

BISCAYNE

July 2011

www.BiscayneTimes.com

Volume 9 Issue 5

IN THIS ISSUE
The BT Hits 100 p. 12
Aventura on Fire p. 46
272 Restaurants p. 70

Times

Who We Are

What the U.S. Census tells us about life along the Biscayne Corridor **page 20**



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Bay Point. Elegantly renov. 4/4.5, master w/sitting rm, gourmet kit., fireplace, pool, manicured gardens, a/c gar., new roof. Just Reduced



Beautiful 1930's Miami Beach hm. 3,900 sq/ft appraisal, 4bd/3.5ba on prestigious N. Bay Rd. Perfect for entertaining, lg pool & patio area.



275' on wide bay w/ 6bd/7ba, new everything, kitchen, baths, roof, protected dockage and stunning Downtown Miami skyline views!



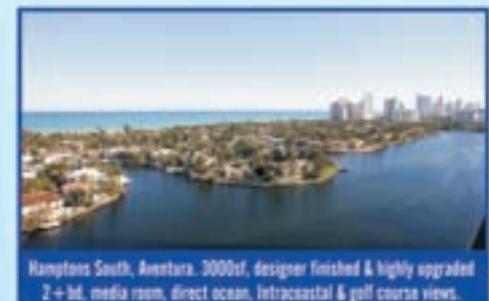
Keystone Pt Isl #15. Custom built builder's home, 4/3.5, 3,236sf per owner, pool, jacuzzi, sauna, 2 car gar, new dock + davits, no bridges to bay.



Bay Harbor Isl. Deco style family hm on corner lot, 4bd + den, entertainment/media rm, pool. Walk to beach, shops & houses of worship.



Keystone Pt waterfront in gated comm. on quiet cul-de-sac. Completely updated 4/3.5, 3415 sf, courtyard entry, gourmet kit., pool.



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JULY

Adrienne Arsht Center

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5th ANNIVERSARY SEASON

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

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

FREE TOURS

XXVI INTERNATIONAL HISPANIC THEATRE FESTIVAL

JULY 7 – 24

CARNIVAL STUDIO THEATER
(ZIFF BALLET OPERA HOUSE)

2

Free Adrienne Arsht Center Tour
12 PM 

“The indisputable jewel in the crown of Miami’s entertainment scene.”
The Chicago Tribune

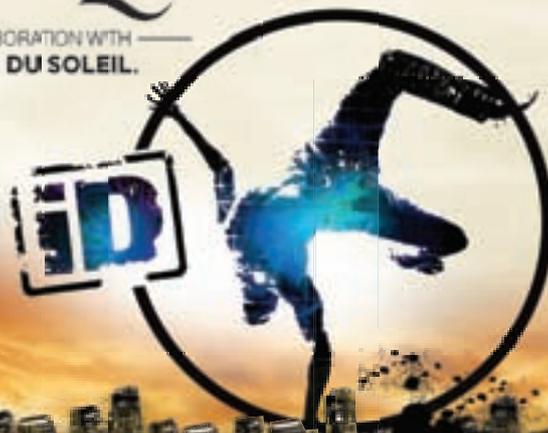
The Chicago Tribune

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BEGINS JULY 26 Ziff Ballet Opera House

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7

XXVI International Hispanic Theater Festival (IHTF) - Lo Crudo, Lo Cocido, Lo Podrido
8:30 PM 

“Riveting!”
New Times Miami

All IHTF performances are in Spanish with English subtitles.

8

IHTF - Lo Crudo, Lo Cocido, Lo Podrido
8:30 PM 

“The acclaimed gathering of some of Latin America’s best theatre companies.”
Sun Sentinel

In Spanish with English subtitles.

9

Free Adrienne Arsht Center Tour
12 PM 

Get a behind the scenes look at the Arsht Center!

IHTF - Amores de Cantina
8:30 PM 

In Spanish with English subtitles.

10

IHTF - Amores de Cantina
5 PM 

“Magical!”
Miami New Times

In Spanish with English subtitles.

14

IHTF - Decir Lluvia Y Que Lluvea
8:30 PM 

Come see the International Hispanic Theatre Festival in its 25th year!

In Spanish with English subtitles.

15

IHTF - Decir Lluvia Y Que Lluvea
8:30 PM 

“Riveting!”
New Times Miami

In Spanish with English subtitles.

16

Free Adrienne Arsht Center Tour
12 PM 

Bring the whole family!

IHTF - Cuerdas
8:30 PM 

“Comes to life!”
Miami New Times

In Spanish with English subtitles.

17

IHTF - Cuerdas
5 PM 

“Raises the curtain on Hispanic culture with plays, dance performances and children’s theatre.”
Sun Sentinel

In Spanish with English subtitles.

21

IHTF - El Malentendido
8:30 PM 

“Experience some of the best theatre companies from Spain, Latin America, and the U.S.!”
Around Town

In Spanish with English subtitles.

22

IHTF - El Malentendido
8:30 PM 

“Comes to life!”
Miami New Times

In Spanish with English subtitles.

23

Free Adrienne Arsht Center Tour
12 PM 

See what goes on behind the curtain!

IHTF - El Malentendido
8:30 PM 

“Comes to life!”
Miami New Times

In Spanish with English subtitles.

24

IHTF - El Malentendido
5 PM 

In Spanish with English subtitles.

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26

Cirque iD
8 PM 
Opening performance!

27

Cirque iD
8 PM 
“The eight-minute trampoline finale was killer! Mesmerizing!”
Boston Herald

28

Cirque iD
8 PM 
“Eye-popping and enrapturing!”
Boston Herald

29

Cirque iD
8 PM 
“Expanding the possibilities of traditional stage!”
Chicago Sun Times

30

Free Adrienne Arsht Center Tour
12 PM 

Cirque iD
2 PM & 8 PM 

“Athleticism sprinkled with feats of danger!”
Chicago Tribune

31

Cirque iD
2 PM & 7:30 PM 
“Edgy!”
Chicago Tribune

TICKETS!

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Jamie Goff 305.978.5622 jgoff@ellimanflorida.com



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CONTENTS

14



- COVER STORY**
- 20 Who We Are
- COMMENTARY**
- 8 Feedback: Letters
- 12 Publisher's Letter
- 14 Picture Story: The Big Blimp
- OUR SPONSORS**
- 16 BizBuzz
- COMMUNITY NEWS**
- 36 A Bumpy Biscayne Landing
- 36 Changing of the Upper Eastside Guard
- 37 We Demand a Green Lawn — Just Don't Use Water
- 37 Little House in the Parking Lot
- NEIGHBORHOOD CORRESPONDENTS**
- 46 Shari Lynn Rothstein-Kramer: Your Condo Is Ablaze!
- 48 Wendy Doscher-Smith: A Ride to the Other Side
- 50 Frank Rollason: Pink Slips All Around
- 52 Jen Karetnick: Ripe for Trouble
- ART & CULTURE**
- 54 Anne Tschida: Café Society in Wynwood
- 56 Melissa Wallen: Galleries + Museums
- 59 Events Calendar
- POLICE REPORTS**
- 60 Biscayne Crime Beat
- PARK PATROL**
- 62 A Harmonious Place
- COLUMNISTS**
- 64 Pawsitively Pets: Worse Than Their Bite
- 66 Your Garden: The Gall of It All
- 67 Going Green: Natural High
- 68 Vino: Wines for the Grilling Season
- 69 Kids and the City: Daddy's Home!
- DINING GUIDE**
- 70 Restaurant Listings: 272 Biscayne Corridor Restaurants



36



52

BISCAYNE *Times*

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Commentary: LETTERS

No Shame: They'll Poop Right in Front of Me

Concerning Shari Lynn Rothstein-Kramer's "Aventura's Poop Snoop" (June 2011), I want to comment as I own a local business called POOP911. Believe me when I say this: I commend Shari Lynn on her article.

I clean numerous high rises, shopping centers, and houses in the Miami area. As we try to clean up, I'll see people letting their dogs poop in front of me and have no shame in not picking it up.

I've even had people tell me: Isn't that your job to pick up the poop?

*Adrian Finch
Fort Lauderdale*

If I Learned How To Pick Up Poop, So Can You

Bravo to Shari Lynn Rothstein-Kramer for her poop police efforts!

Six years ago my husband and I moved to Belle Meade, a community that loves their dogs, and the sheer number of dogs proves it.

Frankly, prior to our move and during our four-decade marriage, my husband Frank was assigned the responsibility of "poop patrol" (as he called it) in our backyard. I always felt he was a firefighter-paramedic and was used to dealing with things I could never image handling.

The reason I feel compelled to write this is for those people reluctant to pick up their dog's poop — because it is yucky. I know exactly how you feel.

I found it quite difficult turning that little bag inside out and picking up poop, but I *forced* myself because I wanted to do the right thing in our new neighborhood.

I want to tell you that to my surprise, it was not long before I got used to picking it up. In fact I have gotten so good that I can put poops from both my dogs in one bag prior to knotting it and disposing of it at home.

This is an accomplishment I feel really good about, because only I know how difficult it was to achieve.

*Fran Rollason
Belle Meade*

On the Poop-O-Meter, as Bad as Aventura

The people of Aventura aren't the only ones who don't pick up after their dogs. I work in South Beach just east of Alton Road. Folks in that area walk their dogs at all times of the day and use the west side of Lenox Avenue and the north

side of 15th Street as their dogs' personal toilet. They also walk them in the alley, leaving the evidence there, too.

I was in touch with the "pooper-scooper" officer of Miami Beach, who claimed that he had the area under watch and didn't see anyone walking their dogs and not picking up after them. However, you only have to walk along the sidewalk; the evidence is strewn right there. And on a hot, sunny day, you need a mask so as not to gag on the foul odor left by the dogs' poop.

There are no signs advising folks that they should be picking up after their dogs.

I'm so glad I don't live in that neighborhood.

*Brenda Romeo
El Portal*

Vagabond Motel: From Rat Pack to Fat Farm

After reading Erik Bojnansky's latest update on the historic Vagabond Motel ("Follow That Story: Vagabond Still Up for Grabs," June 2011), I wanted to reach out with an idea that, without knowing much about the motel, seems completely reasonable and would help a lot of people.

What made me think of the idea was a weight-loss show that basketball star Shaquille O'Neal did about medically obese kids. It prompted me to do some research about obesity. I discovered that there are very few schools or places that can educate these kids and also help them lose weight so they are no longer at risk of death from obesity.

Since 73rd Street and Biscayne Boulevard doesn't seem like a very logical place for a motel in Miami these days, it's really the perfect place to locate such a boarding school for obese kids, perhaps ready to go to the college level.

An online school such as University of Phoenix or Miami-Dade College could provide the education aspect so actual college credits can be received, and the motel could be used for boarding and activities, as well as the different therapies and culinary education required to lose weight and keep it off.

If you are interested in my idea, please let me know (jodieshields@yahoo.com). I have a true vision for this location. It's creative, it could generate money for the area, and it will bring a historical location back to life with a purpose!

With approval from the city, funds can be arranged either through corporate

Continued on page 10

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KEYSTONE POINT ISLAND #5 CORNER LOT 175' ON WATER

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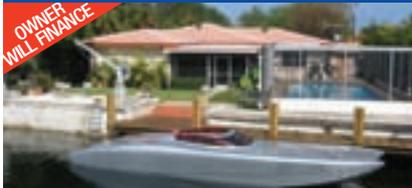
Keystone Point ocean access 4br/3ba, pool, 3153 sq ft. Custom built-in wet-bar, new sea wall, and brand new custom dockage for 75' vessel. Owner will finance with 200K down. Only \$799K

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KEYSTONE POINT WATERFRONT 24 HR GAURDGATED SECURE



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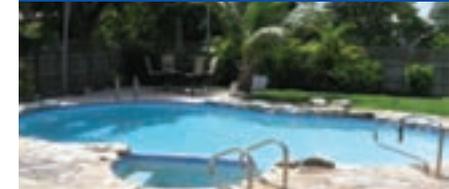
Keystone Point waterfront lot. 80' X 135' new seawall with direct ocean access. No fixed bridges! 499K

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SANS SOUCI ESTATES NONWATERFRONT 24 HR GATED COMMUNITY



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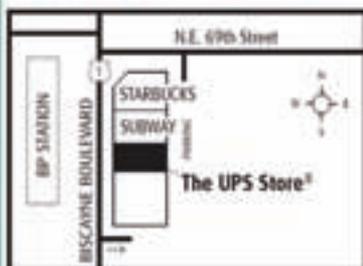
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Commentary: LETTERS

Letters

Continued from page 8

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Jodie Shields
Miami

Hours and Hours of Minutes

Gaspar González's article "A Matter of Minutes" (June 2011) was interesting not so much for what he put in it but for what he left out.

Again he writes about me (mostly he makes assumptions about me) and he still has yet to take even one minute to have a conversation with me.

González says the Biscayne Park Village Commission should produce "full transcripts of commission meetings. Every word," as the City of Miami does. What he doesn't mention is the City of Miami employs two full-time transcriptionists at a salary of approximately \$45,000 each, plus benefits. In addition they have an assistant clerk, and he or the clerk verifies the transcriptions.

We don't have anyone on staff to produce "full transcripts" of every meeting. We would have to outsource. The cost could be \$600 and up, plus a charge per page. There could easily be several hundred pages. We sometimes have two or even three meetings a month, so it gets expensive real fast. And the clerk would still have to take time to certify the accuracy of the minutes.

He fails to mention other cities — El Portal and Miami Shores to name two — that produce summary minutes similar to Biscayne Park yet don't seem to have the controversy we do.

There are a lot of people in our community — residents, staff, and some commissioners — working hard to accomplish things that improve our quality of life, bring our community together, and hopefully help our property values rise. It's too bad that, rather than writing about those things, González chooses to dwell on meeting minutes — an issue that does nothing to accomplish any of those goals.

Bob Anderson, commissioner
Village of Biscayne Park

Denis to Anne: Let Me Thank You Three Ways

Thank you, Anne Tschida, for such comprehensive research for your cover story "Masters of Art" (May

2011). The article was very valuable in helping me to understand the Miami art scene.

And thanks a lot also for your blog at the Knight Foundation's website, and for your articles in other publications.

Denis Rovinsky
Miami Shores

Ultimate Solution to Oil Addiction: Just Stay Home

The article by Jim Harper "Swimming in Deepwater" (May 2011) was very interesting. I researched the film he recommended, which everyone should watch: *The Fuel* (2008, directed by Josh Tickell).

This is a documentary film about our dependency on oil. It's ironic that former President George W. Bush, in the film, states that America is addicted to oil, as Texas is America's mega capital of oil. The film is provocative and gets viewers to think.

Another quote needs explanation: "Homeland security begins with homeland fuel," yet offshore drilling in America is a target of this film's alarm. I wonder if there is any environmentally safe way to drill for oil.

On-land shale-fracturing is being explored, but has its drawbacks as well. Harper suggests driving less, using fuel-efficient cars, and so on. Electric cars also create problems with electrical grids, which are becoming terrorist targets.

So should we all take to biking, skating? No easy solution.

Pat Burke
Bonsall, California

Pleasant Words from Pleasantville

It's rare to find a community publication that displays the high degree of reportorial skill, sense of justice, and writerly talent that I've found in *Biscayne Times*. Although I read your stories from afar, I fully appreciate the old-school, give-'em-hell attitude, tempered with an appreciation for humanity and, frankly, a sense of fun and humor, that the *BT* displays in every issue.

H.L. Mencken (or the guy he stole it from) said newspapers are supposed to "comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable." You don't find much of that these days.

That's why I'll continue to read your solid journalism and be glad that someone out there is still willing to hold a few feet to the fire when merited — without fear or favor.

Bravo to your writers and editors.

Mark Orwell
Pleasantville, New York

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A Month of Milestones

The publishing count hits 100, the U.S. Census says our Biscayne Corridor is advancing, the calendar says we'll soon be moving, and the *BT* has thousands of new readers

By **Jim Mullin**
BT Publisher and Editor

You are holding in your hands the 100th edition of this journal. In the annals of American publishing, that may not rank up there with the *Atlantic* magazine (founded in 1857) or the *Farmer's Almanac* (1818), but considering the state of print media in this town and elsewhere, it's an accomplishment worth noting.

Founded by Skip Van Cel as the *Biscayne Boulevard Times* in 2003, our local monthly has found its place among competing newspapers and magazines, and has (thus far) survived the onslaught of new media that vies for our attention. The *BBT*, as it is still known to many, actually found its niche immediately, Skip having rightly sensed the potential value of a publication devoted to local interests.

Today, more than four years after clambering into the publisher's chair at *Biscayne Times*, I'm delighted to report that the potential is being realized. In fact we're now operating from a position of some strength, which has allowed us to significantly expand our reach — while carefully maintaining our concentration on the Biscayne Corridor.

As new condominiums in Miami's downtown area are filling up with eager urbanites, we

increase the number of copies we leave in their mail rooms. Our greatest expansion, however, has been to the north, in and around Aventura.

We deliver to virtually all the condominiums there, as well as select retailers. Just to the west, we're hand-delivering the *BT* to nearly 1200 single-family homes in neighborhoods like Highland Lakes, Coventry, Enchanted Lake, Oak Forest, and Sky Lake. By our reckoning, about 12,000 people in Aventura are happily (we hope) reading *Biscayne Times*.

All told, from Brickell to Broward, we're now delivering to 16,200 single-family homes, reaching some 69,000 individuals monthly.

That's a lot of numbers to toss around, but consider it just a prelude to our two-part cover story analyzing local results from the 2010 U.S. Census, prepared by the *BT*'s newly appointed senior writer, Erik Bojnansky. Some of those numbers will surprise you.

This month marks another notable event, at least for some of us. After seven years, *Biscayne Times* World Headquarters will be moving from Miami Shores to the MiMo District, where our new landlord, Mark Soyka, promises most excellent accommodations. Now *that's* progress.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com



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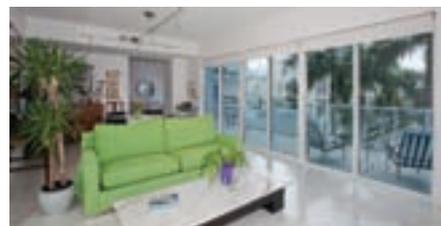
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3 Bed | 3.5 Baths | 2,203 sq. ft. | 2 parking
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An Island, a Blimp, and a Young City

A view of our past from the archives of HistoryMiami

By Paul George
Special to the BT

Several of the most iconic images of old Miami are evident in this photograph, taken in 1934. Hovering above the recently dredged Watson Island is the Goodyear blimp. For nearly 50 years the blimp provided tourists and locals with panoramic views of the Magic City.

The MacArthur Causeway, which opened in 1920, predated Watson Island's birth by 11 years. The island, which was named for John Watson, Sr., an early Miami mayor, and his son, John Watson, Jr., a long-serving city attorney, has been the object of innumerable schemes since its creation.

Across the bay is the bustling Port of Miami, which operated at that location from the early 1900s until the mid-1960s.

Miami was already an important cruise-ship port, as evidenced by the large building housing the offices of the Clyde Mallory Lines.

Immediately north of the port and abutting the entrance to the MacArthur Causeway stand the storage tanks of Belcher Oil, one of the city's most important businesses. Near the upper-right corner of the photograph is the historic Sears Tower (one of Miami's first Art Deco buildings) and department store, site of today's Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts.

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

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com



Photo courtesy of Miami News Collection, HistoryMiami, #1989-011-2314

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

By Pamela Robin Brandt
BT Contributor

Before we celebrate our nation's birthday, we need to begin with: Oops!

When writing about the completely renovated **Sunny Isles Marina** (400 Sunny Isles Blvd.) last issue, we accidentally printed the marina's old phone number. The correct current number is 305-945-6000.

Okay, so how will you be celebrating July 4th, Independence Day? The USA's second president, John Adams, suggested parades, shows, sports, and illuminations — all still popular, especially the last. There are more than 14,000 fireworks displays on the Fourth of July.

But what far more Americans will be doing is eating hot dogs. Some 155 million are consumed on that day alone, which is why this couldn't be a better month than to welcome new advertiser **Damn Good Burger** (20 Biscayne Blvd., 305-718-6565). Despite the name, this retro modern restaurant within downtown's urban lounge MIA serves a damn good dog, too (especially the signature with mustard, bacon, tomato, onions, and avocado).

On to some deals dealing with a different sort of dog. Now in its new

location (19030 W. Dixie Hwy., 305-935-5551), **Rio's Pet Spa and Boarding** is offering a \$10 discount to new customers this month. Services range from cage-free boarding to complete grooming or sedation-free deep-teeth cleaning.

If your pooch could use a makeover but you'd rather not leave the air-conditioned comfort of your own home, Marilou Lekanne of **Doggie's Groom Mobile**, whose groomers come to you, also has a July special: get \$10 off when grooming two dogs at the same residence. Call 786-234-5492 or go to www.doggiesgroommobile.com to schedule an appointment.

For those whose furry friend is a feline, Dr. William Marks, aka the **Cat Doctor** (305-733-0007) also makes house calls — and has further committed to keeping kitties in tip-top shape with helpful tips in this column. This month he cautions that certain common household medicines are toxic and/or lethal to cats — much more so than to humans or even dogs, since cats have difficulty metabolizing the medicines. Who knew? Worst offenders: ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin), naproxen (Aleve), chewable veterinary nonsteroidal anti-inflammatories like Rimadyl or Deramaxx or acetaminophen; of the latter, just one Tylenol can be fatal. "Cats also seem to



like the taste of certain anti-depressants," he warns. So if your Effexor goes missing, don't schedule an intervention for your teenagers before questioning kitty.

To help assure, affordable health-care to all Miami-Dade County residents, the **COOP** (10909 Biscayne Blvd., 305-984-7247), a nonprofit thrift shop whose proceeds benefit the **Miami Beach Community Health Centers** (one in BT territory, at 11645 Biscayne Blvd.) is seeking donations: clothing and accessories for men, women, and children; furniture; household goods and small appliances; artwork, home décor, and antiques; books. Naturally, you can also buy the same at the shop, open Monday-Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

For affordable, state-of-the-art dental care, new high-tech **Biscayne Dental Center** (14771 Biscayne Blvd., 305-945-7745) is now open, and offers a special this month for new patients: an exam, x-rays, and cleaning for just \$39. The full-service general, cosmetic, and specialized facility accepts almost all insurances and also does in-house financing.

And **Dental Options** (two locations: 11645 Biscayne Blvd., #204; 305-892-2960 or 2999 NE 191st Street, #804, 305-466-1804) has news to smile about. The friendly, gentle-care center has added a

new orthodontist to its staff — and she's available for Saturday appointments, so no need to take time off from school or work to get your bite right. Naturally, Dr. Alexandra Gordon and her multi-lingual staff are still there to fill all your general or cosmetic dental needs.

One thing is for sure: You're going to need your choppers in great shape to take advantage of what the BT's restaurant advertisers have in store this month — though we're certain Miami's formidable food fans can handle the challenges. For proof of our capacity, consult Jeff Stephens of the **18th Street Café** (210 NE 18th St., 305-381-8006). To celebrate the eatery's third anniversary last month, Stephens offered a signature red velvet cupcake with every lunch or dinner entrée ordered from June 13-17. Tally for the four-day giveaway: 1734 cupcakes. That's what we're talkin' about!

Still, you might want to let that belt out a notch for your trip to **Trio on the Bay** (1601 79th Street Causeway, 305-866-1234), where chef Klime Kovachewski is offering not one but three summer specials: a Tuesday-Sunday early bird, from 5:00-6:00 p.m., where the price of an entrée includes soup or salad plus dessert; an all-hours Trio prix fixe (\$35

Continued on page 18

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EASTERN SHORES 5 BR 3 BTH

Beautiful updated 2 story waterfront home with 2 car garage and dock space for upto 80 FT yacht. Wood and marble floors thru-out. All new marble patio and remodeled pool. Large master suite with sitting room. Ocean access and no fixed bridges to Haulover.



\$925,000

NORTH MIAMI BEACH
EASTERN SHORES 3 BR 3 BTH

Totally renovated waterfront pool home. Located on ocean access canal with no fixed bridges to Haulover Inlet. Hurricane impact windows thru-out. 24/7 Guard-Gated Community. Minutes to the Sunny Isles Beach.



\$1,199,000

NORTH MIAMI BEACH
EASTERN SHORES 3 BR 3 BTH

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



\$639,000

NORTH MIAMI

KEYSTONE POINT 5 BR 4 BTH

PRICED FOR QUICK SALE -- Updated 5 bedroom 4 bath waterfront pool home. 75 FT on water with direct ocean access, no fixed bridges and minutes to Haulover Inlet. 24 Hour Guard-Gated Community.



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NORTH MIAMI BEACH

EASTERN SHORES TH 2 BR 2 1/2 BTH

Great opportunity-Renovated 2 story townhome. 40ft plus boat dock space included. Direct Intracoastal location and views. 24/7 guard-gated. Just minutes to the beaches of Sunny Isles.

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Elegant family residence. 5/4 Plus staff, 2 family rooms, spacious storage rm, impact glass. Big back yard & patio. For Sale/Rent \$1,149,000. or \$5300.00 month



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Biz Buzz

Continued from page 16

for any starter, entrée, and dessert); and for couples, Trio's Treat for Two, a three-course menu including a bottle of wine for just \$79.

Serious stomach expansion seems a likely possibility, too, at new advertiser **Salsa Fiesta**, where happy hour, 3:00-7:00 p.m. Monday-Friday is "Fiesta Hour" — seriously. For \$24.95 diners get two orders of flautas, fresh-make like all food at this homegrown fast-casual eatery, plus two buckets of imported brewskis. That's ten bottles. And you get to keep the buckets (very useful for when your designated driver needs something to pour you into, at Fiesta's end.

At **Tuna's Raw Bar & Grille** (17850 W. Dixie Hwy., 305-932-0960), owner Michael Chiodo reports that last month's advertised special, a free order of mussels Chardonnay with cocktail purchase, was huge success. For summer, chef Rolf Fellhauer, who for many years crafted the complex Swiss-Continental fare at La Paloma, is "beefing up" the menu with seafood: bacon-wrapped shrimp, salmon in caper sauce, and elaborate oysters Moscow (topped with sour cream-horseradish sauce and two caviars).

Just a few months ago Hiro's Yakko-san upgraded from its longtime location, a midsize space in a mini mall, to spacious new digs in the Intracoastal Mall (305-947-0064). And now sibling Hiro's Sushi Express has upgraded, too, moving from its longtime midsize space in the same mini mall to Yakko-san's former digs (17040 W. Dixie Hwy, 305-949-0076). Don't get confused. One place has sushi, the other has everything but.

Feeling in the mood to throw a spontaneous dinner party? Say hello to **Mama Jennie's** (11720 NE 2nd Ave., 305-757-3627), a new advertiser but old-time Miami favorite for satisfying Italian-American food at student-budget prices. While we've always favored the eatery's informally festive dining room, Mama's specialty is short-notice catering, for those who want lots of home-cooked fare fast — and without the home-cooking part.

