

# BISCAYNE

August 2011

[www.BiscayneTimes.com](http://www.BiscayneTimes.com)

Volume 9 Issue 6

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278 Restaurants, 8 New p. 76

# Times

# Who We Are

**Part 2: What the U.S. Census tells us about life in Aventura, Biscayne Park, El Portal, Miami Shores, North Miami, and North Miami Beach**

page 20

  
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# AUGUST

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	<b>7</b> <b>Cirque iD</b> 2 & 7 PM  "Athleticism sprinkled with feats of danger!" <i>Chicago Tribune</i>	<b>8</b> <b>Free Adrienne Arsht Center Tour</b> 12 PM Get a behind-the-scenes glimpse of the Adrienne Arsht Center!	<b>9</b> <b>Cirque iD</b> 8 PM  "Acrobatics that are as spectacular as they are artistic!" <i>La Presse</i>	<b>10</b> <b>Cirque iD</b> 8 PM  A spectacular, mind-blowing fusion of new theatrical circus and urban dance!	<b>11</b> <b>Cirque iD</b> 8 PM  "Blends hip-hop dance and circus arts together in brilliant fashion!" <i>Globe and Mail</i>	<b>12</b> <b>Cirque iD</b> 8 PM  Created by the great contemporary cirque director, Jeannot Painchaud.
<b>14</b> <b>Cirque iD</b> 2 & 7:30 PM  "A completely incredible show!" <i>La Presse</i>	<b>15</b> <b>Free Adrienne Arsht Center Tour</b> 12 PM Explore the beautiful architecture and award-winning art at the Adrienne Arsht Center!	<b>16</b> <b>Cirque iD</b> 8 PM  An astonishing new acrobatic/theatrical spectacle!	<b>17</b> <b>Cirque iD</b> 8 PM  "Such extraordinary feats really lifts the spirits!" <i>Eye Weekly</i>	<b>18</b> <b>Cirque iD</b> 8 PM  "This show really evokes enthusiasm. An absolute delight!" <i>The Independent (UK)</i>	<b>19</b> <b>Cirque iD</b> 8 PM  <i>iD</i> transports us into the vibrant streets at the heart of a city!	<b>20</b> <b>Cirque iD</b> 2 & 8 PM  <b>Free Adrienne Arsht Center Tour</b> 12 PM Bring your family and enjoy an exclusive backstage pass to the Arsht Center!
<b>21</b> <b>Cirque iD</b> 2 & 7:30 PM  "It is pure energy, pure entertainment!" <i>Chicago Stage Review</i>	<b>22</b> <b>Free Adrienne Arsht Center Tour</b> 12 PM Experience the views of the dramatic skyline of Biscayne Bay and Downtown Miami from the Arsht Center	<b>23</b> <b>Cirque iD</b> 8 PM  <i>iD</i> transports us into the vibrant streets at the heart of a city!	<b>24</b> <b>Cirque iD</b> 8 PM  "A marvelous spectacle of sensational surprises!" <i>Chicago Stage Review</i>	<b>25</b> <b>Cirque iD</b> 8 PM  The stage comes alive with the boundless energy!	<b>26</b> <b>Cirque iD</b> 8 PM  "Lights, sounds, costumes and performances that dazzle and stun you!" <i>Splash Magazine LA</i>	<b>27</b> <b>Cirque iD</b> 2 & 8 PM  <b>Free Adrienne Arsht Center Tour</b> 12 PM "The indisputable jewel in the crown of Miami's entertainment scene." <i>NileGuide</i>
<b>28</b> <b>Cirque iD</b> 2 & 7:30 PM  Acrobats, break dancers, contortionists, a fearless stunt biker, and eye-popping video projections!	<b>29</b> <b>Free Adrienne Arsht Center Tour</b> 12 PM "An infectiously exuberant celebration of the human form!" <i>The Examiner Chicago</i>	<b>30</b> <b>Cirque iD</b> 8 PM  " <i>iD</i> is a show that will likely leave you breathless!" <i>Toronto Star</i>	<b>31</b> <b>Cirque iD</b> 8 PM  For photos and video, visit <a href="http://arshtcenter.org/cirqueid">arshtcenter.org/cirqueid</a>			<b>MONDAYS AND SATURDAYS AT NOON!</b> <b>Your Backstage Pass to the Adrienne Arsht Center!</b>

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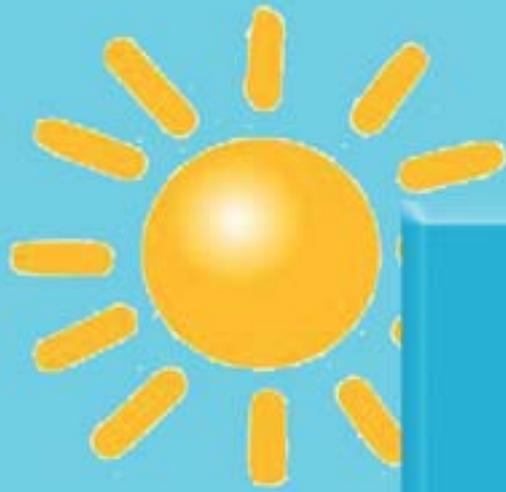