Man/woman does not live by bread alone, and he/she doesn't even have to try at recently opened **Lester's** (2519 NW 2nd Ave., 305-456-1784), a new advertiser and new morning-to-night

multi-media café, where the light bites from breakfast croissants to all-hours sandwiches and empanadas, are supplemented not only by artisan beverages worthy of the artsy area but by alt-culture periodicals virtually impossible to find anywhere else in town. Frequent and strange encounters of the creative kind, ranging from folk music to comedy nights to interactive art events, also add to the unique character of the café — and the whole neighborhood; consult www.lestersmiami.com for schedules.

As usual at **Bagels and Company** (11064 Biscayne Blvd., 305-892-2435), David Cohen is offering an abundance of discounts this month, all valid Monday-Friday only and only with the coupons in this issue's ad. Dine-in patrons have a choice of three deals: get \$2 off orders of \$10 or more; get \$5 off orders of \$20 or more; or buy one entrée and get a second, of equal or lesser value, for half price. And take-out bagel mavens who buy a dozen of the shop's hand-rolled beauties get another dozen free.

At Miami Shores's beloved **Busy Bee Car Wash** (10550 Biscayne Blvd.), the sister/brother team of Tracey and Jim Mulholland, carrying on for their founding father, are also offering *BT* readers a July deal so hot that customers must clip the actual coupon from this issue's ad — no photocopies accepted: a thorough exterior wash and high-tech glossy wax, plus interior vacuum and wipe-down, for just \$19.99. Normal price is \$40. The restorative treatment is available from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. every weekday this month except July 4, at the Bee's original Miami Shores location only.

Since there's little chance of out-of-town visitors descending in droves during summer's dog days, it's a great time for home improvements in preparation for high season. And whether you have major work (a new roof, replacement windows, a patio or deck, complete kitchen/bath remodeling, interior or exterior painting) or small jobs that need doing, new advertiser **fab Interior and Exterior** (215 NE 97th St., 305-751-4447), which has both a licensed/insured general contracting component and a handyman division, does it all.

Though the expansive new showroom of internationally renowned interior design/renovation company **Casaurbana** (921 NE 79th St.) is nearly done, it won't be ready to open in July. So this is the ideal month to grab owner Charlie Abaca to do a makeover on your

home — window treatments, carpentry, painting, tile installation, you name it. Give him a call at 305-762-8191.

If poor lighting is making home or office look dingy, or bad wiring is making the space downright dangerous, call new advertiser **Lighting Electric of Miami** (305-252-3476). Electricity can be pretty scary, but no worries. Owner Tom Mentelos's licensed and insured business has been serving Miami-Dade County for 50 years. Estimates are free, and there are discounts for seniors.

Perhaps your home or office needs less dramatic improvements — just new table, chairs, etc. You can find great deals this month at new advertiser **Follow Furniture** (80 NE 29th St., 1-267-283-7834), now open to the public and offering 5 to 15% off on all furniture.

For financing a far more dramatic improvement — moving up to a spiffy new home — check out **TotalBank**, which itself has a brand-new, high-tech branch (1865 NE 123rd St., 305-982-3350). Total is currently ramping up its mortgage. Finally a bank that's lending! And if you don't want to venture far from your own air-conditioning, there's a mortgage-loan direct line (305-982-3100).

A/C isn't doing so hot... Or rather too hot? Call new advertiser **Air Care Solutions** (305-222-7848 or 1-877-821-6026). The company does everything from air-duct cleaning (using organic, nontoxic products) to total AC unit replacement.

Summer, being bathing suit/shorts weather, is also the time for self-improvement — preferably involving maximum self-indulgence. And what sounds like the ultimate self-indulgent self-improvement, because it involves no effort whatsoever on our part, is this month's special deal at **Hannah and Her Scissors** (611 NE 86th St., 305-772-6426): Mention the *BT* for a \$35 discount on a blow dry and makeup by the salon's new Mac and Aveda-trained stylist Steven Neal.

Moving on down the bod to other areas needing help, **Slender Fit U** (786-477-6194) reports that June's 20% discount on its weight-loss program was so successful that it'll be continued through July 31. The program promises a 15-20 pound loss in three weeks using the natural hormone HCG with no diet pills, packaged meals, or exercise.

How about losing 15 pounds or more per month by eating cookies? *BT* readers signing up for a 30-day HCG

program, aka the famous cookie diet, at **Smart For Life** (2980 Aventura Blvd., 305-935-5550) during July will receive a free week of "Smart cookies" — or buy a four-week cookie supply and get week five's goodies free.

For a more active approach to getting in shape, try new advertiser **Normandy Gym** (1145 71st St., Miami Beach, 305-865-8570). The ten-year-old facility has long been renowned for its innovative "Hot Boxing" workouts, but also has energetic programs for more party-minded exercisers, like salsa and zumba classes for couples. And a recently renovated smoothie/snack bar doubles as a lively live-music club or sports bar.

Kayaking is informal exercise for sure, but it's a solid upper-body and cardio workout, especially when dodging big boats on the bay. Plus the designer-colored kayaks and paddle boards sold by new advertiser **Crescent Kayaks** (11032 Biscayne Blvd., 305-785-4307) are just so cute. We'll take the hot pink, please.

Does all the above sound too energetic? If even the blow dry idea makes your hair feel tired, go to **Pure Energy Massage** (7136 Abbott Ave., Miami Beach, 305-767-0610), where the aim is restoring energy via therapeutic touch. Mention the *BT* during July for \$25 off your first massage.

Reward yourself with a new smaller-size outfit from **Lorie Lester Studio + Boutique** (6301 Biscayne Blvd. #103, 305-756-8070) on July 21, from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m., when the shop is hosting a midsummer sale/party. Featured: Prices discounted 20% off the designer's new seasonal collection and 30% off everything else, plus wine and treats.

Still looking for something fun and rewarding for the kids to do during summer vacation? It's not too late to enroll children 6-12 in the second session of the **Playground Theatre's** Musical Theatre Summer Camp, July 18-August 12. Call 305-751-9550 for more info.

Meanwhile, though the school year has barely finished, it's not too soon to start the application process for your high-school kids' 2011-2012 school year, if they're interested in attending the technology-rich, business/government-oriented magnet school **iPrep Academy** (1500 Biscayne Blvd.). Places are limited, so call 305-995-1928 ASAP.

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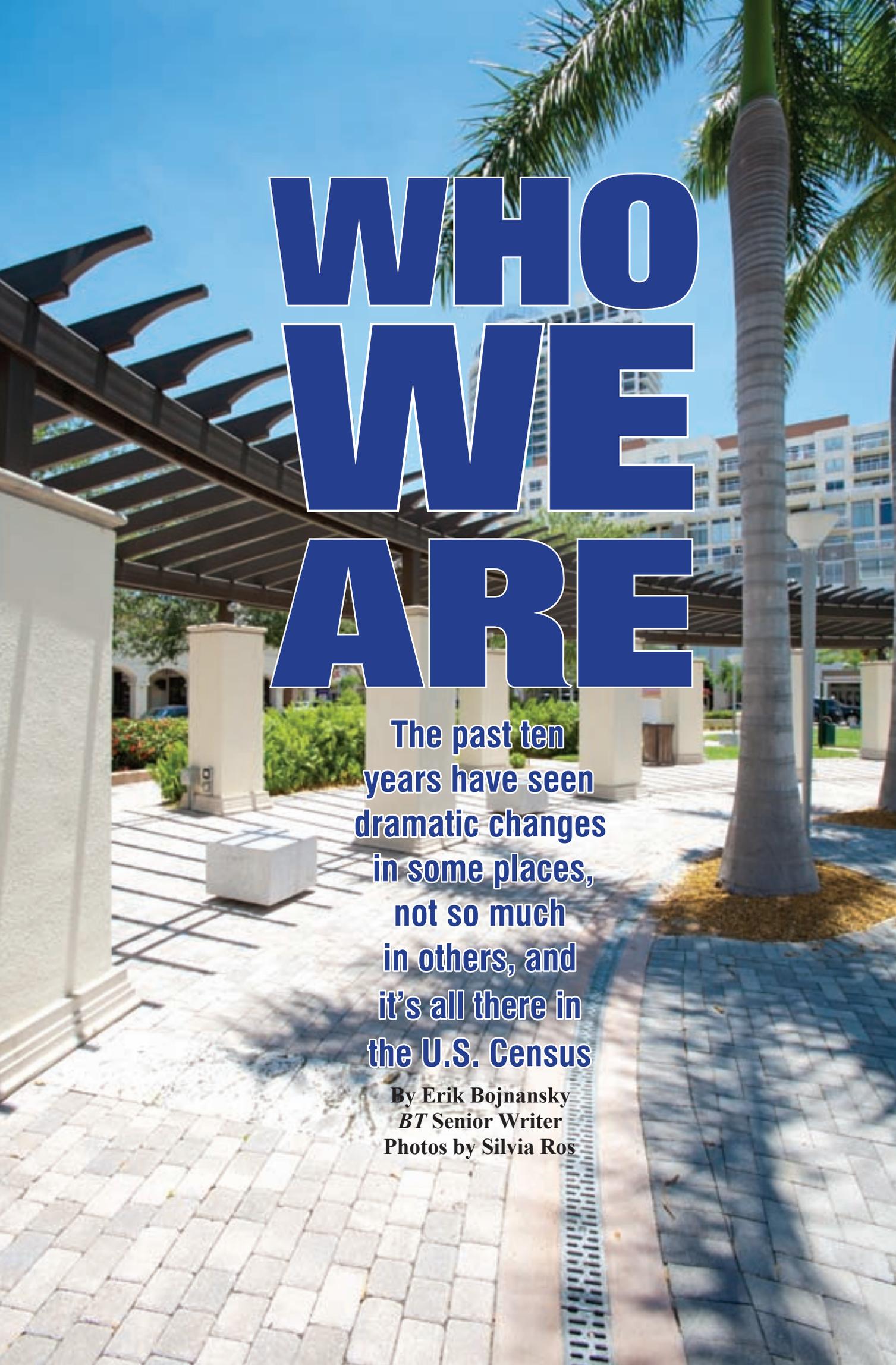
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WHO WE ARE

**The past ten
years have seen
dramatic changes
in some places,
not so much
in others, and
it's all there in
the U.S. Census**

**By Erik Bojnansky
BT Senior Writer
Photos by Silvia Ros**

If you believe the United States Census, the City of Miami's population increased by a bit more than 10 % between 2000 and 2010.

Miami Mayor Tomás Regalado does not believe it. He contends that the Census Bureau missed tens of thousands of residents. "I think we were undercounted by at least 100,000 people," he says. That will cost the city big bucks, he notes, asserting that "at least \$20 million is at stake because we get sales tax, gas tax, and storm sewer tax based on the census." It will also be the second time Miami has claimed it was undercounted in less than three years.

Although a nationwide census involving everyone living in the United States has been conducted every ten years since 1790, the Census Bureau in 1996 began sending out annual American Community Surveys (ACS) to randomly selected addresses around the nation that asked more detailed questions than the traditional decennial questionnaires. Aside from revealing how people lived in a given city, the ACS also provided the Census Bureau with data that allowed them to make annual population estimates.

When the Census Bureau revealed its 2008 population figures for Miami, then Mayor Manny Diaz balked. That count was later upgraded by 82,000 people, thanks to Social Compact, a non-profit economic development advocacy group, based in Washington, D.C., that counts neighborhood populations using an analytics system called Neighborhood Market DrillDown.

Whereas the Census Bureau depends on whatever answers residents give them, the DrillDown uses data from utility and credit card bills and other records from private companies and public agencies.

Three months ago Miami retained Social Compact's services again, this time for the 2010 results. Already the agency claims it has detected anomalies. "We submitted information for discrepancies found in 2225 blocks for the Census Bureau," says Carolina Valencia, Social Compact's research director.

Drianna Kaya, public affairs specialist for the U.S. Census, says cities and counties have until 2013 to ask for a recount. But even without a challenge, the bureau routinely checks and corrects its statistics, she says.

Edward Murray, associate director of Florida International University's Metropolitan Center, says the alleged 2010 undercount raises a "red flag" about

a regional trend: The area is becoming more of a second-home resort community for the affluent, thanks to a speculator-fueled development boom of mainly upscale housing that collapsed, drastically reducing prices. “External demand came from Europeans and South Americans who are going to be here a couple weeks or a few months out of the year,” Murray asserts. “That is not a year-round population.”

Despite the boom and bust and possible undercount, says Jeff Morr, president of Majestic Properties, Miami is in better

Miami-Dade County

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Total population 2000: **2,253,362**
Total population 2010: **2,496,435**

Median age 2000: **35.6**
Median age 2010: **38.2**

18 years and under 2000: **558,655 (24.8 %)**
18 years and under 2010: **545,728 (21.9 %)**

65 years and over 2000: **300,552 (13.3 %)**
65 years and over 2010: **205,589 (8.2 %)**

Hispanic 2000: **1,291,737 (57.3 %)**
Hispanic 2010: **1,623,859 (65.0 %)**

Black 2000: **457,214 (20.3 %)**
Black 2010: **472,976 (18.9 %)**

Non-Hispanic White 2000: **465,772 (20.7 %)**
Non-Hispanic White 2010: **383,551 (15.4 %)**

Asian 2000: **31,753 (1.4 %)**
Asian 2010: **37,699 (1.5 %)**

Median household income 1999: **\$35,966**
Median household income 2009: **\$41,533**

Households making below \$14,999 annually in 1999: **166,310 (21.4 %)**
Households making below \$14,999 annually in 2009: **147,866 (18.2 %)**

Households making above \$150,000 annually in 1999: **35,888 (4.7 %)**
Households making above \$150,000 annually in 2009: **52,928 (6.5 %)**

Total households 2000: **776,774**
Total households 2010: **867,352**

Family households 2000: **548,493 (70.6 %)**
Family households 2010: **602,911 (69.5 %)**

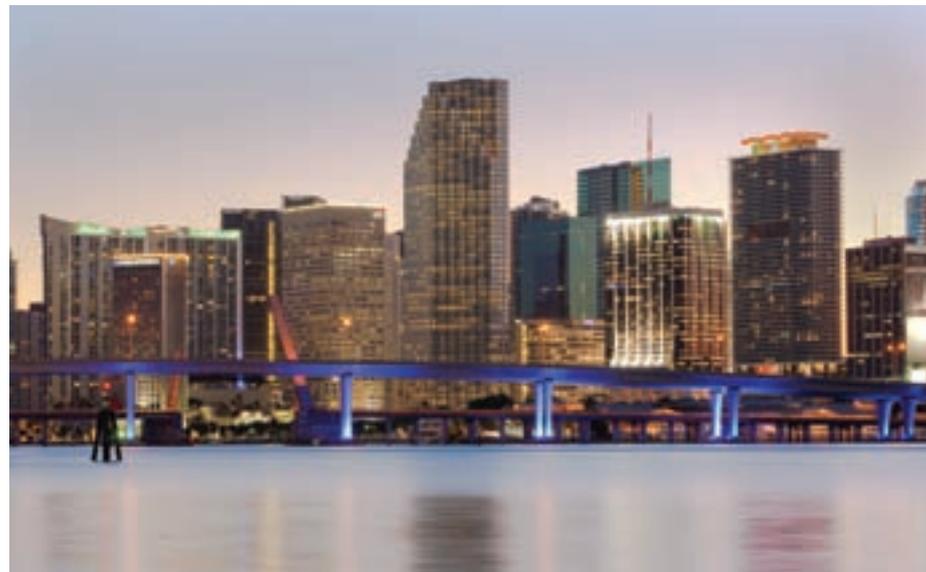
Householder living alone 2000: **180,980 (23.3 %)**
Householder living alone 2010: **94,284 (10.9 %)**

Total housing units 2000: **852,278**
Total housing units 2010: **989,435**

Occupied housing units 2000: **776,774 (91.1 %)**
Occupied housing units 2010: **867,352 (87.7 %)**

Vacant housing units 2000: **75,504 (8.9 %)**
Vacant housing units 2010: **122,083 (12.3 %)**

For seasonal, recreational, or occasional use 2000: **29,587 (3.5 %)**
For seasonal, recreational, or occasional use 2010: **38,302 (3.9 %)**



Miami’s “urban core” is bustling with economic activity, sparked by thousands of new residents.



When the Paramount Bay fills up, the Edgewater neighborhood could benefit.

shape than it was ten years ago, particularly along the Biscayne Corridor. He says the condo boom “brought more people to Miami, more businesses, more restaurants, more culture. Obviously some people lost money on speculative investments, but the city is becoming a *real* city.”

Murray agrees that some neighborhoods will prosper more than others, particularly near the Biscayne Corridor, where there’s still room for new construction. “Miami is still hot,” he says.

Also worth noting is that the building boom of the past decade increased Miami-Dade County’s median household income, according to the Census Bureau. (A household is defined as individuals, related or unrelated, living in the same housing “unit” — a house, apartment, condo, or trailer.) The number of households earning

six-figures or more has grown dramatically, while the ranks of those barely scraping by have been shrinking.

Yet that doesn’t mean the City of Miami, crowned the United States’ poorest city in 2000, is much richer. In fact, with a poverty rate of 27 % as of 2009, it is now considered the nation’s sixth-poorest city with a population above 250,000. (Detroit holds the top spot with a 33 % poverty rate.)

In this two-part series, *Biscayne Times* examines how the Biscayne Corridor fared from 2000 to 2010. Although data from the 2010 U.S. Census is still being released, the information already available provides some intriguing insights into this rollercoaster of a decade, and the twists and turns that may lie ahead. (All figures are drawn from the

U.S. Census unless otherwise noted. Detailed unemployment figures were not available by press time.)

In Part 1, we’ll concentrate on the City of Miami, its corridor communities from Brickell-Downtown to the Upper Eastside, as well as North Bay Village and Bay Harbor Islands. Part 2 will continue up the Biscayne Corridor, covering El Portal, Miami Shores, Biscayne Park, North Miami, North Miami Beach, and Aventura.

But first, to gain some perspective, we’ll consider changes to the county as a whole.

Miami-Dade County

Miami-Dade County has also challenged the Census Bureau’s numbers. In 2008 county planners thought the American Community Survey was far too low, and submitted its evidence. “The Census Bureau accepted our challenge and added 80,500 persons to their estimate,” explains Hilda Castillo, senior human resources manager for the county’s Department of Planning and Zoning.

Castillo’s department has no plans to challenge the 2010 results because, she says, “We found no evidence of an undercount.” That puts her office at odds with the City of Miami, which is included in the county’s numbers.

Between 2000 and 2010, the county’s population increased 11 %. That trails the 16 % hike in new housing units (condos, houses, and apartments) constructed during those years: 137,157 units were added. Meanwhile, the number of units counted as vacant rose an eye-popping 62 % countywide.

As of 2010, only 4 % of Miami-Dade’s housing units were occupied by part-time residents, yet those 38,302 seasonal units represent a 30 % increase over 2000.

Miami-Dade County’s Hispanic population increased 26 % between the 2000 and 2010, according to census data. Of the county’s total population, 34 % identified themselves as Cuban. Research from the Metropolitan Center suggests a “new wave” of Hispanics is also migrating to Miami-Dade.

The fastest-growing groups are Panamanians, whose overall presence increased by 15 %, followed by Guatemalans (up 10 %), Ecuadorians and Dominicans (up 9 % each), Nicaraguans (up 9 %), Hondurans (up 8 %), Uruguayans (up 8 %), Colombians (up 7 %), Argentines (up 6 %), and Salvadorans (up 5 %).

Continued on page 22

Who We Are

Continued from page 21

Murray says most Central Americans are moving to the county to work low-paying service jobs and are settling in places like Little Havana, Sweetwater, Florida City, Homestead, or “wherever they can afford to live.”

On the other hand, South Americans (particularly Colombians, Venezuelans, and Argentines) are more likely to be investors, eager to purchase distressed real estate. Foreclosed or short-sale condos, Murray says, “are going to be turned over to a Colombian or Venezuelan investor who is going to sell them off to someone back in his home country. That’s going to continue to be the trend.”

Murray also predicts there will be fewer working-class families with children living in Miami-Dade in the future, just like the rest of South Florida. At the height of the foreclosure crunch, he observes, working-class families with children also fled from Broward and Monroe counties. Families with children made up 34 % of Miami-Dade households in 2000 but dropped to 31 % in 2010. “If it weren’t for new immigrant families,” he says, “the percentage loss would have been much greater.”

Non-Hispanic family households may already be on the decline county-wide. The county’s black population increased by only 3 % between 2000 and 2010. Had it not been for continued Haitian migration, there might have been a net loss.

Anglos (officially called non-Hispanic whites) packed up and left town, their numbers declining a substantial 18 % over the decade. “There has been a steady loss of white non-Hispanic working families,” Murray adds. “The Hispanic populations have become more diverse economically as well. However, “higher-end housing created during the decade attracted higher-income Hispanic households.”

Indeed the county’s median household income jumped 16 % between 1999 and 2009. At the high end — households making more than \$150,000 annually — the increase was striking: up by 48 %. At the same time, the count of those earning below \$15,000 dipped by 11 %.

With rising income came rising cost of living. As an example, in 2000, median monthly mortgage costs were \$1206, and more than a quarter of homeowners were funneling at least 35 % of their income into mortgage payments.



Coming to the Design District: Residential, hotels, and more upscale retail.

Median monthly rents were \$647, with more than a third of renters using at least 35 % of their income to keep a roof over their heads.

In 2009, median monthly mortgage costs were \$1861, a steep increase. More significant: 52 % of homeowners were paying 35 % or more of their earnings to make those payments. By 2009, the median rent had broken \$1000, a hike of 56 % over the previous decade. That year 55 % of renters gave at least 35 % of their paychecks to their landlords.

City of Miami

In 2003, as Miami Beach’s most recent development boom was winding down, the City of Miami’s was just beginning. “Land was ridiculously cheap,” remembers Jeff Morr of Majestic Properties. Miami Beach’s, on the other hand, was becoming too expensive for both developers and buyers. “People were priced out of the Beach,” he says.

Census Bureau data show there were 35,606 more units in Miami in 2010 than in 2000. Such a boom sparked widespread economic changes within what was once America’s poorest city. For one thing, the median household income rose at least 24 % between 1999 and 2009. In 2008, year of the Lehman Brothers meltdown, Miami’s median household income was up to \$31,990, according to Social Compact’s DrillDown report, while households making below \$14,999 dropped 4.9 % . Again the upper incomes saw the biggest gains: Households making more than \$150,000 per year skyrocketed by 84 %.

In keeping with rising incomes, so too did living costs. The census revealed that in the past decade, monthly mortgage costs rose from \$1163 to \$2083, an increase of 82 %. Despite higher mortgage costs, just one-quarter of homeowners paid 35 % or more of their earnings toward mortgages.

On the renter front, median monthly rents went from \$535 to \$900, a 68 % hike in a decade. The percentage of renters forking over 35 % or more of their income to their landlord rose from 41 % to 58 %. Overall, it was a decade that saw a widening of the gap between rich and poor.

Other notable demographic shifts include a 17 % increase in Hispanics, who now comprise 70 % of the city’s total population. Anglos, though, also increased within the City of Miami by 11 %. Murray is not sure why Miami’s Anglo population went up while it decreased in the county overall. “It could have something to do with the revitalization of the Biscayne Corridor, including Wynwood and Midtown Miami,” he surmises. “Another consideration, though, is the fact that not all Hispanics identify as such. Some ‘Latino’ populations do not identify themselves as Hispanic.” (Brazilians are not considered Hispanic by the U.S. Census Bureau.)

Nearly 4000 fewer people of African descent called Miami home in 2010 versus 2000, a decline of 5 %. Murray says he’s watched Miami’s black community shrinking since 2005, as apartment complexes and affordable housing were ripped down in the name of redevelopment. But while African

City of Miami

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Total population 2000: **362,470**
Total population 2010: **399,457**

Median age 2000: **37.7**
Median age 2010: **38.8**

18 and under 2000: **78,797 (21.7 %)**
18 and under 2010: **73,446 (18.4 %)**

65 and over 2000: **61,768 (17.0 %)**
65 and over 2010: **63,987 (16.0 %)**

Hispanic 2000: **238,351 (65.8 %)**
Hispanic 2010: **279,456 (70.0 %)**

Black 2000: **80,858 (22.3 %)**
Black 2010: **76,880 (19.2 %)**

Non-Hispanic White 2000: **42,897 (11.8 %)**
Non-Hispanic White 2010: **47,622 (11.9 %)**

Asian 2000: **2376 (0.7 %)**
Asian 2010: **3953 (1.0 %)**

Median household income 1999: **\$23,483**
Median household income 2009: **\$28,999**

Households making below \$14,999 annually in 1999: **46,928 (34.9 %)**
Households making below \$14,999 annually in 2009: **44,614 (28.0 %)**

Households making above \$150,000 annually in 1999: **4242 (3.2 %)**
Households making above \$150,000 annually in 2009: **7809 (7 %)**

Total households 2000: **134,198**
Total households 2010: **158,317**

Family households 2000: **83,281 (62.1 %)**
Family households 2010: **90,032 (56.9 %)**

Householder living alone 2000: **40,834 (30.4 %)**
Householder living alone 2010: **52,644 (33.3 %)**

Total housing units 2000: **148,388**
Total housing units 2010: **183,994**

Occupied housing units 2000: **134,198 (90.4 %)**
Occupied housing units 2010: **158,317 (86 %)**

Vacant housing units 2000: **14,190 (9.6 %)**
Vacant housing units 2010: **25,677 (14.0 %)**

For seasonal, recreational or occasional use 2000: **2,901 (2 %)**
For seasonal, recreational or occasional use 2010: **4,222 (3.9 %)**

Americans have been migrating to South Broward or points farther north, Haitians have been increasingly settling into cities such as El Portal, North Miami, and North Miami Beach.

Another possible explanation: Miami’s black community was undercounted along with the rest of the city. The Census Bureau says there were 362,470 people living in Miami in 2000 and 399,457 in 2010. Yet Social Compact’s DrillDown estimate shows that by 2008,

Continued on page 24

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Who We Are

Continued from page 22

the city had 504,266 residents, a 37 % increase from the 2000 census count.

At press time, the U.S. Census had not released detailed figures of census tracts and ZIP codes, yet Social Compact's Valencia says, "I can tell you that overall there was a high discrepancy across the city between the projections and estimates and the census numbers."

Leo Zabezhinsky is the manager of business development and real estate for the taxpayer-funded Downtown Development Authority (DDA). He says the census results "don't make sense, not with the amount of construction that went on. Certainly we think we were undercounted." He points out that census workers were unable to enter some of Miami's newer condo buildings, and that only 54 % of residents in the broad downtown area (from Brickell to Omni) returned their census forms by mail. "Obviously, that contributes to the undercount," Zabezhinsky says. Citywide the census-form return rate was 64 %. Nationally it was 74 %.



The Upper Eastside's population has remained relatively unchanged, hovering around 16,000.

Census figures indicate that empty housing units shot up by 81 % over the past decade. And although the 4222 seasonal-use units reported in 2010 represented just 4 % of Miami's total housing units, the figure marks a 46 % increase in part-time housing from ten years earlier.

The Urban Core

On the land bounded by the Rickenbacker Causeway, I-95, Biscayne Bay, and NE 36th Street, 23,628 condo and apartment units have been built since 2003, according to a 2011 report prepared for the DDA by Goodkin Consulting and Focus Real Estate

Advisors. That accounts for 66 % of the housing that sprang into existence within all of Miami between 2000 and 2010.

When the economy tanked in 2008, this area — which encompasses Brickell, the Central Business District, Park West, Omni (also known as the Media and Entertainment District), as well as the neighborhoods of Wynwood and Edgewater — was hit hard by foreclosures. Many developers had barely unveiled their gleaming condo towers when banks began demanding money.

In the ensuing mess, condo prices plunged and foreign investors with plenty of cash swooped in to snatch up units. At the same time, a condo rental market emerged, encouraging even banks to lease foreclosed units. By December 2010, the average downtown rent was \$1976 per month, the DDA report states, and people were paying. That same month, the occupancy rate reached 85 %.

The DDA's Zabezhinsky thinks Miami's urban core has turned a corner. "All indications are pointing upward," he says. "Downtown has seen tremendous growth."

Continued on page 26

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Who We Are

Continued from page 24

Tremendous might be an understatement. There were 18,463 people living in the Brickell-Downtown area in 2000, according to the DDA. By 2010 the population was 44,200, a whopping 139% increase.

While some of the units are filled with South American part-time residents and U.S. snowbirds, Zabezhinsky insists that the vast majority of downtowners are full-time residents, including lawyers, entrepreneurs, police, firefighters, teachers, musicians, artists, and people from all other walks of life. "It is," he says, "what I would characterize as a mixed-income community."

It is the density of it all that Tony Cho, president of Metro 1 Properties, loves. In addition to residences, the "urban core" is filling up with restaurants, bars, hotels, services, offices, courthouses, and retail stores. Best of all, many of them are either within blocks of each other or close to alternate transportation such as the Metromover. As gas prices rise, Cho predicts, many folks — working-class and middle-class — will



North Bay Village households earning more than \$150,000 a year rose a record 319% over the decade.

trade in suburban sprawl for big city life. "There is a *lot* of demand for property in the urban core," he says. "From an affordability standpoint and desirability standpoint, Miami has never been more

attractive."

That demand is also sparking a mini boom that is already triggering new development. Just last month big, ambitious mixed-use projects were announced

for Brickell (just north of Mary Brickell Village) and the Omni district (just west of Margaret Pace Park). Also last month international developer Genting Malaysia Berhad inked a \$236 million deal to buy the Miami Herald building and its surrounding 14 acres. The company plans to build a \$3 billion resort on the site, which may one day include casino gambling. Cho believes that cash buyers and more prudent banking practices will likely make this new phase "more sustainable, more sane, and more level."

All of the DDA's four districts saw exponential growth in the past decade. Miami-Dade College history professor Paul George says the downtown-Brickell area in particular is livelier now than ever. Back in the mid-to-late-1960s, Paul recalls, "Life in Brickell and downtown was shut down after 6:00 p.m. Now it's slowly becoming a community there. It is dense, it is young, and it is yuppie-ish."

The Edgewater and Wynwood neighborhoods — between NE 15th and NE 36th streets, and from Biscayne Bay to I-95 — are steadily being absorbed into

Continued on page 28

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Who We Are

Continued from page 26

the greater downtown region. Since 2003, 18 buildings and 3365 units have been constructed in these two neighborhoods. Edgewater and Wynwood are often lumped together by Realtors and researchers alike, but their fates may be different.

Wynwood is home to art galleries, warehouses, an increasing inventory of retail and restaurants, and a disappearing stock of clothing manufacturers. The Metropolitan Center reports that, over the past decade, its population went from 6115 to 7740. As *BT* contributor Anne Tschida writes in this issue (“Café Society,” page 54), the area is slowly but surely developing the characteristics of a genuine community.

Edgewater, roughly from NE 15th Street to NE 36th Street between Biscayne Bay and NE 2nd Avenue, is also making progress, many new residents and as many new businesses along Biscayne Boulevard. To some observers, however, the social cohesion still is not there. That may change once a flood of new residents settles into Paramount



Bay Harbor Islands is now majority Hispanic as 707 Anglos moved out between 2000 and 2010.

Bay, the empty, 46-story condo tower that iStar Financial seized from developer Dan Kodsi this past April. Jeff Morr of Majestic Properties predicts the Paramount’s 360 units will fill quickly once it’s on the market. “Even a year ago, a lot of condo buildings in the downtown area were empty,” he notes. “Now all of

these vacant units — just about all of them — are full.”

Between Wynwood and Edgewater lies Midtown Miami, a miniature city built by Joe Cayre’s Midtown Equities and Developers Diversified Realty. At this point in its development, the area consists of four residential towers and

plenty of retail, offices, and restaurants. Prior to 2002, Midtown was a 56-acre storage facility used by the Port of Miami and the Florida East Coast railway. But after county and city officials agreed to redirect up to \$170 million in property taxes to the property via a community redevelopment agency, Cayre bought it, later selling a portion to Developers Diversified, which built the Shops at Midtown Miami.

Edward Murray of the Metropolitan Center was an advisor in the creation of the community redevelopment agency. He remembers the yard as a detriment to the surrounding community. “It was referred to as the hole in the donut,” he says. “It was dangerous, dirty. Trucks were driving over sidewalks and running over people. The whole area was a mess.”

Wynwood in particular needed an economic shot in the arm. “That was the reason for the plan to begin with,” Murray explains. “There was so much *de*investment and manufacturing job loss.” Murray credits Midtown’s mix of retail and residential for encouraging

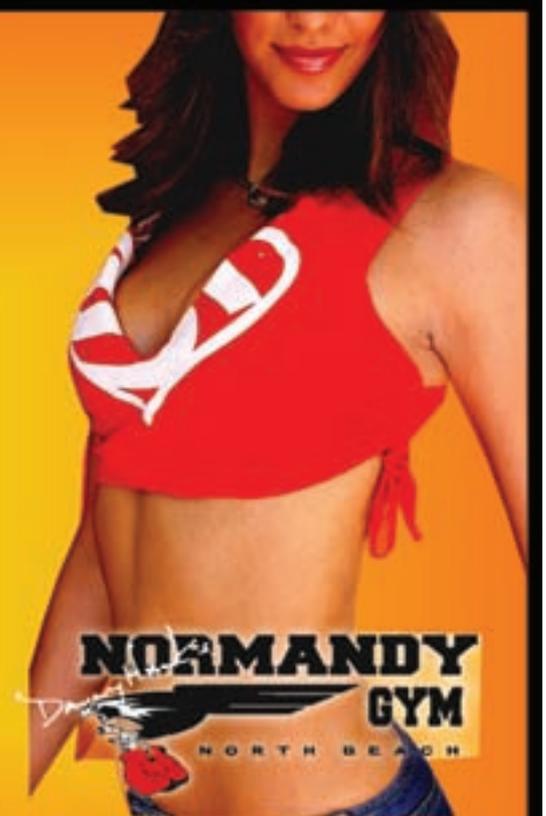
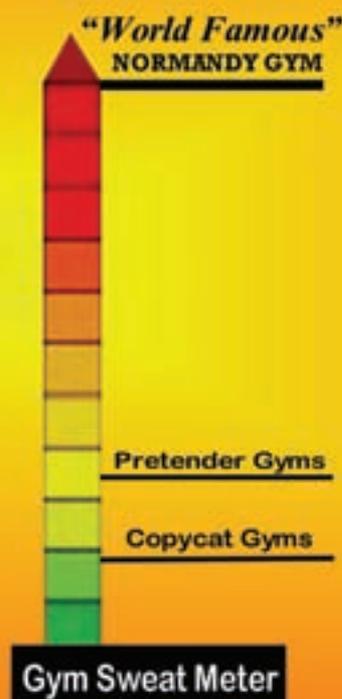
Continued on page 30

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Who We Are

Continued from page 28

incremental investment in Wynwood and the Design District that welcomed artists and other creative types. “Those areas have become pretty vogue,” he says.

Design District/Buena Vista

In the mid-1990s, Craig Robins, president of Dacra Development, began buying buildings in the down-and-out Design District. In the years since then, the District has become a hub for luxury furniture shops, art galleries, clothing boutiques, and fine dining.

Robins was just getting started. According to a recent report in the *Miami Herald*, he’s now increasing his holdings there to 700,000 square feet of mixed-use property and 20 acres vacant of land, which will allow him to build more retail space, as well as apartments and hotels.

Although Robins was altering the landscape of the Design District long before Midtown came into being, Murray argues that the two areas are now thriving on economic synergy. In the future, Murray says, the Design

District and Midtown may grow into bustling 24/7 centers, just as the downtown area is doing.

Just north of the Design District is the residential neighborhood known as Buena Vista. Over the past decade, Buena Vista actually lost population, though not in a dramatic way: 30,260 in 2000 to 29,158 in 2010. That is actually viewed as a good thing, says Wendy Stephan, who has been living in the Buena Vista East historic neighborhood since 1995. Stephan points out that the area’s historic homes — many of which were once subdivided into cramped rooming houses — are being restored to their original grace and grandeur as single-family homes. “I feel there’s increased stability in the neighborhood,” she says. “There are fewer people and it is not as transient.”

Upper Eastside

Between NE 36th Street and the City of Miami’s northern boundary at NE 87th Street lies the Upper Eastside, which runs from Biscayne Bay westward to NE 4th Court. It is a diverse area that includes the Miami Modern Biscayne

Historic District along the Boulevard, as well as an assemblage of single-family homes, apartment buildings, and condominium complexes.

“We each have our own way of dealing with things,” says Margaret Tynan, president of the Belle Meade Homeowners Association, referring to the various Upper Eastside communities: Bay Point, Morningside, Bayshore, Palm Grove, Belle Meade, Oakland Grove, and Shorecrest. “That is why if anyone wants to put us all in the same soup, we are indigestible.”

But the Upper Eastside neighborhoods do unite from time to time to assert themselves, such as guiding the redesign of Biscayne Boulevard, combating overdevelopment, and supporting creation of the MiMo District. “We all want the same thing, which is quality of life,” Tynan says.

It was that pioneering spirit that helped lift the Upper Eastside from the dangerous, drug-infested area it was in the 1980s to the stable, year-round neighborhood it is today, says historian Paul George. “These people are fearless,” he adds.

Income levels have fluctuated within the Upper Eastside. In 2000 the median

household income was \$35,114. By 2008 the median income increased 21 % to \$42,347, according to Social Compact’s DrillDown analysis.

But in the absence of major development, the Upper Eastside’s population has been relatively stable. In 2000 there were 15,056 documented residents; in 2008, 16,213, according to the DrillDown

Morr, of Majestic Properties, predicts that property values will steadily increase in the area. “East of Biscayne Boulevard is as good as gold, while the west side is cleaning up nicely,” he says. Another bonus he points to is the proximity of retail and restaurants lining the Boulevard.

Despite his enthusiasm for other Biscayne Corridor neighborhoods, Tony Cho of Metro 1 Properties isn’t as bullish as Morr on the Upper Eastside. “The neighborhood, much to their disadvantage, has been very anti-development,” he says. “I love the architecture there, but the climate for redevelopment investment is very negative.”

Continued on page 32

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Who We Are

Continued from page 30

North Bay Village

Before being forced from power by the Miami-Dade State Attorney's Office, Mayor Al Dorne rolled out the red carpet for developers in 2000. In the next ten years, North Bay Village's housing stock shot up by 33 % as 1122 units were added. By the 2010 census, 1208 of North Bay Village's housing units were empty.

"One thousand? That is an impossible number," comments Morr regarding vacant units. He suspects many of the units that were empty when the census was taken are now filled. "Developers were still fighting with banks," he says. "It was definitely not as good as the market is today."

Although the area has few restaurants and what Morr calls "one really bad grocery store," he says he's been closing condo deals in NBV with buyers appreciating the views offered by the city's newer high-rises. "It feels like old Florida," Morr says. "It has its own charm."

That charm includes a volatile and often nasty political climate, and, according to historian Paul George, has been home to "low-key Mafia people for decades."

North Bay Village's population did increase by 404 people from 2000 to 2010. It also became a Hispanic-majority city as 511 Anglos whites moved out.

Seasonal units also increased by 157, prompting the Metropolitan Center's Murray to describe North Bay Village as a prime example of a city turning into a resort community — perhaps not surprising given that it is surrounded by Biscayne Bay. "The closer you are to the water, the greater the demand for a second home," he says.

In this resort world, the affluent proliferated like locusts. Households earning more than \$150,000 a year rose a record 319 % between 1999 and 2009. At the same time, poor households earning \$14,999 a year declined by 51 %. Hardly any wonder that the city's median household income increased by 45 % that decade.

Bay Harbor Islands

When it comes to development, Bay Harbor Islands has bucked the trend. The town's housing units increased by just 3 % over the past ten years.

That's because Bay Harbor residents slammed the door on high-rise development in 2002, passing a referendum requiring voter approval for new towers

North Bay Village

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Total population 2000: **6733**
Total population 2010: **7137**

Median age 2000: **35.2**
Median age 2010: **36.9**

18 and under 2000: **1132 (16.8 %)**
18 and under 2010: **1100 (15.4 %)**

65 and over 2000: **815 (12.1 %)**
65 and over 2010: **660 (9.2 %)**

Hispanic 2000: **3302 (49.0 %)**
Hispanic 2010: **4139 (58.0 %)**

Black 2000: **344 (5.1 %)**
Black 2010: **432 (6.1 %)**

Non-Hispanic White 2000: **2722 (40.4 %)**
Non-Hispanic White 2010: **2211 (31.0 %)**

Asian 2000: **227 (3.4 %)**
Asian 2010: **294 (4.1 %)**

Median household income 1999: **\$34,354**
Median household income 2005-2009: **\$49,963**

Households making below \$14,999 annually 1999: **518 (16.6 %)**
Households making below \$14,999 annually 2009: **252 (7.1 %)**

Households making above \$150,000 annually 1999: **64 (2.1 %)**
Households making above \$150,000 annually 2009: **267 (7.5 %)**

Total households 2000: **3132**
Total households 2010: **3364**

Family households 2000: **1520 (48.5 %)**
Family households 2010: **1678 (49.9 %)**

Householder living alone 2000: **1211 (38.7 %)**
Householder living alone 2010: **1185 (35.2 %)**

Total housing units 2000: **3450**
Total housing units 2010: **4572**

Occupied housing units 2000: **3132 (90.8 %)**
Occupied housing units 2010: **3364 (73.6 %)**

Vacant housing units 2000: **318 (9.2 %)**
Vacant housing units 2010: **1208 (26.4 %)**

For seasonal, recreational, or occasional use 2000: **71 (2.1 %)**
For seasonal, recreational, or occasional use 2010: **228 (5.0 %)**

taller than 75 feet. Currently only six towers, ranging from 10 to 15 stories, surpass that height. Abundant retail, restaurants, offices, and services can also be found close by on Kane Concourse or in neighboring Bal Harbour and Surfside.

Says Murray: "I would think any community that did not go overboard with residential development is probably in better shape."

Hispanics now have a slight majority in Bay Harbor Islands after 788

Continued on page 34

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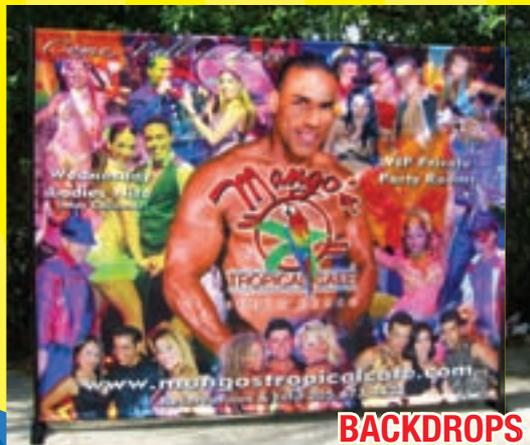
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Who We Are

Continued from page 32

Hispanics moved in and 707 Anglos moved out between 2000 and 2010.

The town also got slightly younger, with its median age decreasing from 43 to 41. The number of people younger than 18 increased by 32 % in the previous decade, while senior citizens over the age of 65 have decreased by 20 %. There are also more family households with children, increasing from 20 % of households in 2000 to 26 % in 2010.

This island community became more affluent as well. The median income of Bay Harbor Islands jumped 37 % between 1999 and 2009. Households making less than \$14,999 a year shrank by 71 % while those making more than \$150,000 increased by 151 %. Another example of our area's wealth disparity.

The Future

As the economy slowly recovers, and Biscayne Corridor residents contemplate what they find in the U.S. Census, it would seem an opportune time for some civic introspection. Edward Murray certainly sees it that way. "Miami is a very attractive city internationally," he says. "It was just a matter of time before the city took off. I'm surprised it hadn't taken off sooner. I guess the issue with Miami is: 'Do we want to be a *great* city with *great* neighborhoods? Or grow willy-nilly?'"

Murray contends that simply increasing the number of residential units, without regard to other forms of development, does not help the economy, and it also doesn't help municipalities collect more revenue. With more residential development comes the need for more services.

But places with balanced and planned mixed-use development can become great. "Miami's population is going to increase and development is going to come back," Murray predicts. "The concern ought to be what population groups are we looking to attract and keep here, and turn it into a great city with great neighborhoods."

A laissez-faire attitude toward development, which has prevailed in Greater Miami for decades, is no longer viable. Residents and their civic leaders must actually plan the future of neighborhoods. Murray says that local officials sometimes "hope the market takes care of itself, but it didn't and it won't."

Planning requires thought. Hence the time for introspection. Says Murray:

Bay Harbor Islands

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Total population 2000: **5146**
Total population 2010: **5628**

Median age 2000: **41.7**
Median age 2010: **42.0**

18 and under 2000: **924 (18.0 %)**
18 and under 2010: **1223 (21.7 %)**

65 and over 2000: **1198 (23.3 %)**
65 and over 2010: **963 (17.1 %)**

Hispanic 2000: **1816 (35.3 %)**
Hispanic 2010: **2606 (46.3 %)**

Black 2000: **92 (1.8 %)**
Black 2010: **142 (2.5 %)**

Non-Hispanic White 2000: **3094 (60.1 %)**
Non-Hispanic White 2010: **2387 (42.4 %)**

Asian 2000: **63 (1.2 %)**
Asian 2010: **60 (1.2 %)**

Median household income 1999: **\$38,514**
Median household income 2009: **\$52,868**

Households making below \$14,999 annually 1999: **496 (20.1 %)**
Households making below \$14,999 annually 2009: **143 (6.0 %)**

Households making above \$150,000 annually 1999: **142 (5.5 %)**
Household making above \$150,000 annually 2009: **356 (15.0 %)**

Total households 2000: **2612**
Total households 2010: **2599**

Family households 2000: **1296 (49.6 %)**
Family households 2010: **1438 (55.3 %)**

Householder living alone 2000: **1126 (43.1 %)**
Householder living alone 2010: **966 (37.2 %)**

Total housing units 2000: **3103**
Total housing units 2010: **3199**

Occupied housing units 2000: **2612 (84.2 %)**
Occupied housing units 2010: **2599 (81.2 %)**

Vacant housing units 2000: **491 (15.8 %)**
Vacant housing units 2010: **600 (18.8 %)**

For seasonal, recreational, or occasional use 2000: **228 (7.3 %)**
For seasonal, recreational, or occasional use 2010: **285 (8.9 %)**

"I think Miami and other cities have to look at themselves in the mirror and ask, 'What do we want to become?' They've never made that decision."

This is the first part of a two-part story. In the August issue, we examine what the U.S. Census can teach us about El Portal, Miami Shores, Biscayne Park, North Miami, North Miami Beach, and Aventura.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com



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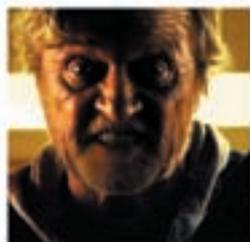
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Directed by Jason Eisner

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Bill Cunningham New York

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.

July 7th to 10th



Page One: Inside the New York Times

Directed by Andrew Rossi

During the most tumultuous time for media in generations, filmmaker Andrew Rossi gains unprecedented access to the newsroom at The New York Times yielding a complex view of the transformation of a media landscape fraught with both peril and opportunity. Taking place simultaneous to the emergence of wikileaks, *Page One* is an engaging and fascinating chronicle of how the world's leading newspaper fights to remain both relevant and alive.



July 14th to 17th



Life 2.0

Directed by Jason Spingarn-Koff

Every day, across the globe, hundreds of thousands of users log onto Second Life, a virtual online world in which they enter a new reality, whose inhabitants assume alternate personas in the form of avatars -digital alter egos of their own creation. *Life 2.0* chronicles users whose real lives have been drastically transformed by the new lives they lead in cyberspace, forcing us to question not only who we are, but who we long to be.



Square Grouper

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*, the filmmakers will be present at various screenings. Check website for details.

July 21st to 26th



The Big Uneasy

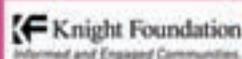
Directed by Harry Shearer

In his feature-length documentary *The Big Uneasy*, humorist and New Orleans resident Harry Shearer, best known for his roles in *Spinal Tap* and as the voice of Smithers and Mr. Burns on *The Simpsons*, gets the inside story of a disaster that could have been prevented from the people who were there. *The Big Uneasy* follows three remarkable people -the leaders of two scientific research team and a 'whistleblower' from the Army Corps of Engineers as they uncover and reveal the real reason why New Orleans flooded and why it could happen to your town too.



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The Perfect Host

Directed by Nick Torney

Warwick is the consummate host in preparation for a dinner party. John is a bank robber who needs to get off the streets and finds himself on Warwick's doorstep posing as a friend of a friend. As the wine flows and the evening progresses, we become intertwined in the lives of these two men and discover how deceiving appearances can be. With outstanding performances by David Hyde Pierce (Niles from *Frasier*) *The Perfect Host* is a funny, slippery, psychological thriller.

Tickets available online and at the box office

A Bumpy Biscayne Landing

Life in North Miami's notorious residential development is not great — but not so bad, either

By Mark Sell
BT Contributor

You probably know the rough story: Boca Developers dreamed up a \$3 billion, mixed-use, high-end residential city-within-a-city for 6000 people on 193 acres of publicly owned land that was once a notorious toxic dump east of Biscayne Boulevard between 137th and 151st streets in North Miami.

They called the development Biscayne Landing and built two striking, 25-story twin condo towers — Oaks I and Oaks II — with a combined 373 units, and then executed a belly-flop spectacular even by Miami standards, defaulting on a \$200 million loan at a 100-percent loss. The market and economy tanked and condo owners bailed.

After much litigation and squabbling, the City of North Miami regained control of the property and now has issued requests for proposals to find a savior

with pockets deep enough to develop the remaining 183 acres, clean out the underground contaminants, and pay the city at least the \$25 million required to satisfy the terms of the 200-year lease.

It's no surprise that Biscayne Landing has a bad rap. It's an arrested development, bounded by chainlink fences, tarps, orange semaphores, and the fenced-off Superfund site. Twice a month, if the wind is right, a flatulent, sulfurous odor wafts from the Miami-Dade sewage treatment facility just to the north during filter changes. (Alternate narrative: It's the nutrients from the bay at low tide. In any case, the stench comes erratically and, when it arrives, generally dissipates within 24 hours.)

But what's it like to actually live at Biscayne Landing? Well, I can tell you. My family and I live there, and all in all, it's not bad.

People stream into the place every day in big moving vans and little



BT photo by Wendy Doscher-Smith

No clubhouse, no swimming pool, no resident owners, but big spaces and nice views.

U-Haul trailers, in gleaming Lexus SUVs and 1994 maroon Toyotas. Of 162 bank-owned units, 60 percent are occupied, up from a mere 5 percent this past November. The new residents speak English, Spanish, Portuguese, French, Russian, and Kreyol, and come in most conceivable colors, shapes, sizes, ages, and occupations. Some are hale, some not so much. (Biscayne Landing is friendly to people with disabilities, and includes apartment numbers in Braille.)

Taken together, the population resembles a reasonably diverse jury pool, or a slice of the human parade at Hollywood Beach. Dogs are as mixed as their owners: Labs, poodles, schnauzers, bichons, pugs, boxers, and honorable mutts. One must step adroitly through the grass and mind one's shoes in the elevator. For that reason,

dogs are now *verboden* for new occupants.

Restless kids had indulged their Huck Finn imaginings by swerving on skateboards in front of cars, chasing each other with plastic death-ray guns, or wrapping themselves in toilet paper to play mummy by the entrance. But that, too, is fading, as the condo association and Kent Security guards clamp down. The place could use a playground and tot lot.

Palms, oaks, jacarandas, and impatiens grace the premises. It's tough to slalom around all those speed bumps in the 563-space garage. With no guard gate, round-the-clock Kent Security guards double-team to take visitors' names and let traffic through.

The apartments inside are huge. You can get a 1700-square-foot unit

Continued on page 42

Changing of the Upper Eastside Guard

After 44 years with the Miami Police Department, Darrell Nichols bids farewell

By Christian Cipriani
Special to the BT

For many, many years, Ofcr. Darrell Nichols has been a familiar figure to every Upper Eastside resident, hotelier, shopkeeper, and pimp, and he's about to bid them all adieu. After 44 years of service, Nichols is retiring to Tahiti at the age of 67.

"Well, I'm not getting any younger," he quips. Nichols has been

the Upper Eastside's Neighborhood Resource Officer (NRO) since the early 1990s, when the City of Miami created Neighborhood Enhancement Team (NET) offices to provide localized support across its districts. Each came with a dedicated NRO, but today the role has been diminished.

"The challenge has dissipated," says Nichols. "Now that we have the Internet and Facebook and Google groups, it's



BT photo by Cathi Marro

For many years Darrell Nichols was a constant and welcome presence in Miami's Upper Eastside.

kind of bypassed the need for a lot of personal contact. People can get the information they need faster through a computer than by calling me."

No one needs a beat cop like Nichols to learn about area crimes stats or where

Continued on page 40

We Demand a Green Lawn — Just Don't Use Water

What's a Miami Shores resident to do with when faced with conflicting commands?

By Erik Bojnansky
BT Contributor

Just because we're in an extreme drought doesn't mean you should stop watering your lawn.