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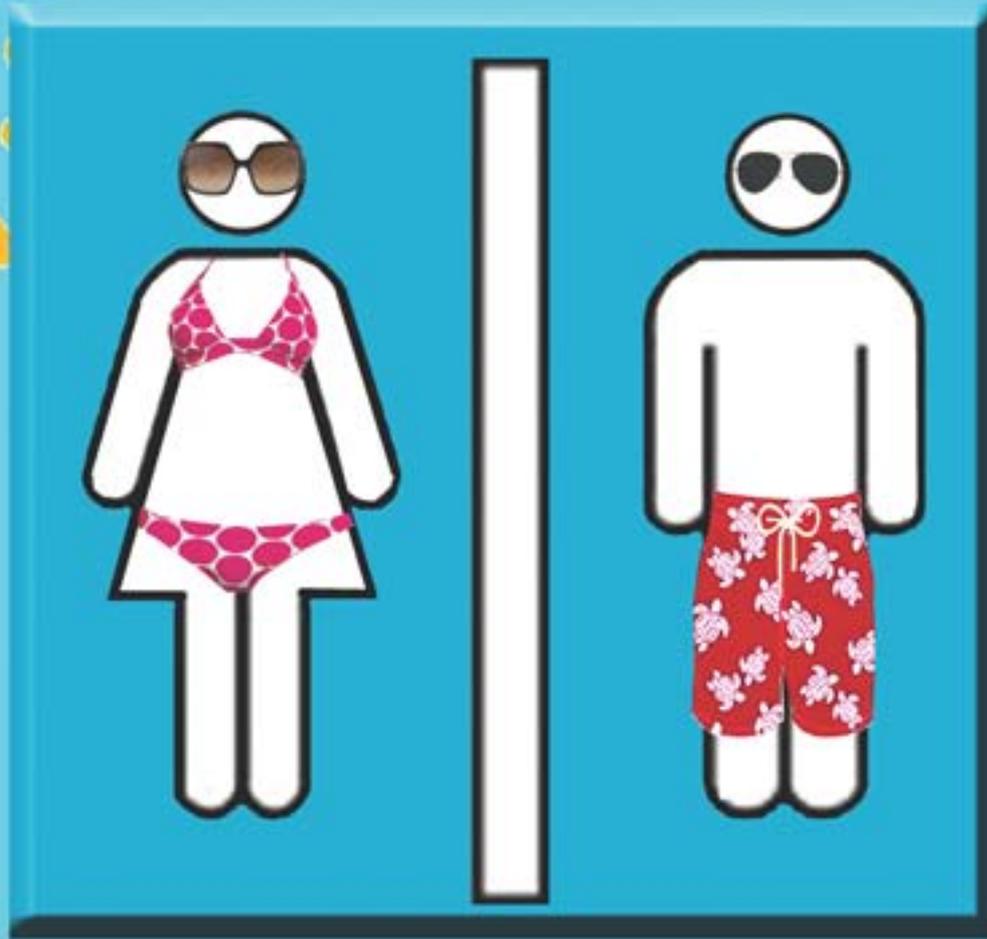


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# BISCAYNE *Times*

PO Box 370566, Miami, FL 33137 [www.biscaynetimes.com](http://www.biscaynetimes.com)

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South Florida Distributors

## PRINTING

Stuart Web, Inc.  
[www.stuartweb.com](http://www.stuartweb.com)

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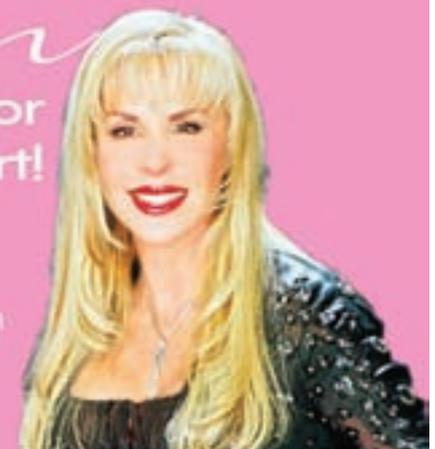
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## Commentary: LETTERS

### Never Fear, the Upper Eastsiders Are Here

Terrific article by Erik Bojnansky about the results of the 2010 Census: “Who We Are” (July 2011). Yes, we Upper Eastside folks are a “fearless” bunch, as historian Paul George pointed out. We protect our turf. And Jeff Morr of Majestic Properties is correct in predicting that property values will steadily increase. We are “as good as gold.”

I do have to disagree with Tony Cho of Metro 1 Properties. There is a big difference between development/redevelopment and preservation, restoration, and revitalization. Why a handful of folks who are not residents, who are “commercial property” owners not “business” owners, continue to clamor for higher building heights and predict doomsday scenarios for the MiMo District if that doesn't happen, is beyond me. I can point out a number of thriving business districts throughout the nation that are made up of only one- or two-story buildings.

The problem with Biscayne Boulevard is this: It isn't pedestrian friendly.

Unfortunately, the group that helped plan the roadway improvements with FDOT, long before the Boulevard was historically designated, decided that center islands and parallel parking would not be in the mix.

I commend the small-business owners who have invested in the Boulevard and the residents who fight to preserve the integrity of our neighborhoods and the MiMo District. And I long for the day that the District is extended to the city limits at NE 87th Street.

Revitalization doesn't happen overnight, especially in a down economy like this one. But good things will come. Look at South Beach.

Yes, we Upper East Side folks are indeed a “fearless” bunch.

*Jack Spirk*

*Upper Eastside Preservation Coalition  
Shorecrest*

### Four Palm Trees Out of Five: That Park Is Going Platinum!

I very much enjoyed Jim W. Harper's “Park Patrol” review of Maurice Gibb Memorial Park in Miami Beach (“A Harmonious Place,” July 2011). I have been living in Miami for more than seven years and had never seen, or even heard of, that park. Although I was not around when the Bee Gees were in style, I would like to visit this waterfront hideaway in remembrance of this Rock and Roll Hall of Fame pop star.

I found the mosaic contributed to Maurice interesting. I would have never guessed that the yellow, red, and blue pieces of glass signified peace, love, and tranquility. I also thought the carved piece of granite disguising “Mo's” name was quite creative.

The view of the bay from the seawall looks impressive as well. This park certainly seems like somewhere my lover and I can get away, relax, and enjoy the beautiful bay.

Since Harper is probably the only park critic in the nation, I will take his word for it and believe that this park deserves four palm trees out of five. By the pictures and description, I am convinced this is somewhere I would like to visit.

Thank you, *Biscayne Times*.

*Sofia Galiano  
North Miami*

### Role Reversals? Mr. Mom Thinks It's Great

I am writing in regards to Crystal Brewe's “Kids and the City” column titled “Daddy's Home!” (July 2011). I think it was so well told.

I am a stay-at-home dad after more than 20 years working in kitchens, of which more than 15 years were as a chef at high-end restaurants and hotels. My wife and have two kids, one eight years old and the other seven months.

For years I had been in a kitchen, sometimes six days a week, 12 hours a day, and I remember not being around much for the first three years of my daughter's life. It was hard.

Today the roles have been reversed. My wife started her company seven years ago, an interior design firm, and it has skyrocketed. Now she's running a great company, doing big things in Miami, is a co-chair at MOCA, flies to China, and builds homes in the Caribbean, in New York and here in Miami.

Me? I'm making breakfast, doing food shopping, laundry, cleaning the house, and helping with homework. I take my daughter to golf lessons and golf tournaments in Boca Raton and West Palm Beach every other weekend, and run to the mall with my son strapped to me.

I am trying to work on a book, but did I mention the diapers, the parks, the morning strolls, and trying to fit in the gym?