That was the message the Village of Miami Shores sent to homeowners last month, just as the state was grappling with what the South Florida Water Management District calls "one of the worst droughts ever."

As many as 200 Shores homeowners received courtesy notices reminding people of water restrictions but also

warning that village codes require they irrigate the grass on their property and nearby public right-of-way.

Liz Whitney, a commodities broker who bought her Miami Shores home ten months ago, received a notice on June 9 informing her that her "property is in need of watering" and her "swale (parkway) is in need of watering."

The notice goes on: "We are sure that you will agree that a well-maintained lawn and swale enhances the appearance of your home and your entire neighborhood. Now that we are in the midst of a dry season it is essential that



BT photo by Wendy Doscher-Smith

Shores resident Liz Whitney was given ten days to revive her lawn — or else.

your lawn and swale get the appropriate attention it needs to thrive in a healthy, attractive and growing condition."

The notice gave her until June 19 to "correct" the violation. Whitney was flabbergasted.

"I found it really surprising that officially we only are allowed two days to water, but they're giving me ten days to

get my lawn green," Whitney says.

Under current water restrictions, Whitney can only water her lawn on Thursdays and Sundays after 4:00 p.m. or before 10:00 a.m. Whitney has an even-numbered address. Odd-numbered properties are restricted to those same

Continued on page 39

Little House in the Parking Lot

When you're the only family that refuses to sell, you might end up surrounded by asphalt

By Terence Cantarella
BT Contributor

When Rene Martinez opens the front door of his house, he sees nothing but cars. From the back door, it's the same view. In fact, no matter which window or door he looks out of, the scenery is the same. That's because his home sits in the middle of a 200-car parking lot.

"I'm in love," says Martinez. "I'm in my spot. What goes on around me, I don't care. I'm happy."

Straddling the border between Little Haiti and Buena Vista, Martinez's house was once part of a subdivision that included nearly 100 homes and stretched from N. Miami Avenue to NE 2nd Avenue, and from NE 50th Terrace to NE 53rd Street.

The neighborhood was middle-class Anglo for most of the last century, then shifted demographics in the 1970s and 1980s, when thousands of refugees from Haiti and Cuba arrived. And while the neighborhood is still distinctly Caribbean, Martinez's block looks more like an asphalt sandbar, with his house sitting alone in the parking lot like a two-story metaphor for the passage of time.

Over the course of the past 30 years, his former neighbors sold their homes to the nearby Jewish Home and Hospital for the Aged (recently renamed Miami Jewish Health Systems). In the 1950s, MJHS was just a collection of wooden bungalows on the former estate of prominent Miami merchant E.B. Douglas. But the organization outgrew its 17-acre campus toward the end of the



BT photos by Terence Cantarella

Rene Martinez at home: "I'm going to do renovations soon, get it in good shape and let everyone know I'm here to stay."

last century as Miami's large post-war Jewish community began to age and seek medical care. "The Home," as it's still known, expanded south and westward into Martinez's neighborhood.

"They were hungry," Martinez says of his vanished neighbors. "It was a poor neighborhood. They jumped on the first deal they got." But his father, who bought the property in the early 1970s, refused to sell. His affection for his house and a belief that he could hold out

for a better deal motivated him to hang on until the end. When he died last year at the age of 81, he left the house to his son, now 45 years old, who shares his father's sentiments for the home.

The tall mango trees in the backyard grew from seeds his father carried in his pocket from Cuba. The roosters and chickens that patrol the area are the offspring of fowl that Martinez Sr. raised himself. And

Continued on page 38

Little House

Continued from page 37

the home's second story, an addition to the original 70-year-old structure, is the handiwork of the father-son team.

Martinez still refers to his long-gone neighbors by their full names when speaking about them. He tells tales of murders, hauntings, affairs, and of schoolboy pranks that he and his friends regularly played on the residents. To give up his childhood home, he says, "They'd have to pay me one million dollars. Maybe \$1.5 million."

Valued at just \$258,000 by the Dade County Property Appraiser, his asking price seems extravagant, especially since the prospect of finding a buyer willing to live amid a crush of cars and trucks seems unlikely. However, Martinez explains that he has four sisters — all of whom share a stake in the property — and a million dollars split five ways doesn't amount to a fortune.

He also points out that the access road leading to his house is maintained solely for his benefit and divides MJHS's parking area into two separate,



Demolishing the house and closing its access road could yield 100 new parking spaces.

unconnected lots. If he leaves, MJHS can close it off and gain a new rear access to the facility, or add roughly 70 new parking spaces — that's in addition to some 30 spaces his house occupies.

Will they pay the princely sum?

MJHS's chief development and marketing officer, Blaise Mercadante, says that his organization needs more parking

and would love to buy Martinez's property. But, he explains, "We are a not-for-profit and we operate on donations. We need to be good stewards of the donations we receive, which includes paying reasonable rates for all we purchase."

The plan, he says, is simply to wait out Martinez: "We don't want to be bullies. There are no plans to ask the

government for eminent domain."

Eminent domain, while typically used by governments to seize land for public projects such as highways, railroads, and airports, can sometimes be enacted on behalf of private entities. If a company can convince a majority of the state legislature that removing a homeowner is in the public interest, a plea might be successful. In this case, since MJHS is a large medical facility, it could conceivably argue that Martinez's presence hinders access, parking, expansion, and complicates important zoning processes.

How much compensation would Martinez receive under such a scenario? Jeff Cynamon, an eminent domain and private property rights attorney in Miami Beach, says, "In an eminent domain case, the property is valued at its highest and best use, and the highest and best use may be as assembled as part of the hospital's property."

Determining that future value involves a measure of speculation based on price per square foot, the value of added parking spaces (and any revenue collected from them), new facilities, jobs

Continued on page 44

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Green Lawn

Continued from page 37

times but on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Watering lawns in the middle of day is forbidden and violators can be fined between \$25 and \$125, according to the Water Management District.

Water conditions are indeed dire for much of Florida. Lake Okeechobee is almost ten feet below normal, while the rainfall in eastern Palm Beach County is more than 22 inches below normal. As of June 27, despite the recent rain, east Miami-Dade County's precipitation is 15.25 below normal. Unlike Palm Beach, Miami-Dade gets its water from the underground Biscayne Aquifer, and it needs rain to recharge its finite supply. Lots of it.

"For eastern Miami-Dade during the dry season, the area received 61 percent of the average rainfall and built up a deficit of 7.58 inches," explains SFWMD spokesman Randy Smith. "We will need a wetter than average wet season and probably a tropical system to make a dent in the deficit situation."

Given that it may take a wet hurricane to revive the region's water supply,

Whitney thinks the village is acting irresponsibly. "The Everglades are on fire and the governor has declared a state of emergency due to the severity of the drought," Whitney says. "I believe it should be up to each individual's discretion as to whether he or she decides to water on the permitted days, and conservation efforts should be rewarded instead of actively discouraged..."

But Miami Shores's codes, which the village is renowned for diligently enforcing, say otherwise. Section 537 goes into detail about yard maintenance that includes "watering, mowing, and trimming on a regular basis as required in each instance to keep said landscaping in healthy, attractive, and growing condition." Homeowners who fail to correct code violations can be fined up to \$250 a day for the first offense and \$500 a day for repeat offense.

Neighboring El Portal has similar laws on its books, yet village manager Jason Walker is not enforcing them during the drought. "We're facing the same issues that the residents are facing," Walker says, noting that the grass around Village Hall is fairly withered. "It's difficult to cite someone for something you're

having a problem with as well."

Walker says El Portal has been issuing warnings to residents who defy the restrictive water regulations, but it's unknown if Miami Shores is doing the same. Whitney says her lawn "looks pretty brown," as do many of her neighbors, yet she does notice some properties looking pretty lush, and has witnessed residents irrigating even at times when it is forbidden. "I see people watering their lawns all the time," she says, "even in the middle of the day."

Miami Shores has alerted residents about the water restrictions via its newsletter, by signs on roadway medians, and even on the courtesy notices that ask homeowners to water their lawns.

Multiple calls to Shores village manager Tom Benton inquiring about the village's policy regarding residents who flout SFWMD regulations went unanswered, but in an e-mail to the *BT*, village clerk Barbara Estep denies that her municipality is forcing residents to defy the water restrictions.

"We are unsure of the intent of your article, but your line of questioning is inaccurate," Estep writes. "Based on your questions, it appears that you are trying

to insinuate that the village is attempting to force our residents to ignore the South Florida Water Management District's water restrictions. This is not the case. We have not cited any homeowner for having brown lawns. We have distributed a courtesy letter to residents who have appeared to abandon any and all lawn maintenance, advising them that it is their responsibility to maintain their yard, including watering per the SFWMD guidelines. So that there is no misunderstanding as to what the SFWMD guidelines are, we also provide the residents with a SFWMD fact sheet which details the watering restrictions in place during this drought period."

After receiving her "courtesy letter," Whitney began watering her lawn at times allowed. On June 19 she did not receive any further notices, and in the days that followed, the long-awaited summer rains hydrated lawns throughout the Shores and beyond. Still, she's befuddled by the village's approach. "It shows how short-sighted our local government can be," she says, "by preferring a green lawn today over water tomorrow."

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com



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Darrell Nichols

Continued from page 36

sex offenders are located. And when they have a grievance, Nichols says people just send e-mails to the mayor and police chief and get a direct response. Once a key liaison between residents and decision-makers, the NRO is going by the wayside.

When Miami first created its Neighborhood Enhancement Teams, there were 12 officers like Nichols located throughout city. Each one had a staff that included, among other personnel, fire and solid-waste inspectors, two code-enforcement officers, a NET administrator, a service representative, and an aide. Recalls Nichols: "We, as a team, could resolve anything right there at the office."

There was a time when people could file a police report at their local NET, and the office was alive with activity — phones ringing, fax machines whirring, reports happening. NETs were once active police substations, but over time politics and administrative interference diluted their power. In one part of the

city, rumors swirled about code officers just hanging out at NET offices wasting time. This disconnect eroded the entire operation. Nichols would like to see NET operations restored to their former glory — as effective, user-friendly parts of the community.

Historically the Upper Eastside's best and worst quality has always been its perpetual state of flux. The constant wave of people in and out seems to draw curious new investors, but it's also made it difficult to establish long-term stakeholders. Years ago it was mainly retirees, wintering Northerners, and families with children. As the demographics shifted in the mid-1980s, however, the Boulevard went into steady decline, especially its west side. Nichols attributes this to a lack of effective code enforcement when they began subdividing homes into apartments.

He traces through a cycle he's watched chip away at the community time and again: Garbage isn't picked up, code enforcement becomes lax, the area starts to look bad, transient people with no stake in the neighborhood move into cheap housing, blighted and abandoned buildings become squats for petty

criminals, and soon these crimes turn serious as desperation grows.

Cheap motels stretching up the west side of the Boulevard were notorious dens of drugs, prostitution, and violence, drawing constant attention from the police and the Nuisance Abatement Board. From the 1990s through the mid-2000s, the Upper Eastside was primarily defined by seediness and fear, but in recent years neighbors and property owners began fighting back.

One major, and majorly effective, Upper Eastside initiative has been Crime Watch. Nichols says residents developed one particularly bad habit over the years — not caring about issues that don't personally affect them. But in the past few years, countywide coordinator Carmen Caldwell galvanized Morningside residents into 100-percent participation. The momentum spread, and soon Belle Meade, Bayside, and Shorecrest were onboard, creating their own effective Crime Watch groups.

With neighborhood vigilance on the rise and businesses steadily filling in, things are looking up. The Upper Eastside is now home to Miami's most

enticing new collection of small businesses. Its once blighted motels boast hip restaurants like Red Light and American Noodle Bar. The New Yorker Boutique Hotel at 6500 Biscayne was just named the Best Hotel by *Miami New Times*. In fact the area is now one of the safest neighborhoods in the City of Miami, much to the surprise of residents. "People think we're making up statistics," Nichols says. "We're not."

While Nichols has no strong concerns about or criticisms of the Miami Police Department and its leadership, he leaves with a bitter taste for city politics. The city's budget woes put a damper on his final chapter with the force, and had a negative impact on training, morale, and police readiness. This past year in particular Nichols watched police salaries suffer as the city tried to fill spiraling financial holes. Even after pay and pension cuts, Miami is still facing a shortfall for 2012 projected to top \$54 million, but that figure now grows almost weekly. A police union lawsuit against the city is pending.

Continued on page 43

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Biscayne Landing

Continued from page 36

with two bedrooms and two-and-half baths on a low floor for about \$1700 a month, or a 2500-square-foot penthouse with three bedrooms and three-and-a-half baths for about \$2600. Not cheap, not quite luxe, but certainly pleasant enough. Singles, including FIU students, often double or triple up.

Apartments come with high-end kitchens and giant marble master bathrooms with spa bathtubs that provide the illusion of "arrival." Outdoor catwalks keep things breezy in the front and balconies afford verdant views of protected wetland forest on the lower floors, and water views from the 11th floor up. The 1043-acre Oleta River State Park and the Arch Creek East preserve are nearby, with Sunny Isles towers in the near distance. Washer, dryer, cable, phone, and sometimes unreliable Internet are included in the rent.

Walk across 151st Street and you're in North Miami Stadium, next to Alonzo and Tracy Mournig Senior High School. The sounds of football and soccer games

played there often drift up to the balconies, as do the Haitian festivals celebrating national holidays, with compas music emanating from the PA system.

Walk a half mile down the street and past the woods and you're at David Lawrence Jr., K-8 Center, where rotating flashing messages reflect the uplift of its namesake, the former *Miami Herald* publisher and child advocate. ("We are a five-star 'A' school" ... "Prevent bullying and violence.") Less than a mile away is the Biscayne Bay campus of FIU. Cut through Oleta River State Park's outskirts and you are a two-mile bike or jog from the beach.

Not bad at all, and yet reminders persist that you are not in a normal area.

Next to the security guard there's a four-foot, candy-cane-shaped white PVC pipe about five inches thick. Every so often, DERM-dispatched inspectors monitor the air for the ammonia and methane that lurk beneath the old dump. So far, so good — or so residents are told.

Ponds dredged from the muck teem with ducks, fish, and turtles begging for scraps from passersby. Far as we can tell, no mutant mini Godzillas prowl

the fenced-off woods just to the east (christened "Stephen King Forest" by our youngest daughter), but you do find lots of rabbits, and frogs can climb to fifth-floor balconies and beyond.

"Biscayne Landing needs to become a force," says North Miami Councilman Scott Galvin. In other words, things need to improve, whether it's the odor from the county sewage plant or the course of surrounding development.

Although the condo association calls the shots, Biscayne Landing is not yet a community, and resident-owners are in short supply. There is no clubhouse for kvelling and kvetching (the generous mailrooms don't quite cut it), and no swimming pool, but there is a fine fitness center, where the aerobically adept and Incredible Hulks with MP3s do their business, grunt, pant, and leave.

To swim honest laps, you can pay seven bucks at FIU down the street or six bucks at the Miami Shores aquatic center. For tennis, you can try Sans Souci, less than two miles south.

Biscayne Landing works well for busy people and families with established social networks. Most people seem to

like it. Some love it. But the place is dead at midday and offers no solace for the lonely. "When I moved out of here, I ran," says Mario, a divorced former heavy-equipment operator retired on a disability, with time on his hands. He moved to an oceanfront place in Hallandale Beach with a pool and large common area. He's happier there, but still comes back to hang out with the security guards who hear people's joys and sorrows. Nan, one floor below from us, fled to Boca.

Yet for all the development interruption, there is hope. Whoever takes over Biscayne Landing must agree to put in a clubhouse and pool, and provide more direct access than the long, winding road now called Royal Oaks Lane. Sooner or later, it has to happen.

In the meantime, you can watch, wait, pray for mercy on the rates at lease's end, and lay down stakes, if only temporarily, as an urban pioneer between the old dump and the woods, greeting the sun from the master bedroom and bidding it goodbye from the front walkway with a toast to tomorrow.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com



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Darrell Nichols

Continued from page 40

“We took a pretty good hit on our pay,” says Nichols. He leaves with his pension intact, but for officers taking home less each week, a thrifty retirement awaits. “When you join the department, the idea is to work hard and work up — in pay, benefits, and rank — so that when you retire, you have money. There was a six- to seven-year stretch with no raises, and we were the lowest-paid police department of our size in the whole state.”

Nichols calls Miami politics “mind-boggling” and says constant city manager turnover is hurting financial stability: “Now the city is coming into this budget shortfall and the rumors running around are that employees are going to take another hit. City hall can’t even answer the question at this point. I don’t like to be critical to the city because I’ve had a good career with them, but I do take offense that they came at us at the end of last year and took so much money from us after we worked so hard.”

Whatever the city takes from police salaries, something they can’t take from

Nichols is a litany of accomplishments. Just after the Upper Eastside NET office opened in June 1992, Hurricane Andrew devastated South Florida. Nichols and his colleagues immediately set up a food-collection point at the NET office, at NE 65th and Biscayne. They were soon so overwhelmed with supplies that they moved it to the nearby American Legion Hall.

“It got to the point where we had military helicopters dropping off MREs for us to distribute to people, especially on the west side,” recalls Nichols. He was on the phone wrangling contacts and people in the neighborhood, and dozens turned up to lend supplies and support. He recalls serving 400 to 500 people a day with care packages for nearly a week.

“We even had the ice and water trucks showing up,” says Nichols. “It was an area that wasn’t thought about because of the location, while other areas were getting more attention. The Upper Eastside has always been a red-headed stepchild, an afterthought, but we were there defending it.”

For his efforts, Nichols was bestowed commendations from both the

city and county.

Other accomplishments he recalls are his park events. As a full-blooded Native American (Cherokee and Lakota), Nichols organized three festivals between 1992 and 1994. More than 300 Native Americans descended on Legion Park to educate and entertain about 25,000 schoolchildren.

“That was very gratifying,” says Nichols. “The whole purpose of those activities was to show the community what they could use their parks for. If you want the city to spend money on parklands, you have to show that you’ll use them. Morningside and Legion are the most underused parks in the City of Miami.”

Nichols also began bringing in musicians from Tobacco Road to perform at Jazz in the Park. He also helped organize the Police Junior Olympics and flea markets, all in a passionate effort to show off the potential of the Upper Eastside’s green spaces.

“In all the years I’ve been with the department, I’ve personally accomplished a lot,” Nichols says, beaming. He’s retiring with more diverse knowledge than he could have ever obtained

from another career, including licenses to operate a boat, a helicopter — even an airplane, which may come in handy during his retirement.

As a young man, Nichols lived in Hawaii for a time, and the experience never left his mind. Now on the brink of retirement, he’s maneuvering to recapture the rustic, breezy island lifestyle he enjoyed so many decades ago. But with Hawaii now commercialized and overdeveloped, Nichols instead picked up a two-bedroom, driftwood-and-tin beachcomber in Tahiti, in the unspoiled heart of French Polynesia. He’d been visiting the island for years and fell in love with the place. Now, in a few months, he’ll travel there again to lay eyes on his new getaway.

Nichols is going to use a home he owns in Gainesville as his primary residence, so don’t expect to see his smiling face around Miami too often. Instead, Ofcr. Darrell Nichols will be somewhere in the South Pacific, patrolling barefoot, keeping the tropical fish in line, and a close eye on its crystal blue waters.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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Community News: BISCAYNE CORRIDOR

Little House

Continued from page 38

created by expansion, and a variety of other factors. It's possible, therefore, that the state could determine that the value of Martinez's property is considerably higher than its current market value.

Martinez, meanwhile, is digging in. He recently planted a row of young lychee trees in the narrow strip of soil beside his house, the fruit from which he plans to enjoy ten years from now. A building contractor by trade, he has plans for the house, too: "I'm going to do renovations soon, paint the house, get it in good shape and let everyone know I'm here to stay."

Martinez is no anomaly. The Internet abounds with stories of people who refuse to sell their homes and end up living in parking lots, shopping malls, under highway overpasses, or sandwiched in between skyscrapers. In China, homes like Martinez's are called "nail houses" because their owners are like stubborn nails stuck in a piece of wood.

Literature and film, meanwhile, regularly sympathize with such tenacity, as in the 2009 Disney/Pixar movie *Up* or

the classic 1942 book *The Little House*, which is still in print today.

But while those stories often involve a David vs. Goliath storyline, Martinez faces a less sinister foe. Real estate records show that MJHS paid fair-market prices for many of the most recently purchased homes in the area. As one of the nation's preeminent geriatric care facilities, the organization is often bequeathed small fortunes by happy patients and their grateful relatives. Those gifts, along with government grants, have fueled its growth and made the acquisition of private homes possible.

Whatever the future holds, Martinez is content living in the house where he grew up. "I really don't care about money," he says. "Money to me means problems. It's a way to live a little better. You can get things you need, but it's not everything."

Still, he'd move on if he could trade up — perhaps to a beach house in Central or South America. Otherwise, he says, "I'd rather die here than go somewhere else. In fact, maybe that's what I'll do."

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com



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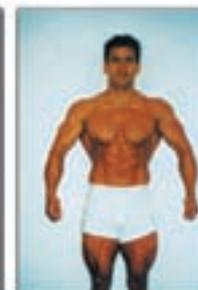
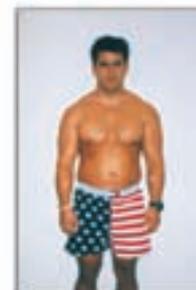
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Middle of the night. Building's fire alarm wails. Now what?

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

It was Thursday, June 16, at 5:00 a.m. when I was jarred from a deep and peaceful sleep. I know that it was *exactly* 5:00 a.m. because I looked disbelievingly at my alarm clock, my heart beating out of my chest from the exceedingly loud, shrill warning that was going off repeatedly for what seemed like forever.

"W-h-o-o-o-o-p! W-h-o-o-o-o-p! The fire alarm has been activated. Please exit the building using the nearest set of stairs. Thank you," said the smooth woman's recorded voice over the loud-speaker throughout my building.

Or it was something like that. Whatever the exact wording was really didn't matter. What *did* matter was that there was a potential fire in my building. And here's the best part — I didn't really believe it. After all, how could there be a fire here? In a modern, recently built, high-tech condominium?

I didn't smell or see anything, but even more, I didn't feel it in my gut. I know it isn't much to go on, but I also know I wasn't alone in my thought process.

When I was finally awake enough to understand that there was potential danger, I took account of where each of my three pets were: dog, next to me; black cat, under the bed; gray cat, looking curiously around for the origin of



that god-awful noise.

I joined my husband on the balcony off of our bedroom to see what was happening outside. The answer: Nothing. There were lots of residents milling about on their respective balconies checking out the scene, but as far as people "evacuating" the building as

instructed, there were maybe two or three people in front of the condo, but otherwise it was business as usual — except for the blood-curdling alarm that sounded repeatedly.

And that alarm didn't stop until the fire department arrived — which seemed like an eternity, though it was a



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mere 13 minutes.

So there we were, waiting...and waiting, and I started thinking. "What if this is a real fire? We're going to burn!"

It's amazing, with a city as small as Aventura, a city that has its own fire department (and its own police force of significant size, but that I'll save for another time), you'd think they'd get those trucks here in no time.

Finally they did arrive. There was no fire. It was a false alarm. Whew!

And it was at that moment I knew what I was going to write about this month.

I later called the Aventura Fire Department. And called them again. I was so annoyed no one bothered to call me back that I was prepared to go off on the department, when on the third try I got through to Chief Tim Castleberry, a veteran firefighter (approximately 39 years), who joined the force when he was just 18 years old. He was accommodating. Correction: He was absolutely forthcoming. And I was blunt: "Do you know how long it took you to get to my building?" (Which is on 188th Street.) "It took 13 minutes. I live five minutes from the station." (Which is at 2900 Aventura

Blvd., on the north side of the mall.) "If my building had been on fire, we could have been killed."

His response, without an ounce of defensiveness: "Depending on the way an alarm comes in, we determine if there is an indication of smoke or fire. We already know and can dispatch our units accordingly."

Alarms can be monitored by the building's management or by an alarm-monitoring company. "Any time an alarm rings, we dispatch at least one unit on the three," explained Castleberry, referring to the code that calls for lights and sirens. "If and when it is determined that there's a false alarm, the detail is modified. Every time we dispatch units, anything can happen, and there's no sense in unnecessarily risking lives."

So basically they have eyes and ears "on the scene" and generally know the urgency before arriving. In other words, there was a method to their slowness, and for that I felt a bit relieved.

Castleberry continued: "We got the call at 5:00 a.m., dispatched at 5:03 a.m., the units were in route at 5:08 a.m.,

and arrived at 5:11. We learned that the alarms came from the 9th, 10th, and 11th floors of the building. It was then isolated to the 9th floor and there was no smoke or fire. This allowed us to slow down. Overall, it took four minutes to get there once they were en route."

I heard through the building grapevine that the alarm was pulled in the garage by a bunch of kids. So much for the rumor mill. Regardless, it was a false alarm, and as the chief explained, there can be a price to pay for that. If false alarms continue, a building can be fined. "It's the only way to stop the degradation of fire prevention," said Castleberry.

He also mentioned that an abundance of false alarms plagued Aventura until he took matters into his own hands. "Working closely with fire prevention," he said, "we've reduced the number of false alarms by 20 to 30 percent over the past four years. False alarms degrade our service. If we're out chasing nothing, it's more difficult to help those in need."

But if you're living in a building and a fire alarm goes off, you never know if it's false or for real. So why don't people

evacuate? Seems kind of messed up that there's a potential fire in a residential building, which could be 50 stories tall, and no one takes it seriously.

When our alarm went off last month, I lay in bed irritated because I was in the middle of a dream and I was comfy — two things that rarely occur simultaneously in my world. Then, once I was coherent enough to understand what was happening, I was annoyed. I really didn't feel like moving, but if need be, I would.

Eventually I asked a number of people in my building what they thought. While not one of them would use his or her name, they unanimously admitted that they had no intention of evacuating. "Too early," said one. "It's not light out yet."

When I mentioned this to the chief, he said, "Sometimes you're better off to stay in your apartment, because people get out of hand and cause chaos. We come in, take over the elevators, and keep order."

That makes sense. And in case of an actual fire, I would welcome that.