Dinner is ready by 7:30 p.m., though sometimes mommy is late because of her work. Now she's bringing in the bucks

Continued on page 12

# "WATERFRONT IS MY BUSINESS"

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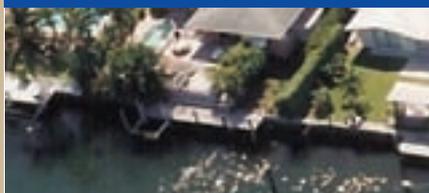
3bdr/3 bath, pool, 1.5 car cbs carport. Brand new  
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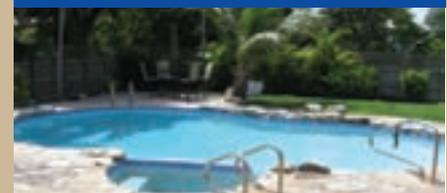
Located 1 lot off the wide bay on cul de sac. Lot  
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Letters

Continued from page 10

— more than I was making. How funny is that?

Crystal's article was great, and it needed to be told. Kudos to all the stay-at-home dads, and many thanks to all the working moms.

Jean Sebastien  
Miami

**Do They Charge by the Hour for Minutes?**

In the July issue of *Biscayne Times*, you published a letter from Biscayne Park Village Commissioner Bob Anderson ("Hours and Hours of Minutes"), responding to a column by *BT* correspondent Gaspar González concerning the minutes of our village commission meetings ("A Matter of Minutes," June 2011).

Anderson raises three critical issues. First he points out that not all municipalities use verbatim minutes, which are what González and his sponsors claim they want. So although González frames his argument as a complaint about Biscayne Park, is he really complaining about all municipalities that don't keep records the

way he claims he would prefer?

Anderson points out that some municipalities don't use verbatim minutes. Some do, and some don't. Does this mean we're simply talking about a matter of style and what's possible for a municipality, not some sense of what is a "correct" approach?

Anderson's second critical point is that González, who very regularly writes in a complaining and accusatory way about Anderson, has never spoken to him. Anderson is one of González's "neighbors" in a very small municipality. Anderson is a commissioner who represents all residents. (Commissioners are all elected at-large.)

Commissioner Anderson is remarkably available, and regularly urges residents to be in touch with him about any village-related matter on their minds. González presents himself, through the *BT*, as a reporter. How is it possible that he has never contacted Anderson? Even I've told González to talk to Anderson. And to Commissioner Al Childress. And to Mayor Roxanna Ross. Not a word between González and any of them. But the accusations just keep on coming.

Finally, Anderson talks about the cost of the minutes González claims he

wants. González frames this as a matter of good government. Anderson cites costs that are prohibitive for a very small and very financially limited community.

There's an opportunity here, and a precedent has been set. If a certain village "improvement" is recognized and desired by a small group of residents, and the village can't afford to pay for it, those residents can, out of civic pride and sense of responsibility, pay for it themselves and make it a gift to the village. In my experience with just such an approach, they should feel free to show their generosity, which will be gratefully acknowledged and accepted.

Fred Jonas  
Biscayne Park

**Skateboards and Hookers Are Like Oil and Water**

Seriously? A skate park would attract crime and vandals ("No Halfpipes, No Ally Oops, No Skid-Lids, No Nothing," June 2011)? Has *BT* writer Erik Bojnansky even been in that area? There are two hookers and two drug dealers on the corner of NE 2nd Avenue and 18th Street. I know because I live there.

If anything, a skate park would deter crime as a result of heavy traffic.

Is Aventura Mall the epicenter of crime? Is Dadeland the highest-rated place for crime? If there were a skate park, maybe city cops would finally patrol that area and hence reduce crime. Come on, man!

Here's a quote from an earlier *BT* article about our proposed skate park ("Skateboards and Synagogues Are Like Oil and Water," March 2011): "We don't want it to be built there," according to Stanley Tate, a successful South Florida developer, veteran political player, and past president of Temple Israel, which is located on NE 19th Street in Miami's Midtown neighborhood. 'If we have to, we will bring a large number of people. We have some of the oldest membership in Dade County. We are well respected. I don't think the city commission wants to get involved in that kind of controversy.'"

Yet in your latest article Tate says: "He [skate-park advocate Seth Levy] has accused me of things that he made up out of thin air," Tate says. 'He thought that I had political influence here. It's silly. I never get involved in City of Miami politics. I don't even live in the city.'"

That sounds like politics!

Santiago Sanz  
Miami

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# Springtime Home of the Brooklyn Dodgers

A view of our past from the archives of HistoryMiami

By Paul George  
Special to the BT

Standing two miles northwest of downtown Miami and next to a Seaboard Airline Railroad station, Miami Stadium, later known as Bobby Maduro Stadium, was one of Miami's iconic structures during the mid-20th Century.

Built by José Aleman, who once served as Cuba's minister of education, the state-of-the-art ballpark, which opened in 1949, contained a high, arched, cantilever roof over the grandstand, and 13,500 seats, each with an unobstructed view of the field.

The stadium was the spring-training home of the Brooklyn Dodgers from 1950 to 1957. The team played its very first game as the Los Angeles Dodgers there on March 8, 1958, but left Miami after that season.

From 1959 through 1990 it hosted the Baltimore Orioles in the same capacity. Miami Stadium was also the home of two minor league baseball teams, the Miami Sun Sox and the Miami Marlins, a Triple A team whose roster in 1956 included the great Satchel Paige, who was then 50 years old.

Sadly, the stadium where Jackie Robinson, Sandy Koufax, Duke Snider, Willie Mays, Mickey Mantle, and other greats had played, was razed at the outset of this century to make way for a large apartment complex, appropriately called the Miami Stadium Apartments.

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

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



Photo courtesy of Miami News Collection, HistoryMiami, #1989-011-15487



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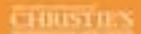
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# BizBuzz

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

By **Pamela Robin Brandt**  
BT Contributor

It's hot outside, but here at BizBuzz the only hot thing are our advertisers' August deals. Cool ways to beat the heat, look neat, feel sweet, buy a treat, grab something to eat. We've got 'em all. So let's get to them, before we run out of rhymes for "heat."

What we favor during this month, in the looking-neat department, is self-improvement requiring no effort whatsoever on our part beyond driving somewhere and sitting while others do the work.

Ensure that even the drive is effort-free with some preventative maintenance at **Plaza Tire & Auto** (3005 NE 2nd Ave., 305-573-3878), which recently won the *New Times* Best of Miami award for Best Auto Mechanic. Congrats to owner Gabe Cortez, son John, and their staff.