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A Ride to the Other Side

One Brickell cotel has everything — including ghosts in the elevator

By Wendy Doscher-Smith
BT Contributor

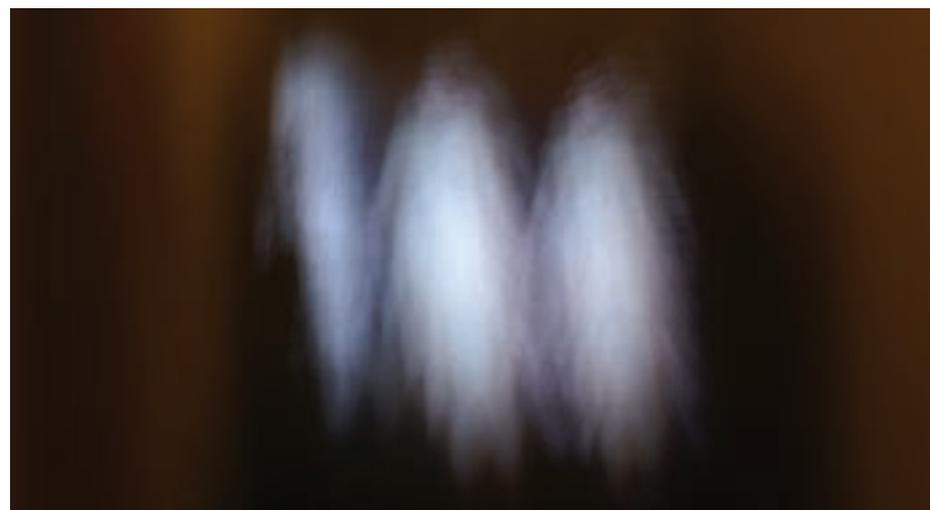
Since by now I've probably garnered a reputation for writing about seemingly out-of-the-ordinary events, I figured I'd switch it up some this month and discuss...stocks. After all, I was once on the staff of a rather no-nonsense business newspaper.

So time to dust off that portfolio, identify the key performers, and blah, blah, blah. Just kidding! Gotcha!

No, I wouldn't do that to you, dear reader. Actually this month I invite you to sit back, relax (for about 30 seconds or so, until you get interrupted by your phone vibrating, spouse complaining,

dog barking, or supposedly microwave-safe bowl blowing up, leaving scalding pea soup splatters in the appliance à la Linda Blair, before sparking a meltdown in your kitchen), and enjoy the tale I am about to relay to you.

You ready? For this column, in order to really benefit from its full efficacy, to drain its holy juices, it would be best if you followed my directions: Score some chocolate bars (preferably 90 percent cacao, imported), marshmallows (you can substitute organic cream cheese if so desired), and gluten-free graham crackers. Now, build a fire. (You don't know how to do that, do you? I knew it. City wimp!) Next, put your nutritionally balanced, snotty, s'more sammy in the micro — scratch that. Put



the Whole Foods-approved concoction in the toaster oven, toast it, remove it, and sit in front of your faux fireplace. Don't forget to kill the lights! Now, wait for my dramatic beginning. It's coming in just a sec... Okay, here goes:

Once upon a time, not very long ago — actually, in the present — there lived a youngish woman in a big condo/hotel building in downtown Miami. Well, technically it was in Brickell. (Let's just agree now to use the past tense so the tale has a more authentic feel. After all, you

are eating an organic cream-cheese-filled s'more in front of your faux fire. So we already have our share of challenges here.)

Now, this woman had a love/hate relationship with the building. She loved that it was located by Biscayne Bay and she could visit the manatees, but she hated the loud neighbors and louder city garbage collectors. She called it the cotel, because people owned units there, haggling with the condo Medusas, and people rented units, clogging the trash room with huge bags of rancid "I'm in Miami, bitch!" party leftovers.

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Anyway this youngish woman, well, she was lively and, some would say, "eccentric," but that seemed to work in her favor and she made friends with everyone who worked at the cotel. As a result of this, she was on the inside track, and she knew things about the daily comings and goings of the cotel that were not otherwise common knowledge.

For example, she knew who was trying to get into whose pants and more important, who made the best café con leche and who put roofies in the tuna subs at the café. Some things she knew were not very pleasant. *Some* things, one might say, were downright eerie.

Okay. *One* thing was downright eerie.

One day the youngish woman was headed to her apartment when she heard strange noises in the elevator she was sharing with a mild-mannered tourist couple. The youngish woman guessed they were from the Midwest. When the elevator shook and made some more odd noises, the couple exchanged confused looks while the youngish woman exclaimed, "What the hell was that?"

The following day the youngish woman reported the incident to the

young woman at the reception desk. The young woman told the youngish woman to "stop" as she was getting "the chills" and instructed the youngish woman to consult with the security guard.

The End.

Ha! Just kidding again.

Okay, so the youngish woman saw the security guard and asked about the elevator.

The security guard said, "Oh, the ghosts."

"Yes?" asked the youngish woman, looking for more information.

"They come starting at nine o'clock," the security guard explained.

"They are always in elevator four."

The youngish woman demanded details. The security guard said he'd show her. He had apparently made a habit of recording the elevator security videos onto his phone. The security guard whipped out his Crackberry and said, "Watch the screen."

"What was that?" the youngish woman asked as the screen seemed to jump. "That was just me," the security guard says. "I moved my hand." Oh. The youngish woman yawned and her mind drifted to a pair of really hot, stiletto heels she saw on the...

Then the elevator lights captured in the video flickered and wavered. Moving white orbs and these ghastly, squinty purple eyes stared back from the screen. The youngish woman squealed and grabbed the security guard's arm.

"Oh my *beep, beeping* God! What in the *beep* is that?!"

The youngish woman watched as the orbs undulated and the menacing purple eyes became part of a facial outline.

This continued for five minutes. The security guard said it might be Jordan. (Deep background: "Jordan" was noted in this column before, though you wouldn't know him as Jordan, but as "Stalk-her." Jordan was found earlier this year, in his apartment, lying on a wet floor, where he had been for four days. By the time he was discovered, he was decomposing, with his hungry, rescued greyhound by his side. To the greyhound's credit, it had not nibbled on Jordan. The faucet in the bathroom was still running and, reportedly, the coroner said they got there just in time before Jordan "blew up.")

The youngish woman thought it made no sense for Jordan to haunt elevator four. He and his whiskey bottle, and

sometimes his dog, were always in elevator one, i.e., the service and dog elevator.

"I've seen it in one, too," another guard said. "And I've seen it for a while. I just didn't want to say anything."

"And don't forget the little girl," the other guard said.

"The what?" the youngish woman asked.

"Oh," the first security guard said, sounding bored, "There is a little girl, too. But she is always on floor 28. And sometimes the lobby."

The youngish woman's nostrils flared, as she had lived on the 28th floor the previous year.

"Is she orbs, too, or like a whole person?" the youngish woman asked.

"A whole person," the yawning security guard said, adding, "but she's not always here."

"Have you spoken to her?" the youngish woman asked.

"What, are you *crazy*?" security guard one responded. "I don't want to meet her! I just do my job and keep going."

Ah, the youngish woman thought, I guess that is what we all do.

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Pink Slips All Around

Here's a tip for the new county mayor: Start with a clean slate

By Frank Rollason
BT Contributor

I'm not much on giving advice unless asked. Big on opinions, yes, but short on advice because it comes with too many responsibilities. That said, Mr. New Dade Mayor, here's some advice whether you want it or not.

A few years ago, I was appointed to be Miami's interim city manager by then Miami Mayor Xavier Suarez (newly elected county commissioner for District 7 — congratulations!). As it turned out, I was not long for the city manager job and "X" (everybody called him X) was not long for the mayor's office. He was removed by the courts because of voter

fraud connected with his campaign, although he was never implicated.

At any rate, the mayor removed me after only 27 days in the position because I did not deliver the one thing that, at that time, he wanted more than anything in the world (or at least he acted like it): the head of then Miami Police Chief Donald Warshaw. Suarez wanted him fired and gone in no uncertain terms.

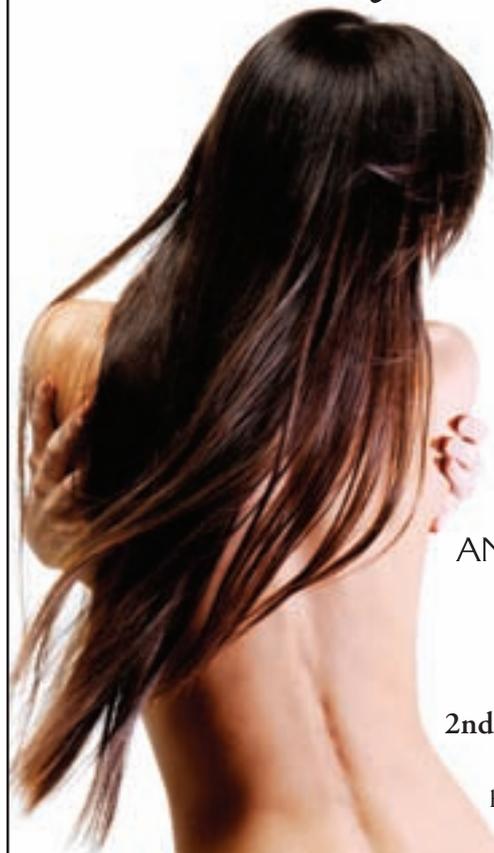
Indeed the mayor had just fired the previous city manager for not delivering on this, and now it was my turn to get my walking papers. The individual he chose as my replacement was Miami Beach City Manager José Garcia-Pedrosa — a real piece of work in my book.



Here we had a guy who was coming in during a financial crisis so bad that the governor had placed the city under state oversight, and the first thing he wanted was the plans for his office so he could modify them because the office was not big enough!

I was incredulous that an individual could come in to take the helm of a financial ship that desperately needed righting, and his first request would be for a larger office. Talk about rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic!

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Anyway, on my last day, Garcia-Pedrosa showed up to retrieve the keys to my office and, at the end of our transition conference (very short, because he already knew everything that anyone needed to know in order to run the City of Miami), he asked me rather wryly: “Frank, you have been an employee of Miami for many years. Do you have any sage advice for a new city manager?”

To which I replied, “Yes, sir, I do. Don’t buy a house.”

It’s something we used to tell individuals who were newly appointed to higher positions in city government, because we knew they probably would not be around long enough to enjoy their new abode. In Garcia-Pedrosa’s case, he lasted only a few months. He was fired by incoming Mayor Joe Carollo after X was removed by court order in one of the more bizarre chapters in recent political history — even for Miami!

So back to the advice thing. By the time this column goes to print, we will have a new mayor of Dade County. (I refuse to call it Miami-Dade County, for much the same reason I still refer to Sun Life Stadium as Joe Robbie Stadium. Because that’s what it is.) As I write this,

I’m hoping it will be Carlos Gimenez, but regardless of who prevails, the advice is appropriate.

A couple of years ago, I ran into Jimmy Morales down in the Keys in, of all places, a fishing tackle store — go figure! You remember Jimmy. He was a great county commissioner who resigned to run for county mayor. Sound familiar? Our conversation turned to local politics and I asked him his opinion on how to fix the mess we have in local government.

His reply reverberates to this day. “You can’t,” he said, “because the problem is endemic within the county administration. You can’t fix it by only changing the elected officials, because the system is corrupt and those in the administration of the county have long ago given up any hope of true reform.” Jimmy’s response was true then and is still true today. So my advice to the new mayor — the new strong mayor — is to fire them all.

That’s right. Get rid of every director and every assistant director of every department. Fire the existing manager and the existing assistant managers. Yup, fire the whole lot and start over.

But just hold on, you say. How will things get done? To which I reply: What is getting done now, and to whom is it being done?

Let’s just say for giggles that on the day the new mayor is sworn in, all the existing executives within the county administration resign. It would not be a crisis. It would be a great opportunity for the new mayor to change the mindset of county government.

And speaking of change, let the new mayor be bold enough to seek some fresh faces for these positions.

I can still hear the naysayers: What we need is experience; fresh faces are too idealistic and not seasoned.

To which I respond: It was an idealistic young landscape architect by the name of Frederick Law Olmsted who gave us Central Park in the middle of New York City at the ripe young age of 36 back in 1858.

Was it not idealistic individuals who wrote the Declaration of Independence, who framed the Constitution and the Bill of Rights? Were these individuals too idealistic? No, they had a sense of commitment to do what was right by their fledgling country. Where is the

commitment today from our higher-level civil servants to do what is right by Dade County residents?

I’m not speaking of the rank-and-file public servants who go to work every day and perform admirably, whether it be keeping us safe from the bad guys, putting out fires, saving the life of someone shot or having a heart attack, or just (and I say “just” tongue-in-cheek) picking up our garbage or operating our parks.

I am speaking of those in managerial positions who have been poisoned by the system, those who find it most important to do what will be politically pleasing to those who sit on high in order to curry favor and keep their jobs.

Well, I say tomorrow is promised to no one, and the new mayor should start out with a clean slate. Send them all packing. As the Nike commercials used to say, “Just do it!” You, Mr. Mayor, and the residents will reap the benefits.

Remember, the next mayoral election, in November 2012, is just 16 short months away, and we will all be watching. Not that anybody asked me.

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Ripe for Trouble

How do you cope with 14 mango trees dropping their fruit at the same time? Take a look

By Jen Karetnick
BT Contributor

These days, no one dares to ask me, “What’s up?” Because the real question is “What’s down?” And everyone knows the answer: mangos.

This year, I’m not alone. A winter with plenty of the necessary chill hours and no spring or early-summer rain combined to give us one of the biggest crops in years. Fruit is overripe on the trees before it even falls off — which it is doing in droves. Those of us with only one mango tree have been busy bringing in bags of sticky, sap-stained globes for colleagues and peers to share no matter where we work. Imagine having 14 of the overproducing monsters.

Toward the end of the school year, I was hauling in 50-75 mangos per day, handing them out willy-nilly to my students, who would take them, poke a hole in the top with their pencils, and then peel them like bananas. It was, I admit, a technique I had yet to see. Then again, I do teach creativity. My kids are good at brainstorming.

Now that my students have left me for the summer, my life has gotten tougher in a lot of ways. Emotionally I miss them; I had my first-ever class of graduating seniors, something I never experienced as a university instructor.

As a practical matter, the absence of my students has left me with hundreds of mangos to dispose of every day. And because every mango-tree owner in Miami



One morning’s collection of Haden and Smith mangos.



We use any bags we can find to collect them.



By the end of June, we’ve run out of bags.



Then we take advantage of any available surface.

BT photos by Jen Karetnick

BT photo by Cathi De Meo Marro

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Sometimes the mangos don't make it.



The dogs like to help.



As soon as the fruit starts to overflow, I cut them up for freezing.



After all, you can only eat, drink, or cook with so many.



They always wind up in the pool.



It's not always fun and games.

Shores is going through the same glut of potentially rotting fruit, my usually faithful

chefs are on the receiving end of more than they can handle from backdoor donations.

Only Kris Wessel from Red Light has been making regular visits to Mango House, and even he laughs every time he views the carnage of plummeting fruit.

That disbelieving chuckle, I have to say, is the response of every reader I've invited to my house to pick up fruit for themselves. They've been fairly loyal, and folks like Lilian Hardy from Quayside and Monique Armbrister from Miami Shores have even given me good-quality recipes for my upcoming book, which is proceeding rapidly. Ms. Hardy also brings a crew to clean up the yard, which my husband

thinks is part of my racket. (Ms. Hardy assures me it's just because she loves yard work, and misses it now that she no longer lives in the Shores, so who am I to argue?)

But rather than describe my pleasure and my pain, I'm going to show it to you. If you've been following my Facebook page, you might have already seen a couple of these images. Along with a couple of friends of mine, I've been documenting this incredible season, and the results speak for themselves.

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Café Society

A smattering of new restaurants is helping turn the Wynwood Arts District into a real neighborhood

By Anne Tschida
BT Contributor

The bright, geometric façade painted to look like green, white, and red bouncing boxes has been beckoning for some time now on NW 2nd Avenue in Wynwood, but the doors of the Panther Coffee Shop seemed to take a long time in opening. (To be fair, “speedy” has never been an adjective used when talking about the city’s process for permitting small businesses in Miami.) Then, on a stifling hot Saturday afternoon in late June, the doors were pulled back and owner Joel Pollack, standing out front, invited us in for a sip.

His wife, Leticia Ramos, served up espressos, from beans that were not only ground, but also roasted on the premises. Guests were pointed only to the tip jar; for Panther’s soft opening, the owners wanted to give the public a taste before charging for their home brews. Huge burlap bags of coffee beans, a large roaster, and a few chairs made up the décor. All in all, it seemed to fit in with the general aesthetic of an arts district.

Several months before, farther north on NW 2nd Avenue, Lester’s had also opened, helmed by artist Daniel Milewski. With a barista bar, some blond-wood tables and stools, a couple of couches, and art magazines spread about, it too has a nice artsy feel. It’s mostly a café,

although it has added a small food menu since opening.

Miami-Dade has always been short on real cafés, but in the city’s urban midsection, they have been nonexistent. That’s starting to change. These two most recent additions have joined Joey’s, a full-scale restaurant run by Joey Goldman and Goldman Properties (the first eating and drinking establishment on NW 2nd Avenue back when it opened in 2009), and a second Goldman enterprise, the Wynwood Kitchen and Bar.



At Panther they roast their own coffee beans.

The latter is an attraction in itself, connected to the eye-popping Wynwood Walls complex and featuring murals painted by



The Panther Coffee Shop’s Joel Pollack and Leticia Ramos.

international street artists such as Kenny Scharf, Barry McGee, Os Gemeos, and Shepard Fairey. (Fairey has also covered the inside of the restaurant in his distinctive, decorative red, black, and gold images and symbols.) And of course, there are several spots not on NW 2nd, such as Cafeina — open only in the evenings with an art gallery in the back — and Morgan’s, with its outdoor dining porch.

It’s not Manhattan, but Wynwood has been waiting forever for a critical mass of places where you can sit, eat,

and hang out. The hope is that such spots will give the neighborhood energy and street life. So far it’s a little difficult to gauge what the impact has been.

On this lazy, hazy afternoon, a number of artists were working on laptops at Lester’s, while up the street some familiar faces from the art world were sitting at the Wynwood Kitchen’s bar. Whether there was any extra gallery-hopping going on is hard to say.

Annie Hollingsworth, a transplant from New York who just curated a show

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Lester's owner Daniel Milewski: "People who live and work here are excited to have a place they can walk to."

called "Noise Field" at Dorsch Gallery, and who also lives in the area, has had a bird's-eye view of the evolving landscape for more than a year. "I don't think that the restaurants have really increased the number of people visiting galleries," she says, "but they certainly make it more hospitable, and that has a less definable but still positive effect."

She's pointing to the immeasurable mix that can make a neighborhood viable. If artists hang out in noticeable numbers, maybe art collectors will, too. (For one group attracts the other.) If owners of BMWs valet park for lunch and then take off without patronizing another local venue, it doesn't necessarily mean they've made no impact. Others who might have considered Wynwood to be "sketchy and unwelcoming, not the kind of place for an afternoon stroll," as Hollingsworth describes it, could look at the area differently.

Dina Mitrani, owner of the eponymous photography gallery on NW 2nd Avenue, a block north of the Goldman

eateries, says she has witnessed an uptick in traffic: "After the opening of the two restaurants, yes, I've seen more people on the streets." As for the newcomer coffee shops, they are "always a good thing — good crowds, good energy, and it's where good conversations about art and culture happen."

Early evening on Second Saturday in June, Lester's was hopping. You can get wine and beer as well as coffee there, so the café was transitioning from an afternoon place to read and work into a nightspot for mixing and mingling. "There have actually been more people than I originally expected [for a summer opening]," says Milewski, whose wife, Nina Johnson, runs Gallery Diet down the street. "I think there is more foot traffic over here than people realize. I also think people who live and work here are just really excited to have a place they can walk to."

As for whether his customers are visiting galleries after a caffeine fix, Milewski says, "I think some do. We



The Wynwood Kitchen & Bar has been painted inside and out by well-known artists.

keep the Wynwood maps here and the stack has been dwindling, so that's one sign that people are using us as a jumping off point for gallery-walking."

Across the street at Pan American Art Projects gallery, director Janda Wetherington is hoping to catch some of that spinoff. "I do believe that having diversity in the offerings of the neighborhood has helped increase the traffic in Wynwood," she notes, "but I can't really say it has significantly increased the traffic to the gallery, as many lunchers come in quickly during the week. But I'm sure that ultimately this will increase our visitors as well."

Like a good advertising campaign, some successful dining and gathering joints should help elevate Wynwood as a destination. Still, stubborn obstacles remain. For one thing, the city has been slow to make improvements around the neighborhood, despite extolling it as a model for what the arts can do for an area. "What we *still* need," says gallery director Mitrani, "is for the city to make

the sidewalks nicer. Maybe some lighting, benches, landscape, cobblestones — okay, I'm dreaming!"

Milewski would like to see NW 2nd Avenue become more bicycle friendly. "I would love to see more of those bike racks that are popping up [other places]. There's a rumor going around that the city's not the one installing them. Apparently there's a rogue rack-installer. So whoever you are, please put one in front of Lester's!" He'd also like to see more trash cans.

Hollingsworth, the arts curator and also a dancer, agrees that Wynwood has a way to go, but the silver lining is discernible: "It's still pretty rough around the edges, but I love the fact that it's starting to have a neighborhood feel. Running into someone casually on the street or at one of the restaurants is almost inevitable — especially now that we have places to run into each other."

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com



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Culture: GALLERIES + MUSEUMS

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101 NE 40th St., Miami
305-573-2101
www.101exhibit.com
Through July 31:
"Between Night and Day" by Hendrik Beikirch and Claudio Ethos

ABBA FINE ART

233 NW 36th St., Miami
305-576-4278
www.abbafineart.com
Through August 31:
"The Pulse of Nature" and "Vanities" by Debra Holt

ALEJANDRA VON HARTZ FINE ARTS

2630 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-438-0220
www.alejandravonhartz.net
Through August 6:
"Tridimensional" with Soledad Arias, Roberto Behar and Rosario Marquardt, Marta Chilandron, Juan Raul Hoyos, Silvana Lacarra, Artur Lescher, Karina Peisajovich, David E. Peterson and Ana Tiscornia

AMY ALONSO GALLERY

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

ART FUSION

1 NE 40th St., Miami
305-573-5730
www.artfusiongallery.com
July 1 through September 21:
"Art of Engagement" with various artists
Reception July 9, 7-10 p.m.

ARTSEEN GALLERY

2215 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-237-3559
http://artseenspace.wordpress.com/
Call gallery for exhibition information.

BAKEHOUSE ART COMPLEX

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

BAS FISHER INVITATIONAL

180 NE 39th St., #210, Miami
By appointment: info@basfisherinvitational.com
www.basfisherinvitational.com

BASHA GALLERY

795 NE 125th St., North Miami
305-891-4624
www.bashagallery.net
Call gallery for exhibition information

BERNICE STEINBAUM GALLERY

3550 N. Miami Ave., Miami
305-573-2700
www.bernicesteinbaumgallery.com
Through August 31:
"Greenhouse" with Maria Fernanda Cardoso, Jimmy Fike, Nancy Friedemann, Enrique Gomez de Molina, Juan Griego, Courtney Johnson, Cal Lane, Holly Lynton, Carsten Meier, Mark Messersmith, Carol Prusa,

Karen Rifas, Gina Ruggeri, Lisa Switalski, Alex Trimino, Joe Waters, and Valeria Yamamoto

BLACK SQUARE GALLERY

2248 NW 1st Pl., Miami
786-999-9735
www.blacksquaregallery.com
Through July 5:
"Where Do Birds Go Off to Die?" by Taro Hattori

BORINQUEN ART GALLERY

100 NE 38th St., Miami
305-491-1526
www.borinquenhealth.org
Ongoing:
"Group Show" with H-Allen Benowitz, François Gracia, Clarice de Souza, David Tupper, Sharon Dash, and Hector Maldonado

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

CAROL JAZZAR CONTEMPORARY ART

158 NW 91st St., Miami Shores
305-490-6906
www.cjazzart.com
By appointment: carol@cjazzart.com
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CARIDI GALLERY

758 NE 125th St., North Miami
786-202-5554
www.caridigallery.com
"Group Show" with various artist from Argentina and Mexico

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www.visual.org
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305-292-0411
www.charest-weinberg.com
Through August 20:
"Contact" by Sheree Hovsepian

CHRISTOPHER MIRO GALLERY

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305-741-0058
www.christophermirogallery.com
Through July 2:
"Secrets, Regrets, Joys, and Truths" by Vanessa Craan, Nathan Delinois, Todd Elliot Mansa, and Nicole Ricca



Nicolas Arehart, *IKEA Object 3, IKEA table top and legs, 2010, at Praxis International Art.*

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www.chirinosanchez.com
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CURATOR'S VOICE ART PROJECTS

2509 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
786-357-0568
www.curatorsvoiceartprojects.com
Through September 10:
"All About Me" by Rosario Bond

DANIEL AZOULAY GALLERY

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Store # 120 Buena Vista Blvd., Miami
305-576-1977
www.danielazoulaygallery.com
Call gallery for exhibition information

DAVID CASTILLO GALLERY

2234 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-573-8110
www.davidcastillogallery.com
July 9 through August 6:
"DCG Open" with various artists
Reception July 9, 6 to 9 p.m.

DIANA LOWENSTEIN FINE ARTS

2043 N. Miami Ave., Miami
305-576-1804
www.dlfinearts.com
Call gallery for exhibition information

DIASPORA VIBE GALLERY

3938 NE 39th St., Miami
305-536-7801
www.diasporavibevirtualgallery.com
Call gallery for exhibition information

DIMENSIONS VARIABLE

171 NE 38th St., Miami
305-607-5527
www.dimensionsvariable.net
dv@dimensionsvariable.net
Through August 27:
"Absenteeism" by Magnus Sigurdarson

DINA MITRANI GALLERY

2620 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
786-486-7248
www.dinamitraniartgallery.com
Call gallery for exhibition information

DORSCH GALLERY

151 NW 24th St., Miami
305-576-1278
www.dorschgallery.com
Through July 9:
"Noise Field" with Raphael Lyon, Martin Murphy, Kylin O'Brien, Odalis Valdivieso, Sam Weston, Antonia Wright

DOT FIFTYONE ART SPACE

51 NW 36th St., Miami
305-573-9994
www.dotfiftyone.com
Through August 8:
"Universal Melancholy" by Liliane Eberle

"Universal Melancholy" by Liliane Eberle

EDGE ZONES CONTEMPORARY ART

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FREDRIC SNITZER GALLERY

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305-448-8976
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Through July 11:
"Merzbau - Now" with Maria Martinez-Cañas, John Bock, Michael Vasquez, Christian Holstad, Ida Ekblad, Bert Rodriguez, Mauricio Gonzalez, Yasue Maetake and Jose Bedia

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GALLERY I/D

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305-778-4568

www.galleryid.com

Call gallery for exhibition information

GARY NADER FINE ART

62 NE 27th St., Miami
305-576-0256

www.garynader.com

Through August 31:

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GIOVANNI ROSSI FINE ART

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

www.giovannirossifineart.com

Call gallery for exhibition information

HARDCORE ARTS CONTEMPORARY SPACE

3326 N. Miami Ave., Miami
www.hardcoreartcontemporary.com

info@hardcoreartmiami.com

Contact gallery for exhibition information

HAROLD GOLEN GALLERY

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

www.haroldgolengallery.com

Through July 2:

"The Fabulous Bunny Yeager" by Bunny Yeager
July 9 through August 16:

"The Hukilau 10 Year Anniversary Fine Art Tiki Show" with Kevin Kidney, Jody Daily, Shag, Skot Olsen, Kirsten Easthope, Tiki Hana, N! Satterfield, Roberto Jimenez, Aaron Marshall, John Kissee, Derek Yaniger, Ken Bernstein, Michelle Bickford, El Gato Gomez, Atomick Kitty, Jason Snyder, Ken Ruzic, Sam Gambino, Tom Fownner, Al Evans, Nat Reed, Jessica Caster, Richey Fahey, and Joe and Donella Vitale

Reception July 9, 7 to 11 p.m.

ICON ART

147 NW 36th St, Miami
(305) 576-4266

www.iconartimages.com

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JG PLATFORM GALLERY

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www.jgplatform.com

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46 NW 36th St, Miami
305-448-2060

www.kavachnina.com

Through July 9:

"Contemporary Alternatives" with Salustiano, Angela Lergo, Alonso Mateo, Marco Nereo Rotelli, John La Huis, Xu De Qi, Zeng Yi, Alejandro Leyva, Esteban Leyva, Ronald Westerhuis, Sydia Reyes, Daniel Escardo, Lili(ana), Evelyn Valdirio, Carmen Maza del Mazo, Emil Alzamora

Through August 10:

"I Was There" with Pepe Morán, Rafaela Rodriguez, David Palacín, and Estala Garcia

KELLEY ROY GALLERY

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305-447-3888

www.kelleyroygallery.com

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48 NW 29th St., Miami
305-200-3047

www.kiwiartsgroup.com

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LELIA MORDOCH GALLERY

2300 N. Miami Ave., Miami
786-431-1506

www.galerieleliamordoch.com

Through July 16:

"De La Geometrie Oganique Des Etoiles et Des Abeilles" by Carolina Sardi

Through July 30:

"Kinetic" with Julio Le Parc, Horacio Garcia Rossi, and Patrick Hughes

LOCUST PROJECTS

155 NE 38th St., Miami
305-576-8570

www.locustprojects.org

Call gallery for exhibition information

MAOR GALLERY

3030 NE 2nd Ave., Miami
305-573-9995

http://maormiami.org/

Through July 29:

"Life Labyrinth" by Anica Shpilberg

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
305-757-6000

www.miamiartspace.com

Through July 10:

"Twenty Twelve: 20(12)" with Reinier Gamboa, Brian Gefen, Alvaro Iliarbe, David Marsh, Raul Perdomo, Johnny Robles, Oliver Sanchez, George Sanchez-Calderon, John Sevigny, David Tamargo, Eric Torriente, and Kiki Valdes

Closing Reception July 10, 6 to 11 p.m.

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Martin Murphy, *Encrypted Tablet*, carved limestone, video scan, LED light, audio, 2011, at Dorsh Gallery.

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Through August 31:

"Summer Heat Gallery Exhibition" with Burhan Dogancay, Dinorah Delfin, Haruna Sato, Phil Kyo Jang, Kwon Soon Ik, and Jean Janssem

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www.norman-liebman-studio.com

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305-571-9036

www.oascaniogallery.com

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OHWOW

3100 NW 7th Ave., Miami

305-633-9345

www.oh-wow.com

Through August 27:

"Post 9-11" with Dan Colen, Terence Koh, Hanna Liden, Nate Lowman, Adam McEwen, Ryan McGinley, Agathe Snow, Dash Snow, and Aaron Young

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2450 NW 2nd Ave., Miami

305-573-2400

www.panamericanart.com

Through July 23:

"Uprooted/Transmigrations" with Luis Cruz Azaceta, Abel Barroso, David Boxer, Tania Bruguera, Los Carpinteros, Humberto Castro, Hernan Dompe, Edouard Duval Carrie, Carlos Estevez, Ernesto Javier Fernandez Zalacain, Yaya Firpo, Carlos Gallardo, Milton George, Carlos Gonzalez, KCHO, Jorge Lopez Pardo, The Merger, Sandra Ramos, and Graciela Sacco



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 Ongoing:
 "First Lady Fantasy & Neon Art" by David Mayberry

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 305-407-8131
 www.thelunchboxgallery.com
 Through August 6:
 "Corrosion" by Rodolfo Vanmarcke and "War By Children" by P.J. Lazo

UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI PROJECTS SPACE
 2200 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
 305-284-2542
 July 9 through 21:
 "Metrouroboros" by Ashley Ford
Reception July 9, 6 p.m.

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

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

YELEN ART GALLERY
 250 NW 23rd St., Unit 306, Miami
 954-235-4758
 www.yeelenart.com
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MUSEUM & COLLECTION EXHIBITS

ARTCENTER/SOUTH FLORIDA
 800 Lincoln Rd., Miami Beach
 305-674-8278
 www.artcentersf.org
 Through July 10:
 "Iron Fist in a Velvet Glove" with Hugo Moro, David Lerio, Damian Sarno, Natasha Duwin, Venessa Monokian, Nina Surel, Adriana Carvalho, and Augustina Woodgate
 July 15 through August 21:
 "GGG Presents the Pop Up" with various artists
Reception July 16, 7 to 10 p.m.

BASS MUSEUM OF ART
 2100 Collins Ave., Miami Beach
 305-673-7530
 www.bassmuseum.org
 Through October 16:
 "At the Same Time (Al Mismo Tiempo)" by Sandra Gamarra

CIFO (Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation)
 1018 N. Miami Ave., Miami
 305-455-3380
 www.cifo.org
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DE LA CRUZ COLLECTION CONTEMPORARY ART SPACE
 23 NE 41st St., Miami
 305-576-6112
 www.delacruzcollection.org
 July 9:
 "Broadcast Against Recording" by Nicolas Lobo and Terrence Hannum
 Through July 9:
 "Amor Infinitus" by Kevin Arrow
Closing Reception July 9, 7 to 10 p.m.

FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY FROST ART MUSEUM
 10975 SW 17th St., Miami
 305-348-2890
 thefrost.fiu.edu
 Through August 14:
 "Rise of an Empire: Scenes of the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95" with various artists, and "Tribute to Japanese Splendor: The Art of the Temari" by Sharon Temari
 Through August 21:
 "South Florida Cultural Consortium Exhibition" with



David E. Peterson, Volume and Shadow 3, acrylic, mdf, 2011, at Alejandra von Hartz Gallery.

Cooper, Michael Genovese, Francis Bishop Good, Nolan Haan, Sibel Kocabasi, Beatriz Monteavaro, Glexis Novoa, Jonathan Rockford, Bert Rodriguez, FriendsWithYou, TM Sisters, and Tonietta Walters
 Through September 11:
 "East/West: Visually Speaking" with Cai Lei, the Luo Brothers, Ma Baozhong, Cang Xin, Shen JingDong, Shi Liang, Sun Ping, Tang Zhigang, Zhang Hongtu, and Zhong Biao
 Through September 18:
 "Who's Counting and Temporal State of Being" with David Hodge and Hi-Jin Hodge
 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
 Through October 23:
 "Sacred Stories, Timeless Tales: Mythic Perspectives in World Art from the Permanent Collection" with various artists
 Through April 22, 2012:
 "Women, Windows, and the Word: Diverging

Perspectives on Islamic Art" with various artists
 Ongoing:
 "Frank Paulin: An American Documentarian" by Frank Paulin

MIAMI ART MUSEUM
 101 W. Flagler St., Miami
 305-375-3000
 www.miamiartmuseum.org
 Ongoing:
 "Between Here and There: Modern and Contemporary Art from the Permanent Collection"
 Through August 28:
 "Anchor Gallery" by Mark Dion
 Through July 31:
 "Focus Gallery" by Mark Boulos
 July 17 through October 16:
 "A Day Like Any Other" by Rivane Neuenschwander
Reception July 16, 6 to 9 p.m.
 July 9:
 "Second Saturdays are Free for Families: Wood You? Could You?" by Leonardo Drew
Reception July 9, 1 to 4 p.m.

MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART
 770 NE 125th St., North Miami
 305-893-6211
 www.mocanomi.org
 Through September 4:
 "Any Ever" by Ryan Trecartin

THE MARGULIES COLLECTION
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 www.margulieswarehouse.com
 Closed until November 10

THE RUBELL FAMILY COLLECTION
 95 NW 29th St., Miami
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 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

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Big Art, Big Ideas at MAM

Interactive will be the most apt description of the big summer exhibition opening at the Miami Art Museum (101 W. Flagler St.) on **Saturday, July 16** at 6:00 p.m., for **“Rivane Neuenschwander: A Day Like Any Other.”** The Brazilian artist will unveil three pieces to the Miami public. One is *I Wish Your Wish*, which involves thousands of ribbons with wishes written on them that visitors wear and eventually replace with new wishes. For *First Love*, a police sketch artist will be on hand to try and reproduce first loves based on visitors’ descriptions. The third includes leaking buckets and recycled water. The show comes from the New Museum of Contemporary Art in New York City. Admission is \$8; www.miamiartmuseum.org.

History Mixed with Wine and Music

HistoryMiami has been letting us in on fascinating aspects of Miami’s past for a good long time now, but sometimes it’s fun to talk about it with fellow travelers as well. Which is why on **Wednesday, July 6**, from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m., HistoryMiami’s **Wine and Live Music Wednesdays** is the place to be. On this evening, the live sounds will come courtesy of the Oscar Fuentes Combo. It’s also a good time to check out the summer exhibit “Aviation in Miami: the First 100 Years,” which runs through July. For wine and snacks, the cost is \$15, or \$5 per glass, at 101 W. Flagler St.; rsvp@historymiami.org; 305-375-1492 .



The One and Only Fourth

The Fourth of July only comes around once a year (on **Monday, July 4**), and only once a year do the fireworks explode so spectacularly over Biscayne Bay. Which is why **America’s Birthday Bash at Bayfront Park** (301 Biscayne Blvd.) should be a mandatory destination. It’s free. There’s a kids’ zone with inflatable slides, a carousel, and face painting. Festivities start at 3:00 p.m., then the actual fireworks start at 9:00 p.m. No bottles, cans, or personal fireworks allowed.

Drama: It Translates in Spanish and English

It seems only natural and appropriate that this year the **International Hispanic Theatre Festival of Miami**, the most respected and largest of its kind, will take over the stages of the Arsht Center for the Performing Arts (1300 Biscayne Blvd.) for many of its productions. Now in its 26th year, the festival will kick off on **Thursday, July 7**, with a Chilean work, *The Raw, the Cooked, the Rotten*. In fact, Chile and its playwrights will be the focus of this year’s month-long festival that concludes on **Sunday, July 24**, but which will also highlight the latest productions from Miami’s own Teatro Avante and Prometeo companies. For a full schedule, times, and prices, go to www.teatroavante.com.

Print on Film: Inside the New York Times

What’s black and white and read all over? Eons ago that was a fun pun for kids. Today it’s a reminder that daily newspapers are struggling. So how is the Gray Lady, the august *New York Times*, handling the age of the Internet and the decline of print? Find out at Wynwood’s O Cinema (90 NW 29th St.) when they screen Andrew Rossi’s new documentary *Page One: Inside the New York Times*, from **Friday, June 8 through Sunday, June 10**. What is the paper doing to remain vital and relevant? What do interesting writers — and characters — such as media critic David Carr have to say about it all? We’d like to know. Visit www.o-cinema.org for times, including matinees and evening screenings.

After Art Walk, Do Something Extraordinary

Have you been to Villa 221? That’s the beautifully restored old mansion complex at 221 NE 17th St. in the Edgewater neighborhood, which opened earlier



Even Bigger Than Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey

Minimalism has its place, but spectacular production usually wins most hearts and minds. Which is why Cirque de Soleil has been one of the most successful road shows in history. Now, in collaboration with that organization, comes **Cirque Éloize iD**, described as a hip-hop, streetwise, acrobatic-theatrical *extravaganza*. There will be break dancers, in-line skaters, contortionists, wild video — pretty much kinetic entertainment from start to finish. This Cirque arrives at the Arsht Center on **Tuesday, July 26**, and is scheduled to run through **Sunday, September 4**. Go to www.arshtcenter.org for various ticket prices and times.

this year. It’s a special-events venue like no other, with two elegant Mediterranean Revival mansions linked together, plus sprawling patios and lush gardens. Normally it’s used for exclusive, private affairs. But on **Saturday, July 9**, **Villa 221** opens its doors to all at no charge when Reset Miami hosts its **Art Walk After Party**, capping off the Saturday art events in Wynwood and the Design District. There’ll be more art to see and hear, and music by Switchcraft, C/B Radio, and others. Drink specials, too. This is a chance for ordinary people to visit an extraordinary place. For free.

Direct from Cuba: Bellas Beats

Although Miami Light Project has new digs in the Goldman Warehouse in Wynwood, for the Cuban rap group **Doble Filo**, the organization wants to keep the music (and the dance) out in the open, at the North Beach Bandshell (7275 Collins Ave., Miami Beach) on **Saturday, July 9**. For Doble Filo’s U.S. debut, the band will be joined by singing sensation Osdalgia, also arriving on our shores for the first time. There’s no better place to move and groove to some of the world’s best beats than this renovated venue. Cost for the evening is \$20. Tickets online at www.miamilightproject.com, or call 305-576-4350.

Mango Madness, Version 19.0

Even if you don’t have your own personal mango tree in your yard, friends who do have likely already delivered some to your door this time of year. But on **Saturday, July 9 and Sunday, July 10** at Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden (10901 Old Cutler Rd., Coral Gables), it will be time to completely indulge yourself in the luscious fruit, for the 19th annual **International Mango Festival**. There’s nothing else like it in the world, with a mango auction, a mango brunch, cooking demonstrations (and sampling), many lectures, and tree sales. On both days it runs from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. For a complete schedule go to www.fairchildgarden.org or call 305-667-1651.

Summer Flicks at Gusman

John Hughes passed away in 2009, leaving a gaping hole where once stood movies about kids of a certain age of a certain era in anywhere USA. But his legacy — films such as *Ferris Bueller’s Day Off*, *The Breakfast Club*, and of course *Sixteen Candles* — remain memorials to a life once lived in 1980s America. The last film will be screened as part of the **Flickin’ Summer** series at the Gusman Center, 174 E. Flagler St., at 7:00 p.m. on **Thursday, July 28**. Molly Ringwald, her haircut, and the guy who never really got the girl will be back, and we can’t wait to revisit it all again. Go to www.gusmancenter.org for more information.

Compiled by BT contributor Anne Tschida. Please send information and images to calendar@biscaynetimes.com.

Biscayne Crime Beat

Compiled by Derek McCann

With this issue, Crime Beat is proud to introduce police reports from North Miami and Aventura. We're doing it as a public service and also because, well, we thought it was a shame that criminals in the northern reaches of the county were not getting the same level of attention as those in Miami. After all, they can be just as creative, vicious, and stupid. And we have the stories to prove it.

Second Thoughts About This New Neighborhood

600 Block of NE 139th Street

Moving can be traumatic, but at the same time, it can be symbolic of one's life changing for the better — new people, a new

environment, and that sort of thing. These two victims were unloading their U-Haul and, within a minute after dropping off some items in their living room, heard glass shattering. They ran outside and found that someone had broken the side window of the car and taken a purse from the front seat. So much for positive symbolism.

Fashion Criminal Turns Carjacker

1700 Block of NE 116th Road

Just because you have an assigned parking space, don't assume it's safe. A woman parked her Pontiac Grand Prix in her apartment parking lot. As she exited the vehicle, a man, dressed all in black, right down to his gloves — fashionista sociopath — pointed a gun at her and told

her to lie on the ground. He then grabbed the keys from her hand and promptly stole the car. The woman got up and ran after the speeding car, but the man got away. (Dear readers, please don't chase after gun-wielding carjackers.) Police conducted a search of the area with no result.

Charge It To My Friend's Account

Aventura Mall

Victim made a purchase at the World Phone kiosk, but the sales associate neglected to return her credit card. When victim was out of sight, the sales associate walked over to the adjacent AT&T kiosk and made a \$799 iPhone purchase. He then signed the credit card receipt. He tried to make another purchase at T-Mobile, but the card was declined. Still determined to burn through the victim's credit limit, he ordered food at the Tango Grill, but they denied the card. When approached by the victim a few minutes later, the suspect claimed he did not have the card. When police



were called, he told them he'd made the purchases with the victim's blessing. Police arrested him. (Interesting side note: Police report stated the suspect was left-handed and possibly under the influence of alcohol and nicotine. We thought there was no smoking in the mall.)

Change We Can Believe In

1000 Block of NE 126th Street

An unknown suspect gained entry into this victim's apartment by breaking in the door. That was the second time in two weeks that her apartment had been broken into. As far as what was taken: 75 cents.

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Not enough for a candy bar, but it might buy a stick of gum. Replacing the door will cost more. Victim should think about hiding her loose change in the future.

More Low-End Theft

400 Block of NE 125th Street

Police in an unmarked vehicle observed a man pacing around a red Toyota. They then saw the man reach inside the vehicle through an open window and remove an item. The officers got out of their car and approached the suspect, who immediately screamed, "I only took a dollar!" Police made contact with the victim, who stated she had a dollar in her cup holder. For a dollar bill, suspect spent a night in jail and was charged with a felony. Sadly for him, there are no vending machines in those cells. And even if there were, police probably entered the dollar into evidence, leaving the suspect to only dream of what might have been.

Secure Your Damn Wall Units

500 Block of NE 39th Street

Air-conditioning window units are old school. They are also old school for Boulevard scum. We have been telling Miamians this for years. A perpetrator pulled the

window unit out of a residence and entered the home, ransacking it and stealing several items. The most unfortunate part of this preventable burglary — the owner could have installed security bars around his unit — is that the home's pet cat is now missing. People, please secure your wall AC units or be prepared to lose the family kitty and other prized possessions.

Finders Keepers, Losers Weepers

3401 N. Miami Ave.

While in Marshall's, victim made a call on her iPhone. After completing the call, she placed the phone on the child seat of her cart and continued shopping. She forgot about the phone, paid for her items, and left the store. She realized her error a few minutes later and ran back, but to no avail. It seems if you lose or misplace something of value in this town, it is gone forever. Does anyone even remember what a "lost and found" is?

I Think Their Names Were Thelma and Louise

NE 2nd Avenue and 10th Street

A car with a female driver pulled up next to a man strolling down 2nd Avenue. The

man, seeing an attractive female calling to him, leaned into the open driver's side window. With that, the woman grabbed the watch off his wrist and attempted to drive away. The man, however, managed to get the watch back and walked away. The female suspect drove off, did a U-turn, and called the victim over again. This time the man resisted her charms, but was unexpectedly tripped from behind by another woman, who struggled with him until she got the watch. The second woman then jumped into the car.

Dollar Drama

500 Block of NE 81st Street

Four suspects packed items into large baskets at the Dollar Store. Nothing wrong with that, except the volume was enormous. Turns out, these were not legit customers, but rather criminal masterminds at work — or so they thought. The four suspects left the store without paying for the items and were stopped by Dollar Store security. A struggle ensued. One of the suspects pulled out pepper spray and attempted to use it on the security guard. This

allowed the suspects to enter a waiting vehicle. (It used to be that waiting vehicles were only for bank robberies, but now they're using them for Dollar Store heists?) It took five suspects to pull off this caper. They got away with \$50 worth of goods. Does anyone see a theme in this month's Crime Beat?

Ladies' Man Loses Wheels, Potential Foursome

Biscayne Boulevard and NE 61st Street

Man picked up three women in Little Haiti, thinking some Miami-style loving was in order. He stopped at a gas station to make a purchase to help him through his pending night of debauchery. (Condoms? A twelve-pack of Schlitz? Snickers?) He left the key in the ignition because he wanted his new girlfriends to be kept cool by the AC. They promptly stole the vehicle. And with that, the victim's night of sexual healing became a night of police reports and a bus ride home. Men, for the last time: It isn't always your good looks these ladies are after.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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A Harmonious Place

Maurice Gibb Memorial Park is a fitting tribute to the late Bee Gee, and an idyllic respite from the buzz of city life

By **Jim W. Harper**
BT Contributor

The term “super group” is thrown around much too freely in the annals of rock and pop, but if the list were whittled down to only the most deserving of the title, the Bee Gees would still make the cut. From their first hits in the late 1960s — “To Love Somebody,” “Massachusetts,” “New York Mining Disaster 1941” — through the disco landslide of the 1970s, to their induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1997, the Bee Gees were never far from public consciousness.

The group, which consisted of big brother Barry and twins Maurice and Robin Gibb, spent a lot of that time in South Florida, recording at Criteria Studios (now the Hit Factory) in North Miami and just plain living here.

So it only makes sense that, more than four decades after their rise to stardom, the Bee Gees are stayin’ alive as a result of recent references on *Saturday Night Live*, while new and true fans must eventually make their way to South Florida to pay tribute. A good place to start would be Maurice Gibb Memorial Park in Miami Beach, named in honor of the only member of the group who is no longer with us.

Maurice Gibb was known to frequent the formerly named Island View Park to enjoy its lovely bayfront. (The Gibb brothers owned their own studio just a block from the park.) After his tragic death in 2003, the City of Miami Beach approved the park’s name change. Seventy-five thousand dollars in improvements later, the park was re-dedicated in March 2007, at a ceremony attended by the Gibb family, including surviving brothers Barry and Robin.

You might just miss Maurice’s tribute if you blink, but it’s worth finding. The three-acre park shares its green space with the two-story office of the city’s marine patrol, a parking lot, and a boat ramp. The ramp is free, and it’s also the only open-access kayak launch in this section of Biscayne Bay.

The best part of the park is the view. The south side shows a Venetian Causeway bridge that leads to Belle Isle, but the northwest view offers an expansive look at the bay. A handful of yachts near the shore make it even more picturesque. You can actually sit on the seawall and watch fish swim by. There are very few spots anywhere on the bay where you can do this — without trespassing, that is.

The most touching part of the park’s commemorative aspect is hidden behind



BT photos by Jim W. Harper

The park is just three acres but feels bigger thanks to the broad views of Biscayne Bay.

hedges near the seawall. At first I walked right past without even seeing it, because the memorial sits flat on the ground. The mosaic made out of glamour glass has three circles in primary colors representing Peace (yellow), Love (red), and Tranquility (blue). Inside the blue circle is a bronze plaque with an inscription from the wife and two children of Maurice Gibb.

This mosaic, installed by Mariel Hautoux, is the second one in this location. The original, bumpier mosaic was hacked and hammered by fans wanting to take home a memento. The redesign was flattened to make it harder for thieves to snatch pieces of the tiles. The artwork (along with other commemorative works in the park) was designed by landscape architect Dale Bryant.

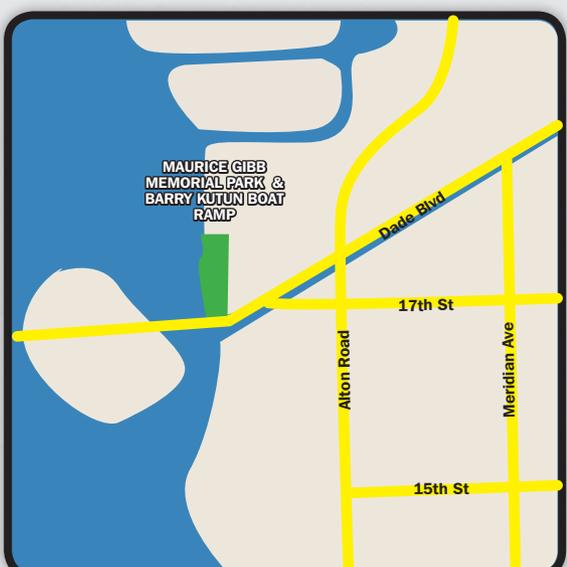
The name “Gibb” cannot be found near the mosaic, but it does appear in two other places. In the southeast corner, where most people drive by, stands a pale-gray granite carving about four feet high, inscribed with the park’s new name. It appears to be a wave with a porthole, and it was also designed to mimic “Mo,” Maurice’s nickname. Look at the entire carving to see the “M” in cursive and add the “O” from the porthole.

The other spot with the Gibb name is the plaque outside the playground. The ample play area is surrounded by an attractive fence with decorative columns, and nearby are some interesting Art Deco lampposts. An overhead tarp covers most of the playground’s equipment, and my favorite parts are the plastic, life-size bongos for kids who feel like making music.



This commemorative mosaic replaced one damaged by Bee Gees fans seeking souvenirs.

Around the curved pathway are entrances to a boardwalk and mangrove restoration area. Fishing must be popular here. Maintained by Miami-Dade County, this boardwalk is shaded by some of the few remaining mangrove trees that used to dominate the natural shoreline. Strangely, the trees here are fenced in by chicken wire. Are they keeping the trees in or the birds out? Is



**MAURICE GIBB
MEMORIAL PARK &
BARRY KUTUN BOAT RAMP**

Park Rating

🌴🌴🌴🌴🌴

**Purdy Avenue at 18th Street
Miami Beach
305-673-7730**

Hours: 7 a.m.-10 p.m.

Picnic tables: Yes

Barbecues: No

Picnic pavilions: No

Tennis courts: No

Athletic fields: No

Night lighting: Yes

Swimming pool: No

Playground: Yes



Sit on the seawall, see the fish, savor the bay.



Barry and Robin Gibb dedicating the park to their brother.



Can you see Maurice's nickname "Mo" in the marker?

there some kind of problem with chickens going fishin'?

As you saunter from the boardwalk to the seawall, be sure to look down at the rocks in the bay, as bright sponges are in evidence. Fish appreciate the hiding places here in addition to under the mangrove roots.

This park seems to be popular with bench sitters and sleepers, and there are a few picnic spots in the shade as well as some in full sun by the bay. The restrooms are

another nice feature, especially for a park this size. They are in the marine patrol building.

The Barry Kutun Boat Ramp, which is free, offers daytime parking for boat trailers. Everybody appreciates a freebie, and this place gets crowded on weekends. The ramp bears the name of a former state legislator who, in 2006, was laid low by a sex scandal (when will these pols ever learn?) and it has an ugly sign to match the ignominy. A strip of wood

with the ramp's name stands behind a huge green drainage pipe and on top of a utility box. Not pretty.

Although they share a parking lot, the ramp is not officially part of Maurice Gibb Memorial Park. And it's not operated by the city's parks and recreation department or by the marine patrol. In fact no one I called at the City of Miami Beach could tell me who is responsible for it. It's just there.

The best way to enjoy Maurice's park is to follow in his footsteps. Leaving behind the recording studio and his worries, he would come here to meditate and to soak in the beauty of South Florida. One can see why. Words don't do it justice. (But, then, words are all I have...) The park is too much heaven. And that ain't just jive talkin'.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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Worse Than Their Bite

What to do when your dog barks uncontrollably

By Lisa Hartman
BT Contributor

There are dogs that bark, and then there are dogs that bark so out of control you think your ear drums may shatter. Ironically, many of the worst barking cases seem to come from the tiniest dogs.