One self-improvement definitely qualifying as effortless: the brand new private line of 100% Russian human hair extensions just introduced at **Anastasia Molchanov Salon** (7242 Biscayne Blvd., 305-756-7755). The silky-soft tape-in extensions never tangle or slip, and are easily reused.

And welcome to new advertiser Gayle Nelson, owner/stylist at Aventura's **770 Salon** (18792 W. Dixie Hwy.,

305-936-9993). As well as full hair services, the salon offers manicures, acrylic nails, and body waxing for women, men, and children.

Readers in BT territory will have to drive just a wee bit farther to new advertiser **CleanSkin by Isa**. Her serene studio is in Coconut Grove (2666 Tigertail Ave. #108., 305-877-6789). But the mini road trip is worth it for services ranging from regular facials to microdermabrasion and chemical peels that leave skin glowing. Mention the BT to licensed aesthetician Isa Salvador for 30% off your first treatment.

How about complementing that face with a dazzling smile? Two dental advertisers can provide that for you this month.

**Biscayne Dental Center** (14771 Biscayne Blvd., 305-945-7745), which bills itself as "Your One Stop Smile Shop," announces the addition of two new dentists: Dr. John Cabrera (general and cosmetic dentistry) and Dr. Mario Iraheta (dental implants and gum surgery). See this issue's ad for the center's \$39 New Patient Special offer.

Up in Aventura, Dr. Valeria Soltanik's **Art of Dentistry** (2999 NE 191st St. #350, 305-466-2334), where cosmetic dentistry for adults and children is a specialty, offers free X-rays with approved



orthodontic treatment for readers who bring in the BT during August.

Slightly more strenuous, shopping is still a suitable summer sport. And you needn't sweat even the biggest purchase imaginable, a house, if new advertiser **Denise Rubin**, an award-winning Realtor, is doing all the legwork for you. See this issue's ad for some tantalizing possibilities, and contact her at 305-409-0019 or Denise@DeniseRubinGroup.com.

Also easy: one-stop house hunting in one stylish building, like **Cynergi** (2700 N. Miami Ave., 305-573-9045), which offers an assortment of apartments and lofts in artsy Wynwood.

Moving on to smaller shopping ops, what could be a more summery purchase than sun shades? New advertiser **Hollywood Shades** (305-420-6644) carries everything from traditional wood blinds and plantation shutters to modern motorized solar shades — and this issue's ad offers a 20% off coupon special. Estimates are free and in-home, so you

needn't budge from your couch.

And you won't want to budge if it's a couch from **The Collection German Furniture** (15400 Biscayne Blvd., 305-944-3727), a new advertiser and the source of some of the most elegantly engineered high-end contemporary pieces we've ever seen. Check out this issue's ad for a luxe leather sofa converted via swivel fittings to a queen-sized bed or several other unique possibilities.

The sun may be blazing outta control but your lighting fixtures won't be if you stock up on the newly arrived LED light bulbs, featuring up to 80% energy efficiency, at **Specialty Lighting & Bulbs** (13611 Biscayne Blvd., 305-423-0017). For August the store is also offering 30% off crystal chandelier displays.

As well as lighting up your life, some advertisers would like to help you lighten it. **Smart for Life** (2980 Aventura Blvd., 305-935-5550) — whose "famous cookie diet," also including the natural hormone

Continued on page 18

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## Your One Stop Smile Shop



## Our Sponsors: AUGUST 2011

### Biz Buzz

Continued from page 16

HCG, assures a 15+ pound-per-month loss — will have you in bikini shape in time to enjoy their August special: a free cruise for up to five people with any \$100 product purchase.

At Geri Kelleher's **Slender Fit U** (786-477-6194), where a 15-20-pound loss in three weeks is promised, the summer special of 20% off her program continues. But hurry. When August ends, the offer does, too. Slender Fit U has two locations: Aventura and downtown Miami.

Looking to build muscle as well as lose flab? This month **Normandy Gym** (1145 71st St., Miami Beach, 305-865-8570) introduces a new, improved version of "Danny Hawk's Spartan 300" high-level cross-training program. Start sweating your way into shape for just \$59. The price includes all classes and events at the pro-boxing trainer's famed facility.

If an array of weight-training and cardio equipment is more your style, join us in welcoming new advertiser **Idol's Gym** (5550 NE 4th Ct., 305-751-7591). Long favored by body builders and power lifters, Idol's is conveniently located in the restaurant/lounge-packed 55th Street Station complex, so exercisers can hoist a few cocktails after hoisting the weights.

Shape up with a different approach at new advertiser **Bikram Yoga North Miami** (2222 NE 123rd St., 305-892-0266). Results of the stretching and posture exercises include muscle tone, proper weight, and vibrant physical and mental health. Note: The studio is hot — deliberately. It's all part of the relatively rapid detoxing process.

Not only is August the year's hottest month, it's also Miami Spa month, according to the folks at the Hotel Victor's **Spa V** (1144 Ocean Drive, Miami Beach, 305-728-6500). Along with complimentary valet parking and champagne, the cozy hideaway is offering, at only \$99 each, five different 80-minute treatments, including specialized male or female full-body skin repair/hydration treatments, and a Relax Me massage featuring reflexology for your feet. Which rhymes with heat. We were only kidding about running out of rhymes.

How about tables and... seats? Okay. Stretching it. But at David Widdas's **360 Furniture Consignments** (18340 W. Dixie Hwy., 305-627-3148), the year's hottest month means the year's hottest

sale: 20%-50% off select furniture and home accessories. And remember: 360 also offers complete services for estate sales and real estate or property auctions, if you are looking to sell some high-quality, gently used items.

Treat your panting pup to some pampering with a visit to **Barks & Tales Dog Spa** (2500 Biscayne Blvd., 305-571-1818), which offers grooming/salon services as well as active, cage-free daycare and boarding. To celebrate the spa's second birthday, owner Daniela is offering a month-long discount of \$10 for new customers, and \$5 for regulars. Additionally, from August 15-20, dogs' nails will be clipped for free.

Thirty-three years young Biscayne Pet House (10789 Biscayne Blvd., 305-895-6164) announces it's now carrying **By Nature** grain-free and certified organic dog and cat foods, formulated to fortify your pets' immune systems against aging, illness, and environmental stress. To introduce the nutritionally complete no-wheat eats, owners Tom and Bonnie are offering a \$5 discount on any size; mention the *BT* to them and they'll also offer a buy-one-get-one-free deal on canned food.