There are many reasons dogs bark, and determining why they bark — and what reinforces the behavior — is key to the solution. For many dogs, it is greeting visitors at the house. A ring at the doorbell sends your dog into overdrive, barking at the door and pouncing on your dinner guests. Other dogs may bark when left alone. Still others seem to bark their heads off nonstop, as if trying to communicate something of great importance.

A dog barking at visitors or passersby is natural and normal. But when a dog's bark gets uncontrollable, we must examine why the behavior exists at all, and acknowledge that the dog owner, no less than the dog, may be in need of training.

There are many ways to curb excessive barking and, as with most problems, a multifaceted approach works best. For starters, you can start desensitizing your dog to the doorbell by practicing ringing and knocking at the door. While standing in the house with him, knock on the door, then give him a reward — a high-value treat or a toy the

dog is crazy about — regardless of any barking he may do.

After many repetitions, you can start moving away from the door to give the reward (laying it on the throw rug in the corner, for example). Ring the doorbell, then run to the place that will be his treat spot. Eventually bring a friend to practice real trials with someone on the outside of the door. Repeat dozens of times until your dog realizes that, when the doorbell rings, he gets chicken!

Another helpful and fun way to curb barking is to have the dog pick up something. Many dogs are comforted and quieted by holding things in their mouths, and stuffing their mouths will bring the barking down, too. Have a tennis ball, toy, or dishrag near the door, and when the doorbell rings, immediately point to the object and say, "Get the toy!" This is an example of training the dog to perform an alternate behavior to replace the one we don't like. Practice this hundreds of times, until it becomes second nature for the dog.

Some dogs bark because there is nothing better to do, or it is just a habit. Exercise and more mental stimulation can combat this "boredom barking." Take your dog for real exercise and play dates, give them chew-toy puzzles they must work food out of, teach them new tricks. The idea is to consistently make their life more exciting.



What about dogs who bark because they are lonely? Dogs are made to live in packs, and many are not prepared to live with busy humans who go to work every day. Practicing leaving them alone, along with providing them with "busy work" while you are gone, will help Lonely Rovers quiet down.

When practicing home-alone training, you want the dog to see you come and go as if it is no big deal. Walk into the bedroom and come back to where your dog is. Walk into the bathroom and right back out. Go get the mail and return. Do not look at the dog or make a show of your entering and exiting the house. Make sure the dog has an activity or toy he really likes to keep him occupied.

The out-of-control barking dog: Unless the dog is truly panicking or neglected, dogs that bark incessantly are usually being rewarded for it. One of my clients, a small Maltese, has such a high-pitched, ear-shattering bark that my ears rang after the first lesson.

I then learned how such a young puppy's barking got so out of control. For one, the owners let the behavior go for months, hoping the problem would correct itself; now it's a bad habit. The owners yelled at the dog, which he doesn't understand. Yelling at the dog is attention, and therefore reinforcing. The dog was never taught an alternative behavior.

In a sense, dogs are a lot like children. The squeaky wheel gets the cookie. We have all seen human children wear

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their parents down with whining and nagging ("Mommy, mommy, mommy, mommy..."). Eventually the mother tries to stave off a conniption and answers the child, or relents and gives the child something. The child thus learns that throwing a fit is the way to get what he or she wants.

Many times people unknowingly trigger a dog's behavior by their own actions, so my first plan of attack in the case of the manic Maltese was to change the owners' behavior. They were free to lavish attention on the dog. However, if the dog

opened his mouth and barked, they were to immediately stop petting him, put him down, and walk away from him.

The dog was now left with a harness and leash dragging at all times. (A harness being better and safer, because it produces less tension on the neck.) When house workers walked in and the dog started raging, someone was to immediately pick up the leash and, while holding it low, apply light pressure. If he kept raging, they were to pull him gently backward, away from the visitor. If he

barked at his handlers, they were to tell him "too bad" and bounce away.

Raging was now unacceptable, and made people move away from him. He would only be spoken to or touched when he was quiet. I eventually brought food rewards into the picture, first to distract him from barking, then as a reward for *not* raging.

Furthermore he was not allowed to greet visitors alone while he was "in training." A human had to be there to work on the problem, and practice his or her own

new way of acting, too. The uncontrollable barking improved after only one lesson, but follow-ups were necessary for progress. As with most cases, I was training the owner as well as the dog.

Lisa Hartman is a dog-friendly trainer, behavior specialist, and author of Dial a Dynamite Dog. You can reach her at lisa@lisathedogtrainer.com, or visit www.pawsitivelypetsonline.com.

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The Gall of It All

Caterpillar poop has stained the reputation of the otherwise desirable black olive tree

By **Jeff Shimonski**
BT Contributor

Galls are abnormal growths that occur on young or newly forming plant tissue. These structures are usually initiated by insects that feed on the plant or lay their eggs in the plant tissue. The plant responds by producing a kind of barricade to surround the resulting insect damage or larvae. Simple galls are just slight swellings or abnormal growths such as concave leaf spots, blisters, or rolled-up leaves. Complex galls are immediately apparent and can look like small fruit or odd-shaped bumps.

Many different shapes and types of galls are commonly seen on the foliage or twigs of our oak trees. One complex plant gall you can go outside and see right now is found on the black olive tree, *Bucida buceras*.

Now, black olive trees have nothing in common with the European olive tree, *Olea europea*, that produces the edible olive that we use in our salads or find on top of pizzas. The black olive does produce a very small, nondescript fruit, but many of these trees, while they are blooming, grow string-bean-like structures from 4 to 12 inches long.

Sometimes they are long and straight; other times they can curl up. These are galls that are induced when a certain species of mite feeds on the fruit of the black olive. The frequently curled shape of these galls is also the reason

oxhorn bucida was once a common name for the tree.

The black olive tree is a great plant for our landscape. The wood is quite dense and wind tolerant, the tree grows just fine in salty situations, and it tolerates our alkaline soil conditions without needing supplemental fertilizer. On the down side, they often produce dark brown stains on the concrete below. (Many species of trees, like our black olives and live oaks, have tannins or other compounds in them. When their leaves and flowers drop and happen to alight on concrete, stains will occur, especially when the foliage is wet.)

Many property owners object to black olive trees because of their propensity to stain. But take a closer look at the black olive trees in your neighborhood. Not all of them have stains, or really dark stains, underneath them.

Doug Caldwell from the University of Florida has documented that most of the staining associated with black olives is the result of frass (poop) from a certain species of caterpillar that feeds on the foliage, flowers, and the insides of the string-bean-like galls that can grow on this tree. This caterpillar apparently concentrates the tannins it eats and turns it into frass to be dropped eventually onto our patios and sidewalks.

Tannins and other similar compounds seem to protect plants from many species of insects because they are difficult to digest and can cause subsequent growth



BT photo by Jeff Shimonski

The string-bean-like galls as seen on many local black olives.

issues in those insects. Not many species can tolerate tannins, but those that can — like the caterpillar in question — have more food available to them owing to less competition from other insects.

These caterpillars seem to produce only one generation per year. However, if galls are produced via the activities of another species of insect — the aforementioned mite — the caterpillars will tunnel inside the galls and have several more generations, thereby prolonging the staining underneath the tree.

While inside the galls, the caterpillars will push the frass they manufacture outside the gall. Sometimes the frass will get stuck to the outside of the gall because it was mixed with the sticky silken threads produced by the caterpillars. Rain will make this mixture function as a tea bag and, as the water drips through it to the ground, more tannin will be released, further staining anything underneath.

So the theory is that if the galls can be prevented, the tree's propensity to stain could be curbed. This may be a difficult undertaking, one I don't think has ever been attempted. The challenge is to

be alert enough to spot the caterpillars when they are first on the tree and then attempt to control them.

Not all black olive trees bloom every year, but some trees have been known to bloom more than once a season, thereby attracting more mites who create more galls, inviting caterpillars to make more of a mess. Thus the black olive tree's bad rap.

On a related note, I'm noticing now that the rugose spiraling whitefly is really on the move and one of its preferred hosts seems to be black olive trees. Many of the black olives on U.S. 1 now look like they are covered with snow (whitefly), but not all of them. The black olives at Jungle Island, where I work, have received little damage from whitefly, so perhaps the general health of the trees has a lot to do with being vulnerable to insect infestations.

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

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

Natural High

Some feel-good suggestions for how to give back to the planet this summer

By Jim W. Harper
BT Contributor

Have you hugged your whale today? That profound experience awaits you in Key Largo thanks to the Marine Mammal Conservancy. This group of dedicated volunteers has been caring for sick pilot whales since early May, when 23 of them were stranded in the lower Keys.

You can volunteer to hold — or hug — a whale so that it can breathe, while veterinarians at the center treat them. They do this 24 hours a day, every day. At this point, volunteer fatigue is setting in, and only two whales remain in rehabilitation as of mid-June. Two others were successfully reintroduced to the wild, but the other 19 did not survive.

The reasons for such strandings are not fully understood, but it could simply be a case of a healthy pod following a sick leader. My theory is that these whales have become aware of how humans have treated them in recent history. In that case, suicide would be completely logical.

I visited the whales' pen for the first time in early June and was so captivated by the experience that I recruited several friends to join me the following week. The atmosphere is touching and reverent, like an outdoor church, as opposed to the carnival atmosphere at an aquatic theme park, where most people see

whales caged or from afar. The whale rescue experience is hands-on-flippers. The whales are clearly sick, intelligent, and resigned to the care of the people keeping them alive. Even if they don't survive, these whales will have taught people the invaluable lesson of how to be more humane.

This opportunity is just one of many ways we can give back to our natural world. Nature has blessed the U.S. with incredible resources from sea to shining sea, and to celebrate our nation's 235th birthday this month, what could be more American than volunteering? With all the budget-slashing going on around us, some area nonprofits may vanish without our support, and our community would become much poorer, indeed. Here are a few places I know that deserve your time and your money.

In Coconut Grove is a place where everyone can sail into the sunset — and I mean *everyone*. People with Down syndrome or autism, with missing limbs, or any other disability that keeps them isolated and landlocked can go to Shake-A-Leg Miami and touch the water. This aquatic-sports club, with an emphasis on reaching out to the underserved, is celebrating 20 years of success. I've been working part-time for them this year and it has been a very nurturing experience for me and for the children who go there to play. What could compare with canoeing to an island and catching sea horses?



Photo courtesy of the Marine Mammal Conservancy

If plants are more your thing, consider lending your hands to Urban Paradise Guild. I have volunteered with this young nonprofit at Oleta River State Park and in Liberty City, and it really enables you to get your hands dirty and see tangible, green results. Led by Sam Van Leer, UPG uses human power to restore native plants to parks and to bring green spaces to blighted neighborhoods. The nursery in Liberty City is one of those strange, only-in-Miami places. Surrounded on all sides by abandoned buildings, it feels like an oasis. Plants can grow anywhere.

What about doing something productive at the beach? ECOMB, the Environmental Coalition of Miami Beach, organizes regular clean-ups of the waterfront. Boy and Girl Scout troops do it, and picking up litter is something that every club should do because a) it's more fun to work as a group, and b) it will make you never want to litter again. Get your friends to put some sweat equity into removing trash for a day, and they will stop littering forever.

Another Beach organization that targets the aquatic community is the Surfrider Foundation. They have organized

Hands Across the Sand rallies locally to protest offshore oil, including one that just occurred on June 25, and they also clean up. If you enjoy surfing, paddling, or boating, you can be part of the solution, not the pollution.

As for the birds, the most original place to encounter them is at the Pelican Harbor Seabird Station. Located off the 79th Street Causeway, this place rescues birds and other nondomesticated animals. Many seabirds become entangled in monofilament fishing line and need time to heal. Some, such as the one I saw this year hanging upside down from a mangrove tree, don't make it, but others can be saved. In addition to volunteering, you can support the station by purchasing an original "I'm a Pelican Pal" T-shirt. Who needs another tacky South Beach tee when you can wear a pelican instead?

These are just a few of the many places where you can lend a hand or donate your money. For some others, check out the Environmental Education Providers of Miami-Dade County (www.eepmiami.org). This summer, do good while you have fun.

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Wines for the Grilling Season

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

By Bill Citara
BT Contributor

From their lofty perch way up in the cosmos, Beings of a Higher Intelligence ponder this strange, earthly ceremony they have come to call the Ritual Charring of the Flesh.

Each year, when the sun rises like a ball of flaming napalm and humid air congeals like atmospheric porridge, when acres of pasty skin are immodestly exposed, and the progeny of the terrestrial tribe are freed from their prisons known as “schools” to hang out at the mall, the ritual begins.

First, the males of the species, known in the vernacular as “Manly Men,” haul out a variety of sacramental devices: compressed bricks of toxic waste, rusting kettles caked with layers of rancid grease, bottles of vile-smelling flammable liquids, and the bent and broken implements of culinary torture.

These Manly Men gather said devices into areas known as “backyards,” where they chemically induce a small inferno in the greasy kettles and place at their center the bloody contents of plastic-wrapped Styrofoam packages, which are then incinerated into hunks of inedible carbon.

When this part of the ritual is complete, the remains are fed to the mates (“wives”) and progeny of the Manly Men, who pretend to be impressed with the blackened remains while performing actions known as “gagging” and demanding something called “Chinese take-out.”

Thus concludes the Ritual Charring of the Flesh. And since the average male

of the species’ skill at the grill is roughly equivalent to his ability to perform brain surgery with a dull butter knife while standing on his head in a swimming pool full of thumbtacks, Beings of a Higher Intelligence know that nothing makes the desiccated remains of cauterized animal protein go down easier than a bottle of good wine.

Vino just happens to have a few examples here. And being that the Ritual Charring of the Flesh is usually a blend of culinary incompetence, toxic products, and inferior tools, it seems only right that this month’s wines be blends, too. One thing you can be sure of with these wines, though: Regardless of how the flesh turns out, you’ll have something pretty good to drink.

To stand up to the smoke and char of the grill, not to mention the sauces and glazes typically applied to grilled foods, you need a white wine with a bit of complexity, relatively full body, and a flavor profile that channels both lean and ripe. All three of our whites nail those requirements and are excellent values as well.

The **14 Hands 2009 “Hot to Trot”** white blend pairs Chardonnay with Pinot Gris to create a rich, creamy-textured wine whose aromas of ripe peaches, pears, and apricots follow through onto the palate, where they’re balanced by a crisp, lemony acidity that keeps the whole thing from becoming cloying.

Our other two summer grilling whites come at that crucial fruit-acid balance from different directions but succeed equally. The **2009 Folie a Deux Mènage à Trois** is a seductive

threesome of Chardonnay (rich and citrusy), Muscat (plush and aromatic), and Chenin Blanc (lean and earthy). It will definitely knock your socks off.

The **La Difference 2010 Viognier-Muscat** takes two grapes known for their lush, aromatic, tropically fruity characteristics and gives them a steely, mineral backbone that really does make for the best of both worlds. Any of these wines would play well with meaty fish like salmon and tuna, with fish tacos and sammies, grilled chicken, veggies, stuff like that.

Still, when Manly Men get serious about ritually charring flesh, they’re usually talking beef and pig and big red wines. Like the **2009 d’Arenberg The Stump Jump**, a blend of Grenache, Shiraz, and Mourvèdre that kicks off with whiffs of cherries and plums, mushrooms, and black olives, then reveals a surprisingly well-balanced palate of bright red cherry and raspberry fruit with hints of spice and minerals. It’s a terrific barbecue wine.

A couple of wines from California anchor their blends with Zinfandel. The **Apothic 2009 Winemaker’s Blend** adds Syrah and Merlot to the mix. It’s ripe and toasty and straightforward, a perfect pour with burgers and grilled sausage. The nonvintage **Middle Sister**



Total Wine & More in North Miami Beach (14750 Biscayne Blvd., 305-354-3270) carries **La Difference** for an exceedingly reasonable \$7.99. The **Mènage à Trois** (\$9.97), **Stump Jump** (\$10.99), and **Apothic Red** (\$9.99) are available at the **North Miami Crown Wine and Spirits (12555 Biscayne Blvd., 305-892-9463)**, while **14 Hands** and **Middle Sister** can be had at the **North Miami Beach ABC Fine Wine & Spirits (16355 Biscayne Blvd., 305-944-6525)** for \$9.99 and \$10.99, respectively.

Rebel Red counters with Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon, giving it a dusky-plummy-spicy nose and slightly candied red cherry-strawberry fruit that’s robust enough for spicy barbecue, yet restrained enough for plain grilled chicken. It’s the kind of wine that both Manly Men and Beings of a Higher Intelligence might enjoy, whether ritually charring the flesh or cooking whatever the hell it is they eat up there.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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Daddy's Home!

More and more fathers are taking care of the kids while mommy goes off to work

By Crystal Brewe
BT Contributor

There is a YouTube music video called "Stay at Home Dad" by Jon Lajoie that has more than four million hits. I suggest you watch it sometime. It perfectly depicts my worldview.

I work evenings, weekends, early mornings, and holidays. I work in the arts. I know that sounds like I should have luxurious lunch breaks and breezy weekends, but this is Miami and art is a high-powered industry. Because of my hectic schedule and my husband's more flexible professor's schedule, my man is, in many ways, a stay-at-home dad. In fact he received an official paternity leave from FIU. (Like many women, I resorted to temporary disability benefits during maternity leave.)

Changing diapers, cooking, cleaning, shuttling children, field-trip chaperoning... Men are now doing it to a degree that makes up for generations of distant dads. Meanwhile women have stepped out from behind the apron and taken up residence in the corner office, and while my emotional response to my own domestic liberation runs the spectrum from tearful guilt to joyful glee, I am thankful every day that my kids have such an amazing dad.

And he's not alone. More and more of our dad friends seem to be taking a leading role in child-rearing.

There's Stuart, the magazine publisher-turned-artist; Duncan, an actor-turned-children's music performer; Greg, an attorney-turned-hairdresser; and Simon the big-shot photographer.

One friend, Patrick, works full-time and juggles such duties as soccer coaching, "mommy and me" classes, and field trips with his wife. "So much has changed since we were kids," he told me at our kids' recent ballet recital. "Because men our age didn't really have a 'new world father' to look up to, we just roll with it. I take cues from my wife and read a couple of cool dad blogs."

Daddy blogs. There are more of them than there are remixes of Cher's "If I Could Turn Back Time." Hipster Dad, Laid-Off Dad, Super Dad, and Two Dads One Princess, to name but a few, address the challenges and triumphs of modern fatherhood. Dads blog and read blogs because they are proud, curious, or sometimes just trying to connect with others looking for direction on the concept of modern-day fatherhood.

Men are redefining what a 21st-century dad looks like, and the role itself is evolving for as many different reasons as there are fathers. My husband wanted more time with his kids than his dad could manage and, in turn, he sought to do fatherhood differently.

I don't doubt that men have always valued their roles as fathers; I just think



the changing role of women has altered the definition of what it means to be a "good father." Providing financially for the family is no longer just a man's duty. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that more than a quarter of working women now earn more than their husbands.

The evidence is all around us. The other day, my daughter's friend tugged on Miami-Dade Public Schools Superintendent Alberto Carvalho's suit jacket as he made a visit to the Primary Learning Center in downtown Miami: "Mr. Carvalho, guess what? My mommy makes more money than my daddy," she told him.

Carvalho blushed at the innocence of her comment and the intimate window into these people's lives. And while the incident was a good reminder to not discuss financial matters in front of your six-year-old, it also points out that the shift in fathers' roles has been one of necessity, not simply of choice.

Of the eight million jobs lost to the recession, 82 percent have been in male-dominated industries. Last year our friend Mike found himself out of a job owing to cutbacks at his advertising firm. Drastic changes had to be made quickly in his family of five. Within weeks, Darcy, Mike's wife, left her

part-time job as a florist and secured a full-time gig in her pre-mommy field of graphic design in order to pay the mortgage and cover necessities for their three kids. Mike is now happily among the growing ranks of dads in the U.S. who stay home with the kids.

The benefits are obvious. Dads today often have much more intimate knowledge and awareness of their kids' day-to-day lives. According to a recent study, fathers who have more positive experiences with their kids report greater overall happiness. Also dads who are more connected to their kids report greater satisfaction with their marriages and are less likely to initiate divorce. Better dads = better husbands? I'm in!

And it doesn't make men any less attractive or desirable to their mates. Watching a dad roll up to the beach like a pack horse — with a cooler, sand toys, towels, baby bag, umbrella — and lather up his kiddies with sunscreen is *badass*.

So, on behalf of wives everywhere, I say, "March on, Macho Dad! You know how the diaper should go, you kiss boo-boos, sing lullabies — and you can fry our bacon anytime!"

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Dining Guide

Restaurant Listings

The Biscayne Corridor's most comprehensive restaurant guide. Total this month: 272.

Restaurant listings for the BT Dining Guide are written by are 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
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\$\$\$\$\$= \$50 and over

MIAMI

Brickell / Downtown

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 seeker setting than its perennially popular Lincoln Road progenitor, but the same

simple yet sophisticated global menu. The indoor space can get mighty loud, but lounging on the dog-friendly outdoor terrace, over a rich croque monsieur (which comes with an alluringly sweet/sour citrus-dressed side salad), a lobster club on onion toast, some surprisingly solid Asian fusion items, and a cocktail is one of Miami's more relaxing experiences. \$\$\$-\$

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

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

The Bar at Level 25 (Conrad Hotel)
1395 Brickell Ave., 305-503-6500

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

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/jalapeno 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/gruyere 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). \$\$\$

Café Bastille
248 SE 1st St., 786-425-3575

Breakfasting on a ham-egg-cheese crepe at this very French-feeling – and tasting – café is a most civilized way to start the day. Formerly breakfast and lunch only, the café is now open for dinner, too. And while the crepes (both savory and sweet) are tempting and varied enough to eat all day, dinner choices like homemade foie gras (with onion jam and Guerande salt), salmon with lentils and fennel salsa, or a very affordable skirt steak au poivre make it possible to resist. \$\$\$

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

MIAMI

BRICKELL / DOWNTOWN

Brickell Bridge Bistro & Bar
500 Brickell Ave., 786-871-7039

The casual-polished hangout's name refers to the nearby real bridge between Brickell and downtown, but its ambiance – part South Beach music lounge and part bankers' sports bar – also tries to bridge the neighborhoods, luring both execs and edgier sorts. The same's true of Allen Susser's role as consulting chef, though those expecting a hint of Chef Allen's won't find it; the sole similarity on the Latin-accented Italianesque menu is Susser's Valrhona chocolate soufflé. Snacking on small plates like meatballs with dried apricots and pine nuts is most fun. \$\$\$

Damn Good Burger
20 Biscayne Blvd., 305-718-6565

At restolounge MIA, the hip, high-tech nightclub component remains the same, as does much of the restaurant space's mod décor. The liquid nitrogen tanks are gone from the kitchen, however, and the atmosphere aims for a retro all-American feel to match the fare: burgers (from a hormone/antibiotic-free ground Angus chuck/brisket/short rib blend), with choice of house-made sauce plus customizable toppings ranging from pickles to pork belly. Also available: veggie burgers, dogs, salads, Buffalo chicken sandwiches, and standard sides. Rich malts and shakes come regular or adult (spiked). \$\$

Ozzi Sushi
200 SE 1st St., 786-704-8003

Since its 1958 invention, conveyor-belt sushi has been the most fun form of Japanese fast food, but problematic. Who knew how long plates had been circulating on the sushi-go-round? Happily, this sushi-boat spot avoids sanitation issues with clear plastic covers, and as for freshness, low prices ensure a steady stream of diners grabbing makis, nigiri, and more as they float by. Highlights include glistening ikura (salmon roe) in a thin-sliced cucumber cup, a sweet-sauced mango/guava/crab roll, and a festively frosted strawberry Nutella dessert maki. \$\$\$

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 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,

MIDTOWN / WYNWOOD / DESIGN DISTRICT

Tapas y Tintos
3535 NE 2nd Ave., 305-392-0506

With about 50 different generously sized traditional tapas plates, from simple (imported Spanish cheeses and cured meats; varied croquetas, including beautifully smooth spinach) to sophisticated (crisp-fried soft-shell crab with aioli dip; the witty Popeye y Olivia, garlicky wine-sauced chickpeas with spinach and olive oil) plus complex salads, paellas, and charbroiled meat and seafood entrées, all add up to entertaining eating even without this tapas/wine bar's live entertainment. This second T&T feels less nightclub and more neighborhood than the South Beach original. Great for dates, business lunches, or very happy hours. \$\$\$

UPPER EASTSIDE

Mi Vida Café
7244 Biscayne Blvd., 305-759-6020

At this indoor/outdoor vegetarian and raw-food vegan café, culinary-school-trained chef/owner Daniela Lagamma produces purist produce-oriented dishes that are easy to understand, like sparkling fresh salads and smoothies, plus more technique-intensive mock meat or cheese items, based on soy proteins, that satisfy even confirmed carnivores. Particularly impressive on the regular menu: a superior Sloppy Joe made with mushroom confit, braised homemade seitan, spinach, and rich almond romesco sauce; and cannelloni de verdura, homemade crepes stuffed with spinach and cashew "ricotta." Do check the daily specials, too. \$\$\$-\$

NORTH MIAMI BEACH

The Rumcake Factory
2075 NE 163rd St., 786-525-7071

When ex-Louisianan (and ex-Dolphins player) Larry Robinson and his Cuban-American wife Elena started a catering company in Miami Lakes, their mouthwateringly moist Caribbean-style buttered rum/walnut-glazed rum cake instantly became the star attraction. But after relocating to a real (if tiny) restaurant space in BT territory, the Factory now features a small supporting cast of Cajun fare scrumptious enough to upstage the star. Always available: authentic remoulade-dressed New Orleans po-boy sandwiches (shrimp, catfish, fried turkey), and humongous house-smoked chicken wings. Rotating specials include hearty gumbo, jambalaya, and BBQ ribs. \$\$

Latin, American, 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 ambiance 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* to 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:



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Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

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

Finnegan's River

401 SW 3rd Ave., 305-285-3030

Pool tables are expected in a sports bar and grill. But an actual pool? And a Jacuzzi? This Miami River hideaway has other surprises, too, on its extensive outdoor deck, including a boat dock and a large array of umbrella tables and lounge chairs where it's easy to while away many happy hours. The menu is the same array of bar bites served by South Beach's older Finnegan's, but angus burgers are big and tasty, and zingy jalapeño-studded smoked-fish dip is a satisfying table-snack choice. \$\$

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 foccacia or crunchy ciabatta; even the vegetarian

version bursts with complex and complementary flavors. During weekday dinners, try generous plates of risotto with shrimp and grilled asparagus; homemade pastas like seafood-packed fettuccine al scoglio; or delicate Vitello alla Milanese on arugula. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Fresco California Bistro

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

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

Garcia's Seafood Grille and Fish Market

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

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

Giovana Caffè

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

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

Grimpa Steakhouse

901 Brickell Plaza
305-455-4757

This expansive indoor/outdoor Brazilian eatery is sleekly contemporary, but no worries. The classic sword-wielding

gauchos are here, serving a mind-reeling assortment of skewered beef, chicken, lamb, pork, sausages, and fish. And included in the price (dinner \$47, lunch \$34) is the traditional belly-busting buffet of hot and cold prepared foods, salad, cold cuts, and cheeses. A pleasant, non-traditional surprise: unusual sauces like sweet/tart passion fruit or mint, tomato-based BBQ, and mango chutney, along with the ubiquitous chimichurri. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

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 snacker's unique take on Argentine-style empanadas that makes it seem a natural for national franchising. The soft-crusted, 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 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

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short ribs; lavish lobster salad with grilled mango; and a seductive fresh corn gazpacho. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Iron Sushi

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

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. \$

Jamón, Jamón, Jamón,

10 SW South River Dr., 305-324-1111

From the outside, you know you're walking into the ground floor of a new condo building. But once inside the charmingly rustic room, you'd swear you're in Spain. Obviously Spain's famous cured hams are a specialty, as are other pork products on the weekly changing menu, from a roast suckling pig entrée to a fried chorizo and chickpea tapa. But seafood is also terrific. Don't miss bacalao-filled piquillo peppers, or two of Miami's best rice dishes: seafood paella and arroz negro (with squid and its ink). \$\$-\$\$\$

La Loggia Ristorante and Lounge

68 W. Flagler St., 305-373-4800

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

La Moon

144 SW 8th St., 305-860-6209

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

La Provence

1064 Brickell Ave., 786-425-9003

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

La Sandwicherie

34 SW 8th St., 305-374-9852

This second location of the open-air diner that is South Beach's favorite après-club eatery (since 1988) closes earlier (midnight Sunday-Thursday, 5:00 a.m. Friday and Saturday), but the smoothies, salads, and superb Parisian sandwiches are the same: ultra-crusty baguette stuffed with evocative charcuterie and cheeses (saucisson sec, country pâté, camembert, etc.) and choice of salad veggies plus salty/tart cornichons and Sandwicherie's incomparable Dijon mustard vinaigrette. Additionally the larger branch has an interior, with a kitchen enabling hot foods (quiches and croques), plus A/C. \$\$\$

Le Boudoir Brickell

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

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

Lime Fresh Mexican Grill

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

(See Midtown / Wynwood / Design District listing.)

Little Lotus

25 N. Miami Ave. #107, 305-533-2700

Secreted inside the International Jewelry Exchange, this eatery (owned by stealth super-foodie Sari Maharani - paralegal by day, restaurateur by night) is tough to find but seems destined to become one of our town's toughest tables to book. Two talented chefs, whose credits include Morimoto (NYC) and hometown fave Yakko-san, create Japanese, Indonesian, and fusion small plates that look remarkably artful and taste like they're about ready to take on Iron Chef Morimoto himself. Saucing, often with multiple but balanced potions, is especially noteworthy. The prices? A steal. \$-\$\$

LouLou Le Petit Bistro

638 S. Miami Ave., 305-379-1404

When Indochine's owner, Jacques Ardisson, closed his Asian spot to open this charming French eatery in the same space, it was a return to his roots. He and his daughter, for whom the place is named, come from Nice. You'll be transported, too, by dishes like lamb shank with flageolets (known as the caviar of beans), duck leg confit on a bed of mouthwatering green lentils from Le Puy, a classic moules/frites, a shared charcuterie platter with a bottle from the savvy wine list, and, of course, salade niçoise. \$\$\$

Martini 28

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

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

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. \$

Mint Leaf

1063 SE 1st Ave., 305-358-5050

Part of London's famous Woodlands Group, this stylish spot, like its Coral Gables parent, serves the sort of upscale Indian food rarely found outside Great Britain or India. More interestingly, the menu includes not just the familiar northern Indian "Mughlai" fare served in most of America's Indian restaurants, but refined versions of south India's scrumptious street food. We've happily assembled whole meals of the vegetarian chaat (snacks) alone. And dosai (lacy rice/lentil crepes rolled around fillings ranging from traditional onion/potato to lamb masala or spicy chicken) are so addictive they oughta be illegal. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

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 mouth-watering finger food, shared among friends. \$-\$\$\$

Novecento

1414 Brickell Ave., 305-403-0900

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

Oceanaire Seafood Room

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

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

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Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

Pega Grill

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

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

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. \$-\$

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 goza 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 scallop maki topped with Peru's traditional potato garnish, huancaina 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 hangout, from the owners of downtown old-timer La Loggia, but "restolounge" sounds too glitzy. Think of it as a neighborhood "bistolounge." The food is mostly modernized Italian, with Latin and Asian accents: a prosciutto-and-fig pizza with Brazilian catupiry cheese; gnocchi served either as finger food (fried, with calamata olive/truffle aioli), or plated with orange-ginger sauce. But there are tomato-sauced meatballs with rigatoni 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 Japanese veteran) may initially seem akin to those airport Oriental steam tables. Wrong. Custom-cooked by Chinese chefs, starters (like soy/garlic-coated edamame), salads, and have-it-your-way stir-fries, fried rice, or noodle bowls burst with bold, fresh flavor. The proef: 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



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Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

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 figiutto: 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 rilletes (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 rilletes, superb salami, and other charcuterie classics) are irresistible, and a buttery-cruste, custardy quiche plus perfectly dressed salad costs little more than a fast-food combo meal. As for Postel's home-made 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. \$\$

Catch Grill & Bar 1633 N. Bayshore Dr., 305-536-6414

A location within easy walking distance of the Arsh Center for the Performing Arts, in the extensively renovated Marriott Biscayne Bay, makes this casual-chic eatery, whose specialty is local and sustainable seafood, a great option for pre-show bites. Then again, enjoying lures like sweet-glazed crispy shrimp with friends on the outdoor, bayfront terrace is entertainment enough. It's worth calling to ask if the daily catch is wreckfish, a sustainable local that tastes like a cross between grouper and sea bass. Bonus: With validation, valet parking is free. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

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-drizzled 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 grilled jerk chicken has

been the main item here. Other favorites: savory rice and pigeon peas; eye-opening onion/vinegar-flavored escovitch fish; sweet plantains; and cabbage that redefines the vegetable. \$

Crumb on Parchment 3930 NE 2nd Ave., 305-572-9444

Though located in a difficult spot (the Melin Building's central atrium, invisible from the street), Michelle Bernstein's bakery/café packs 'em in, partly due to Bernstein's mom Martha, who makes irresistible old-school cakes: German chocolate with walnuts, lemon curd with buttercream frosting, more. Lunch fare includes inspired sandwiches like seared rare tuna with spicy Asian pickles and kimchi aioli. And for morning people, the savory chicken sausage, melted cheddar, kale, and shallot sandwich on challah will convince you that breakfast is the most important meal of the day. \$\$\$

The Daily Creative Food Co. 2001 Biscayne Blvd., 305-573-4535

While the food formula of this contemporary café is familiar — sandwiches, salads, soups, breakfast food, and pastries, plus coffee and fruit drinks — a creative concept differentiates the place. Signature sandwiches are named after national and local newspapers, including Biscayne Times, giving diners something to chat about. Sandwiches and salads can also be do-it-yourself projects, with an unusually wide choice of main ingredients, garnishes, breads, and condiments for the creatively minded. \$

Delicias Peruanas 2590 Biscayne Blvd., 305-573-4634

Seafood is the specialty at this pleasant Peruvian spot, as it was at the nearby original Delicias, run by members of the same family. The food is as tasty as ever, especially the reliably fresh traditional ceviches, and for those who like their fish tangy but cooked, a mammoth jalea platter. As for nonseafood stuff, Peru practically invented fusion cuisine (in the 1800s), such as two traditional noodle dishes: tallerin saltado and tallerin verde. \$\$

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. \$\$

18th Street Café 210 NE 18th St., 305-381-8006

Most seating in this cool, pioneering neighborhood café is in a giant bay window, backed with banquettes, that makes the small space feel expansive — fitting, since the menu keeps expanding, too. Originally breakfast/lunch only, the café, though closed weekends, now serves dinner till 10:00 p.m., with comfort food entrées like secret-recipe meatloaf joining old favorites: daily-changing homemade soups, varied burgers, layered international salads, inspired sandwiches (like roast beef and provolone with creamy horseradish). Beer and wine is available, and now so is delivery. \$\$

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. \$

Fratelli Lyon 4141 NE 2nd Ave., 305-572-2901

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

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 McInnis (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-cruste 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 tripeleta containing roast pork, bacon, Black Forest ham, provolone, and caramelized onions. \$\$



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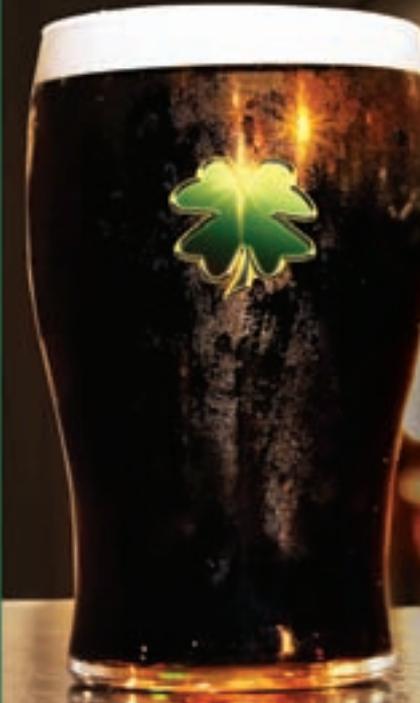
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Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

Joey's Italian Café

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

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

La Provence

2200 Biscayne Blvd., 305-576-8002

(See Brickell / Downtown listing.)

Latin Café 2000

2501 Biscayne Blvd., 305-576-3838

The menu is similar to that at many of our town's Latin cafés, largely classic Cuban entrées and sandwiches, with a smattering of touches from elsewhere in Latin America, such as a Peruvian jalea mixta (marinated mixed seafood), or paella Valenciana from Spain, which many Miami eateries consider a Latin country. What justifies the new millennium moniker is the more modern, yuppified/yaucified 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 Sbroglio seems a more universal lure for the Design District's central "town square." The mostly outdoor space remains unaltered save a wood-burning oven producing flavorfully char-bubbled pizza creations, plus a vintage meat slicer dispensing wild boar salami, bresaola (cured beef), and other artisan salumi. Other irresistibles: fried artichokes with lemon 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 restoulounge, festooned with graffiti-style murals designed to evoke a bustling Mexican street market, just for the dangerously smooth margaritas. But the main must-haves here are tacos, encased in a rarity: genuinely made-from-scratch corn tortillas, small but fatty-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 hangout 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 (crisply 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, focchi pouches filled with pears and cheese), and house-baked pastries. \$

Pasha's

3801 N. Miami Ave., 305-573-0201

(See Brickell/Downtown listing)

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/argula — 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

Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

Brooklyn-style street slice? Fuhgedit. Thankfully that's the speciality of this indoor/outdoor pizzeria: big slices with chewy crusts (made from imported NY tap water) that aren't ultra-thin and crisp, but flexible enough to fold lengthwise, and medium-thick – sturdy enough to support toppings applied with generous all-American abandon. Take-out warning: Picking up a whole pie? Better bring the SUV, not the Morris Mini.

Sakaya Kitchen Shops at Midtown Miami, Buena Vista Avenue 305-576-8096

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

Sake Room 275 NE 18th St., 305-755-0122

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

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 restolounge, 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. \$\$-\$\$\$

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 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, house-made 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 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. \$\$-\$\$\$

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Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

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 pastes 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), poisson gros sel (local snapper in a spicy butter sauce), garlic or Creole crabs. The Miami branch has outdoor tiki-hut dining. \$-\$\$

DeVita's

7251 Biscayne Blvd., 305-754-8282

This Italian/Argentine pizzeria, housed in a charming bungalow and featuring a breezy patio, covers multicultural bases. If the Old World Rucola pizza (a classic Margherita topped with arugula, prosciutto, and shredded parmesan) doesn't do the trick, the New World Especial (a Latin pie with hearts of palm and boiled eggs) just might. Also available are pastas, salads, sandwiches, dinner entrées (eggplant parmigiana with spaghetti, lomito steak with Argentinean potato salad), and desserts (tiramisu or flan). \$

Dogma Grill

7030 Biscayne Blvd.

305-759-3433

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

East Side Pizza

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

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

La Q-Bana

8650 Biscayne Blvd., 305-758-2550

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

Europa Car Wash and Café

6075 Biscayne Blvd., 305-754-2357

Giving new meaning to the food term "fusion," Europa serves up sandwiches, salads, car washes, coffee with croissants, and Chevron with Techron. Snacks match the casual chicness: sandwiches like the Renato (prosciutto, hot capicola, pepper jack cheese, red peppers, and Romano cheese dressing); an elaborate almond-garnished Chinese chicken salad; H&H bagels, the world's best, flown in from NYC. And the car cleanings are equally gentrified,

especially on Wednesdays, when ladies are pampered with \$10 washes and glasses of sparkling wine while they wait. \$

Garden of Eatin'

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

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

Gourmet Station

7601 Biscayne Blvd., 305-762-7229

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

Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

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

Revalas Italian Ristorante

8601 Biscayne Blvd., 305-758-1010

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

Royal Bavarian Schnitzel Haus

1085 NE 79th St., 305-754-8002

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

Soyka

5556 NE 4th Court, 305-759-3117

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 focaccia). Dinner features a range of small plates (poached figs with Gorgonzola cheese and honey balsamic drizzle) and full entrées like sake-marinated salmon with boniato mash and Ponzu butter sauce, and crispy spinach. \$\$-\$\$\$

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



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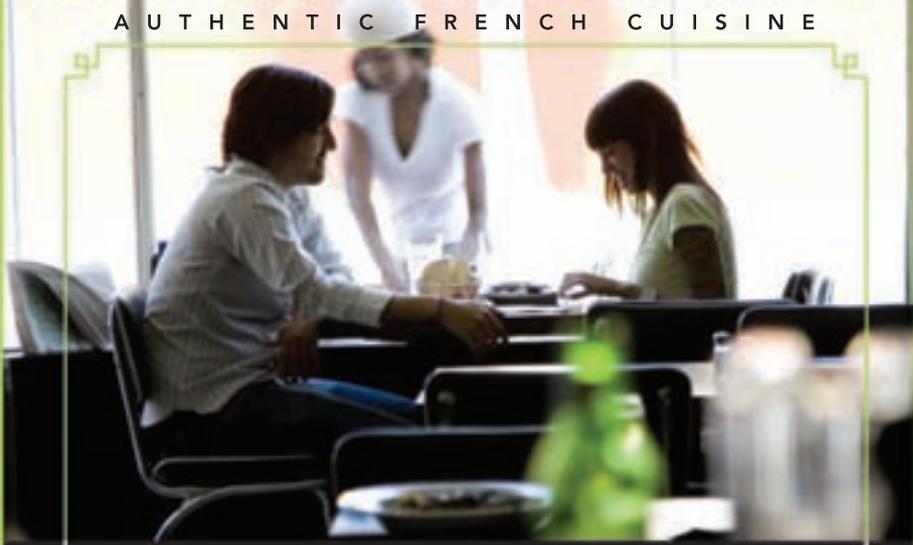
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creamy lobster sauce, with occasional forays into creative exotica such as seaweed spaghetti, with sea scallops, shitakes, and fresh tomatoes. \$\$-\$\$\$

Shuckers Bar & Grill

1819 79th St. Causeway, 305-866-1570
“Cheap eats and a million-dollar view” is the sound bite manager Philip Conklin uses to describe this outdoor beach bar, hidden in back of a bayfront motel. The joint dates from South Beach’s late 1980s revival, but the kick-off-your-shoes vibe couldn’t be farther from SoBe glitz. The food ranges from classic bar favorites (char-grilled wings, conch fritters, raw or steamed shellfish) to full dinners featuring steak, homemade pasta, or fresh, not frozen, fish. \$-\$\$

Sushi Siam

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

Trio on the Bay

1601 79th St. Causeway, 305-866-1234
Several ventures have failed in this expansive indoor/outdoor waterfront space, but that’s hard to imagine once you’ve experienced this stunning incarnation as an exciting yet affordable restaurant/nightclub where food definitely doesn’t play second fiddle to entertainment. Former Crystal Café chef Klime Kovaceski demonstrates a rare mix of Old World technique and New World invention in dishes like perfectly caramelized sea scallops with smoky bacon-garnished spinach salad, filet mignon atop surprisingly pistachio-studded béarnaise sauce, and figs with panna cotta so light one fears a bay breeze might carry it off. \$\$\$

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 place 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. \$-\$\$

Lou’s Beer Garden

7337 Harding Ave., 305-704-7879
“Beer garden” conjures up an image of Bavarian bratwurst, lederhosen, and oompah 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 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 brik (buttery phyllo pastry stuffed with tuna, onions, potatoes, and tomatoes) with a mesclun side salad. But everything is homemade, including all breads, and prepared with impeccable ingredients, classic French technique, and meticulous attention to detail, down to the stylish plaid ribbons that hold together the café’s baguette sandwiches. \$-\$\$

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-crust lamb or tuna tartare with sriracha aioli, plus reviving old favorites like pork tenderloin with ginger-caramel sauce. \$\$-\$\$\$

NORTH MIAMI

Los Antojos

11099 Biscayne Blvd., 305-892-1411
If it’s Sunday, it must be sancocho de gallina, Colombia’s national dish. If it’s Saturday, it must be ajiaico. Both are thick chicken soups, full meals in a bowl. For Colombian-cuisine novices, a bandeja paisa (sampler including rice, beans, carne asada, chicharron, eggs, sautéed sweet plantains, and an arepa corn cake) is available every day, as are antojitos — “little whims,” smaller snacks like chorizo con arepa (a corn cake with Colombian sausage). And for noncarnivores there are several hefty seafood platters, made to order. \$\$

Bagels & Co.

11064 Biscayne Blvd., 305-892-2435
While this place is often referred to as Guns & Bagels, one can’t actually buy a gun here. The nickname refers to its location next to a firearms shop. But there’s a lot of other stuff aside from bagels here, including a full range of sandwiches and wraps. Breakfast time is busy time, with banana-walnut pancakes especially popular. But what’s most important is that this is one of the area’s few sources of the real, New York-style water bagel: crunchy outside, challengingly chewy inside. \$

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. \$\$

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Captain Jim's Seafood

12950 W. Dixie Hwy.,
305-892-2812

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

Casa Mia Trattoria

15400 Biscayne Blvd., 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. \$\$

Chéén-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? Chéén'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 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 scorcher. 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 minestrone) or a salad (mixed greens, tomatoes, cukes, brined olives, and pickled peppers) that's a dinner in itself. Rustic roadhouse ambiance, notably the red leatherette booths, add to Mama's charm. \$\$\$

Mario the Baker

13695 W. Dixie Highway, 305-891-7641

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

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-kear and must-o-mooseer (thick yogurt dips with herbed cukes or shallots) are must-haves. \$\$

Steve's Pizza

12101 Biscayne Blvd., 305-891-0202

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

Tokyo Bowl

12295 Biscayne Blvd., 305-892-9400

This fast-food drive-thru (unexpectedly serene inside) is named for its feature item, big budget-priced bowls of rice or noodles topped with cooked Japanese-style items like teriyaki fish (fresh fish sautéed with vegetables), curried

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

Venezia Pizza and Café

13452 Biscayne Blvd., 305-940-1808

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

Wong's Chinese Restaurant

12420 Biscayne Blvd., 305-891-4313

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

Woody's Famous Steak Sandwich

13105 Biscayne Blvd., 305-891-1451

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

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

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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. \$\$



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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 comforting thick gravy). \$\$\$

Chipotle Mexican Grill 14776 Biscayne Blvd., 305-947-2779

Proving that national fast-food chains don't have to be bad for either diners or the environment, Chipotle serves what the company calls "food with integrity." The fare is simple, basically tacos and big burritos: soft flour or crisp corn tortillas stuffed with chipotle-marinated steak or chicken chunks, bolder shredded beef barbacoa, or herb-scented pork carnitas. But these bites contain no evil ingredients (transfats, artificial color/flavor, antibiotics, growth hormones). And the food, while not the authentic Mex street stuff dreams are made of, is darned tasty, too. \$

Christine's Roti Shop 16721 NE 6th Ave., 305-770-0434

Wraps are for wimps. At this small shop run by Christine Gouvella, originally from British Guyana, the wrapper is a far more substantial and tasty roti, a Caribbean megacrepie 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 nikkei (Japanese/Creole) chef Rosita Yimura: an exquisite, delicately sauced tiradito de corvina, and for those with no fear of cholesterol, pulpo de oliva (octopus topped with rich olive sauce). \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Hanna's Gourmet Diner 13951 Biscayne Blvd. 305-947-2255

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

Hiro Japanese Restaurant 3007 NE 163rd St., 305-948-3687

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

Hiro's Sushi Express 17048 W. Dixie Hwy., 305-949-0776

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

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

King Palace 330 NE 167th St. 305-949-2339

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

Lime Fresh Mexican Grill 14831 Biscayne Blvd., 305-949-8800

(See Midtown / Wynwood / Design District listing)

Laurenzo's Market Café 16385 W. Dixie Hwy., 305-945-6381

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

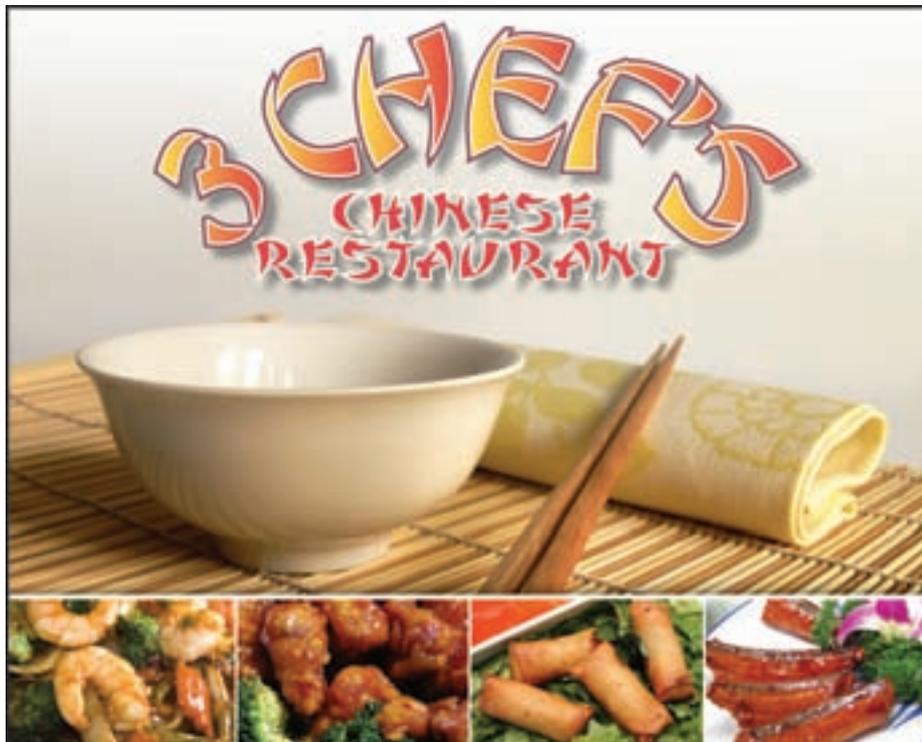
This is Miami's oldest traditional Vietnamese restaurant, but it's still packed most weekend nights. So even the place's biggest negative – its hole-in-the-wall atmosphere, not encouraging of lingering visits – becomes a plus since it ensures fast turnover. Chef/owner Lily Tao is typically in the kitchen, 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



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Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

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 Bennigan'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 albón-digas – 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 esotérica like abalone with sea cucumber. The extensive third menu offers dim sum, served until 4:00 p.m. A live tank allows seasonal seafood dishes like lobster with ginger and scallion. Recently installed: a Chinese barbecue case, displaying savory items like crispy pork with crackling attached. \$\$\$

Shing Wang Vegetarian, Iced & Tea House

237 NE 167th St., 305-654-4008
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. \$\$-\$\$\$

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 neta – mixed with scallions and dressed with habit-forming honey-miso mustard sauce. Other favorites include goma ae (wilded 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. \$\$

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

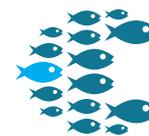
1009 Kane Concourse; 305-861-8166
After renovations in 2010, this old favorite (since 1989) reopened with a hip new lounge – but no fixes to what ain't

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. \$\$\$\$

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AVENTURA / HALLANDALE

Anthony's Coal Fired Pizza

17901 Biscayne Blvd., 305-830-2625
When people rave about New York pizzas' superiority, they don't just mean thin crusts. They mean the kind of airy, abundantly burn-bubbled, uniquely flavorful crusts that can only be consistently produced by a traditional coal (not wood) oven – like those at Anthony's, which began with one Fort Lauderdale pizzeria in 2002 and now has roughly 30 locations. Quality toppings, though limited, hit all the major food groups, from prosciutto to kalamata olives. There are salads, too, but the sausage and garlic-sautéed broccoli rabe pie is a tastier green vegetable. \$\$

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. \$\$\$\$\$

Café Bistro @ Nordstrom

19507 Biscayne Blvd. #15, 305-937-7267

In the days before quick-bite food courts, upscale department stores had their own real restaurants, civilized oases where "Ladies Who Lunch" took leisurely respite from shopping. In today's "Women Who Work" times, those restaurants (and privileged ladies) are anachronisms, but this room, hidden on Nordstrom's second floor, is a relaxing time-trip back. Enjoy creamy crab bisque, extravagant salads (shrimp with cilantro-lime dressing; pear, blue cheese, and candied walnuts with

cherry balsamic vinaigrette), or a retro-modern club sandwich. Organic ingredients from local purveyors are emphasized. \$\$\$

Il Migliore

2576 NE Miami Gardens Dr., 05-792-2902

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

Fuji Hana

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

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

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. \$\$\$

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

Ensnconed 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 gloppily 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-splurgers, lobster thermidor. While seafood is a specialty, butter-sautéed breaded schnitzels like the chicken Holsteiner (topped with capers, anchovies, and an egg) are a treat. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Pilar

20475 Biscayne Blvd.
305-937-2777

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

Pizza Roma

19090 NE 29th Ave.
305-937-4884

Despite its name, this homey 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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Marcy Kaplan & Lori Brandt | 786.543.5755
gimmeshelter@metro1properties.com



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Irene Dakota | 305.972.8860
idakota@metro1properties.com



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Irene Dakota | 305.972.8860
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