If you don't want to leave the air-conditioned comfort of home, **Smiling Pets Animal Clinic** (7310 Biscayne Blvd., 305-754-0844) has a mobile vet, Dr. Avi Adulami, and two dog days deals: a free house call (first visit only), or free house calls for three or more pets seen on the same visit.

Not all Miamians want to give up entertaining outdoors during the dog days — and the experienced experts at **Farrey's** (1850 NE 146th St., 305-947-5451), which has been through 85 South Florida summers, say you don't have to. Naturally you can't air-condition the backyard. But Farrey's does have a large stock of outdoor ceiling fans (rated "outdoor wet," meaning they'll withstand humidity and rain), including the popular Casablanca "Heritage," so you can barbecue in breezy comfort.

Need party invitations, fast? New advertiser **24hrsPrint.com** (305-804-7558) will do any printing job, business cards to banners, fast and easy. There's free local pick-up, too.

Sadly, summer patio parties often get wrecked by unwanted guests of the insect variety. But new advertiser **Eastern Exterminating** will send the gate-crashers packing. The family-owned business was recently granted U.S.

patents for their PLP Natural Products, which use a botanical formula (no chemicals, no poisons, safe around kids and pets) to control everything from mosquitoes to fleas to rats. Call 305-246-0200 for more information.

To further develop your backyard oasis, visit **All Florida Pool and Spa Center** (11720 Biscayne Blvd., 305-893-4036), a 40-year-old, family-run company that does everything but new pool construction — remodeling, service, and repairs as well as retail sales ranging from Sundance Spas to water toys/games. This month's 10% discount offer on Florida-proof, super-durable furniture will enable *BT* readers to chill out poolside for many Augusts to come. It comes with a 20-year warranty.

New advertiser **DownRite Pool & Spa** (305-668-9778) has a couple of heat-beating deals for *BT* readers, but since the company specializes strictly in repair and maintenance, they're different: a free estimate on maintaining your pool or spa, and the first week of service is free.

Those who prefer beating the heat on big waters should check out completely renovated **Sunny Isles Marina** (400 Sunny Isles Blvd., 305-945-6000). The facility, which offers jet ski rentals as well as boat dockage/maintenance and marine fuel, just opened a tiki bar. Bait and ice are available, as well as drinks and snacks (including fresh seafood).

That brings us to our personal favorite summer sports: eating and drinking. Don't laugh. Eating is actually an Xtreme sport at new advertiser **Heavy Burger** (19004 NE 29th Ave., 305-932-7555), where hefty patties of prodigiously topped meat come with equally meaty classic hard rock and metal music.

Another new advertiser sounds like a nightclub: **Club Tipico Dominicano** (1344 NW 36th St., 305-634-7819). And it is, as attested to by the Latin dance beats that create lines down the street into the wee hours. But it's also a tasty traditional Dominican eatery, serving favorites like fried chicharron de pollo and pigeon peas in coconut sauce, from midday on.

Speaking of eats, nothing counters summer heat like cold cuts. Find the coolest at **Bagels & Company** (11064 Biscayne Blvd., 305-892-2435), where Monday-Friday dine-in patrons who bring in the discount coupons in this issue's ad have a choice of three deals: get \$2 off any purchase of \$10 or more; get \$5 off purchases 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 get another dozen *free*.

Advertisers aren't forgetting the kids. At **LoudGirl Exchange** (6621 Biscayne Blvd., 305-458-5783), there's a summer's end special on all Melissa & Doug educational toys (puzzles, puppets, play food, music items, more): Buy one, get one free.

And **The Playground Theatre** (9806 NE 2nd Ave., 305-751-9550) announces AfterSchool & Saturdays@The Playground, a series of acting/dance/music classes for children. The first session runs August 23-October 1; price is \$125 per session or \$25 per class.

Adults won't find alternative films like those shown at **O Cinema** (90 NW 29th St., 305-571-9970) anywhere else in town. On August 12-14 they'll be screening *Rejoice & Shout*, a film about the history of gospel music. Intrigued? Check out the flick at [www.magpictures.com](http://www.magpictures.com).

For an equally unique but sillier theatrical experience, the Metropolitan Parking Authority, a longtime advertiser, calls your attention to the Flickin' Summer film festival at the **Gusman Center** (174 E. Flagler St., 305-372-0925). Evenings start with a happy hour, continue with a cheesy 1980s movie, and climax with an onstage dance party and costume contest. First flick, August 25, is *The Breakfast Club*. Tickets from Ticketmaster are normally \$10; use code DWNTWNER to save 50%. Way to stay off the streets!

One final rhyme: "Oh, bleep!" Well, it's close. Just as we were close but not quite right in the July *BT* with the phone number for **Hannah & Her Scissors** (611 NE 86th St.). The correct number is 305-772-8426. Use it to schedule Hannah Lasky's two-part August deal, performed by her talented new team: first, a careful custom facial from Debbie Little (formerly of Meduhr), then a wash and blow dry from another well-known neighborhood name, Aveda-trained Steven Neal. The package's price: only \$75, a \$20 savings. Hannah is also offering an unadvertised discount on Neal's excellent keratin treatments, to heal hair with serious summer frizzies. Just mention the *BT*.

Now we're really out of rhymes with "heat," so it's time to start taking advantage of all the above deals. On your feet! August is fleet.

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

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# WHO WE ARE

**Part 2: A decade of change has transformed some cities  
along the Biscayne Corridor — but not all**

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

In last month's issue of *Biscayne Times*, we examined the 2010 U.S. Census in an effort to learn how Miami-Dade County has changed over the past ten years. We also took a close look at demographic shifts in the City of Miami and its Biscayne Corridor neighborhoods, as well as the outlying areas of North Bay Village and Bay Harbor Islands.

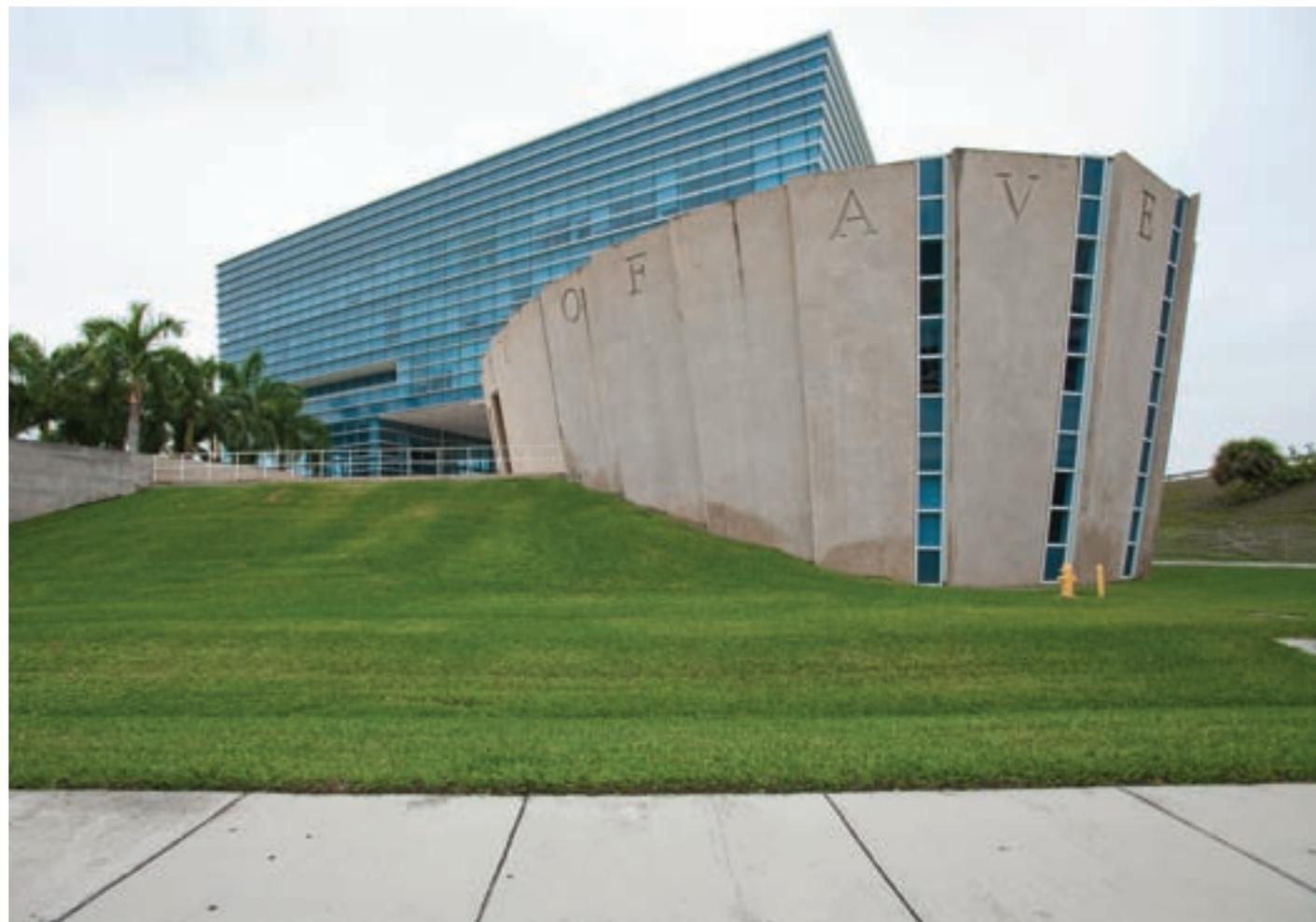
This month we're exploring census results for the northern Biscayne Corridor cities of Aventura, North Miami Beach, North Miami, Biscayne Park, Miami Shores, and El Portal. According to the United States Census Bureau, the changes these communities experienced between 1999 and 2010 are diverse, yet they share one thing in common: Their Hispanic populations are growing significantly. The number of Haitian residents is also on the rise.

On the other hand, non-Hispanic whites, or Anglos, are disappearing from many cities along the Biscayne Corridor where, in decades past, they held firm majorities. Countywide, the Anglo population slipped 18% between 2000 and 2010. Hispanics, by contrast, increased 26% countywide between 2000 and 2010. (All figures in this article are drawn from the U.S. Census unless otherwise noted.)

The Census Bureau has yet to release detailed socioeconomic statistics for 2010. However, the data now available reveal that Miami-Dade households in which only English is spoken at home dropped from 32% to 29% over the past decade. By contrast, households in which Spanish is spoken exclusively rose from 59% to 63% during that same period. That is a remarkable figure: Nearly two-thirds of all households in the county speak only Spanish at home. It's likely that no other county in the nation comes close to that.

Blacks increased by only 3% in the previous decade, and that was largely the result of immigration from Haiti and other Caribbean and Latin American nations. (Hispanic and non-Hispanic blacks were not counted as specific groups until the 2010 census, when 10% of the county's black population, 47,326 people, self-identified as black Hispanics.)

The growth of Miami-Dade's Hispanic and immigrant populations is predictable, says Alex Stepick, director of Florida International University's Research Institute on Social and Economic Policy. "In the case of immigrants, they are following the traditional path of 'chain migration' — that is, following others from their native communities to



**Aventura: The city built like crazy over the past decade, then screamed to a halt.**

a particular foreign destination. In this case, Miami," Stepick says. "Once a particular population begins to settle in a particular place, others tend to follow. That was true for non-Hispanic whites from 100 years ago settling in South Florida, and particularly for Jews settling on Miami Beach from 60 years ago. It is now true of Caribbean and Latin American migrants."

Jaime Suchlicki, director of the University of Miami's Institute for Cuban and Cuban-American Studies, says a "push-pull" effect is fueling Hispanic migration to Miami-Dade. The push comes from rampant crime and political turmoil that plague places like Nicaragua, Venezuela, and Colombia. The pull is from economic opportunities. "Companies settle here to do business in Latin America," he explains.

Another pull is Miami-Dade County's distressed real estate market, where an abundance of luxury condos and single-family homes are available for purchase at bargain rates. Jeff Morr, president of Majestic Properties, says the relative economic and political stability of the United States is encouraging

wealthy South Americans to buy property here. Some are content to use Miami-Dade as a second home, but "many of them who buy [homes] are looking for an escape," he says. "A lot of them put their kids over here to stay."

As a result, households making more than \$150,000 per year increased by a hefty 48% between 1999 and 2009, with much of this affluence occurring in waterfront areas and along the Biscayne Corridor.

In such an environment, some Anglos and African Americans are finding it harder to compete for employment. "There is no question white flight and black flight out of Miami continues, much over the language issue, because people can't get a job without speaking Spanish," says Ira Sheskin, an associate professor of geography and regional studies at University of Miami, where he also directs the school's Jewish Demography Project.

There is one notable exception to Anglo flight, according to FIU's Stepick. Professional and "CEO type" Anglos are moving into the City of Miami "because of the economic ties to Latin America and because they like the diversity, the

fact that Miami is the 'capital' of Latin America," Stepick explains. In fact, the city's Anglo population increased by 11% between 2000 and 2010.

But Edward "Ned" Murray, associate director of FIU's Metropolitan Center, says working-class families of all ethnic and cultural backgrounds are moving out because it is much more expensive to live in Miami-Dade County today than it was at the start of the decade, despite the deflated housing market. Prior to the last housing boom, "the only coastal market that was somewhat affordable was Florida," he says. "Once the state lost that advantage, why stay here? Especially when jobs don't pay as high as other locations."

Yet that phenomenon does not necessarily apply to poor immigrants from Latin America and the Caribbean, who are generally willing to work low-paying service jobs in Florida's four largest industries: hospitality, tourism, health care, and agriculture. If these trends continue, Murray says, Miami-Dade County will become a resort area catering to the rich, and serviced by poor immigrants. Such

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## Who We Are

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an environment is not ideal for working-class and middle-class families, he says.

According to Murray, one way to slow this trend, aside from diversifying the overall economy, is to embrace enlightened urban planning that will balance residential development with commercial. Tony Cho, president of Majestic Properties, goes a step further. He thinks the future of a healthy middle class is tied to dense, urban development where residents can walk to work. "A lot of suburbanites are tired of the commute and tired of the high gas prices," he says.

For Cho, the northeast Miami-Dade city that most closely fits that bill is Aventura.

### Aventura

Aventura was among the fastest-growing municipalities during the boom years. The city is just 3.5 square miles in size, but its housing stock swelled by a whopping 34% between 2000 and 2010.

"It had a lot of developable properties in the last decade, particularly along 182nd Street and the area directly north of Williams Island Boulevard," says Jay Beskin, a former Aventura city commissioner. "There was also a lot of developable land that was by the water." Aventura's property tax rate, the lowest in Miami-Dade County, as well as a city code that encouraged high density, also attracted developers, he adds.

But when the bubble burst, Aventura's property values cratered, and some residents lost their homes in the ensuing foreclosure crisis. "There were short sales, foreclosures, several of the newest construction buildings stopped," says Denise Rubin, a Realtor with Prudential Realty who specializes in northeast Miami-Dade properties. "Some buildings had to raise maintenance fees, close pools, get rid of doormen."

Hardly any wonder that the number of vacant units within Aventura increased by 37% between 2000 and 2010. Yet Aventura's real estate market is rebounding, thanks to its amenities. Aside from thousands of condo units, Aventura has a charter school, a cultural arts center, a movie theater, and plenty of commercial development, including the sprawling Aventura Mall and a number of strip malls. With this recipe, notes Murray, of FIU's Metropolitan Center, "cities like Aventura and Miami Beach are going to attract more urban-type populations.



**Jeff Morr, Majestic Properties, says U.S. Census income figures for Aventura are misleading.**



**Tony Cho of Metro 1 Properties: "A lot of suburbanites are tired of the commute and tired of the high gas prices."**

With the mixed-use type of development, you're going to have an environment similar to New York or Chicago."

Unlike New York and Chicago, though, Aventura doesn't stay open 24/7, or even very late like South Beach, an important element in keeping communities economically healthy, Murray says. Still, the city's population is among the few along the Biscayne Corridor that is getting younger, and in a big way. Between 2000 and 2010, Aventura's median age plummeted by seven years to

46, which can be partly explained by this change: a 107% increase in families with children under the age of 18.

Aventura also experienced a population explosion, jumping 42%, from 25,300 to 36,000. With that increase, it also became more diverse, particularly for a city that just ten years ago was 75% Anglo. The city's Hispanic population shot up by 145%, with 12,800 now calling Aventura home.

Realtor Rubin says most of her clients buying property in Aventura

<b>Aventura</b>	
Source: U.S. Census Bureau	
Total population 2000:	<b>25,267</b>
Total population 2010:	<b>35,762</b>
Median age 2000:	<b>52.8</b>
Median age 2010:	<b>46.1</b>
18 and under 2000:	<b>2,564 (10.1%)</b>
18 and under 2010:	<b>5,552 (15.4%)</b>
65 and over 2000:	<b>8,893 (35.2%)</b>
65 and over 2010:	<b>9,499 (26.6%)</b>
Hispanic 2000:	<b>5,218 (20.7%)</b>
Hispanic 2010:	<b>12,798 (35.8%)</b>
Black 2000:	<b>430 (1.7%)</b>
Black 2010:	<b>1,382 (3.9%)</b>
Non-Hispanic White 2000:	<b>18,954 (75%)</b>
Non-Hispanic White 2010:	<b>20,711 (57.9%)</b>
Asian 2000:	<b>307 (1.2%)</b>
Asian 2010:	<b>648 (1.8%)</b>
Median household income 1999:	<b>\$44,526</b>
Median household income 2009:	<b>\$60,667</b>
Households making below \$14,999 annually in 1999:	<b>2,363 (16.9%)</b>
Households making below \$14,999 annually in 2009:	<b>2,013 (13.6%)</b>
Households making above \$150,000 annually in 1999:	<b>1,330 (9.4%)</b>
Households making above \$150,000 annually in 2009:	<b>2,046 (13.8%)</b>
Total households 2000:	<b>14,000</b>
Total households 2010:	<b>17,892</b>
Family households 2000:	<b>6,692 (47.8%)</b>
Family households 2010:	<b>9,627 (53.8%)</b>
Householder living alone 2000:	<b>6,342 (45.3%)</b>
Householder living alone 2010:	<b>7,037 (39.3%)</b>
Total housing units 2000:	<b>20,020</b>
Total housing units 2010:	<b>26,120</b>
Occupied housing units 2000:	<b>14,000 (69.9%)</b>
Occupied housing units 2010:	<b>17,892 (68.5%)</b>
Vacant housing units 2000:	<b>6,020 (30.1%)</b>
Vacant housing units 2010:	<b>8,228 (31.5%)</b>
For seasonal, recreational or occasional use 2000:	<b>4,200 (21%)</b>
For seasonal, recreational or occasional use 2010:	<b>5,506 (21.1%)</b>

Courtesy: Metro 1 Properties

are foreigners from all over the world, including Russia and China. However, Latin Americans from Brazil, Venezuela, Argentina, and Mexico make up the bulk of her buyers. They also tend to pay cash, she says.

"They were all trying to get out of the country. People were getting kidnapped. All kinds of problems," Rubin explains. For a while, Venezuelans were her best customers. Now it's the Brazilians. "So many wealthy Brazilians," she

Continued on page 24



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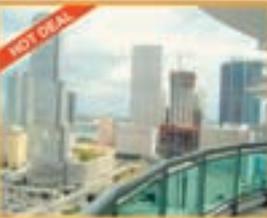


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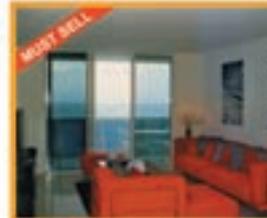
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**Developers avoided North Miami Beach, but tourists are drawn to its Ancient Spanish Monastery.**

## Who We Are

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laughs. “They definitely like Aventura.”

Many of the people moving into the area are Jews from Latin America, Rubin adds.

Sheskin, director of the Jewish Demography Project, affirms Rubin’s observation. While the Jewish population in other Miami-Dade areas is shrinking, Aventura’s is on the rise. “Once an area gets a reputation for being high-percentage Jewish, it continues to grow,” he says. “You start seeing retail and restaurants catering to the population. It’s kind of a take-off point.”

Aventura’s median household income increased by 36% over the past decade. Surprisingly, however, the city’s current median household income of \$60,667 pales in comparison to Biscayne Park (\$72,750) and Miami Shores (\$87,500). Morr, president of Majestic Properties, believes he knows why. Aventura has a much larger population of foreigners who own second homes there, and “a lot of them are not reporting their income,” he says.

Rubin predicts that it may take about six years before developers consider building large projects in northeast Miami-Dade again. But when they do, they are likely to look at high-rise-packed

Aventura and Sunny Isles Beach before breaking ground in the bedroom communities of North Miami Beach and North Miami. In fact, the activity has already begun. Last month, after a three-year hiatus, Miami developer Martin Margulies restarted construction on a \$100 million condo project at Williams Island.

## North Miami Beach

When the real estate market was still hot, developers submitted proposals to build residential and commercial projects in North Miami Beach, ranging from townhouses to high-rises. Several were approved by the city, but hardly anything materialized. “Unfortunately, by the time all the development came here, the market collapsed,” recalls Chris Heid, NMB’s chief planner. As a result, while Aventura’s housing inventory increase by 6100 units in the previous decade, NMB’s increased by only 1052.

So why did developers flock to Aventura rather than North Miami Beach? Heid believes it’s in part because NMB is already built out. “Change, if it happens, happens slowly because we don’t have large tracts for development,” he says. “It requires tearing down what’s there.”

North Miami Beach’s population growth was also anemic between 2000 and 2010. It only increased by 737

people, or less than 2%. Still, the city’s demographics remained varied. “We have a really diverse population,” says Heid, who has spent 23 years working for NMB. “That’s something we’ve always been proud of.”

Blacks remain the city’s largest segment at 41%. Residents claiming West Indian ancestry account for 29% of the city’s population, a large portion of them being Haitian. But NMB’s Hispanic population is bigger (37%) and is growing faster and any other group — up 24% over the past decade.

North Miami Beach’s Anglo population declined by the same percentage the Hispanic population grew: 24%. Ira Sheskin of the Jewish Demography Project points out that, since the end of World War II, a large portion of NMB’s Anglo population has been Jewish. In 1970 there may have been as many as 39,500 Jews living in the city, making it the second largest Jewish community in Miami-Dade. By 2004, only 13,900 NMB households had at least one Jewish member, Sheskin says. Mortality is the principal cause of the population decrease. “If you moved to North Miami Beach at the age of 30 in 1960, in 50 years you’re 80 and dying,” he says.

Aside from its ethnic diversity, “another defining characteristic is our

## North Miami Beach

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Total population 2000: **40,786**  
Total population 2010: **41,523**

Median age 2000: **34.5**  
Median age 2010: **36.4**

18 and under 2000: **11,129 (27.3%)**  
18 and under 2010: **9,731 (23.4%)**

65 and over 2000: **4,611 (11.3%)**  
65 and over 2010: **4,679 (11.3%)**

Hispanic 2000: **12,245 (30%)**  
Hispanic 2010: **15,213 (36.6%)**

Black 2000: **15,895 (39%)**  
Black 2010: **17,177 (41.4%)**

Non-Hispanic White 2000: **10,104 (24.8%)**  
Non-Hispanic White 2010: **7,630 (18.4%)**

Asian 2000: **1,646 (4.0%)**  
Asian 2010: **1,416 (3.4%)**

Median household income 1999: **\$31,377**  
Median household income 2009: **\$42,275**

Households making below \$14,999 annually in 1999: **3,174 (22.6%)**  
Households making below \$14,999 annually in 2009: **1,669 (12.2%)**

Households making above \$150,000 annually in 1999: **359 (2.6%)**  
Households making above \$150,000 annually in 2009: **577 (4.2%)**

Total households 2000: **13,987**  
Total households 2010: **14,412**

Family households 2000: **9,803 (70.1%)**  
Family households 2010: **9,805 (68%)**

Householder living alone 2000: **3,342 (23.9%)**  
Householder living alone 2010: **3,611 (25.1%)**

Total housing units 2000: **15,350**  
Total housing units 2010: **16,402**

Occupied housing units 2000: **13,987 (91.1%)**  
Occupied housing units 2010: **14,412 (87.9%)**

Vacant housing units 2000: **1,363 (8.9%)**  
Vacant housing units 2010: **1,990 (12.1%)**

For seasonal, recreational or occasional use 2000: **605 (3.9%)**  
For seasonal, recreational or occasional use 2010: **453 (2.8%)**

solid middle class,” says city planner Heid. Census data, however, suggest that NMB’s middle class is actually shrinking, while affluence is increasing. The number of households earning more than \$150,000 annually rose by 61% over the past decade. Realtor Denise Rubin says many of those are to be found in the Eastern Shores community. “Eastern Shores has changed a lot in the last ten years,” she notes. “Houses one by one were ripped down and renovated. There

Continued on page 26

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## Who We Are

Continued from page 24

were a lot of homes built on the water.”

At the same time, the number of households earning less than \$15,000 per year dropped by 47%. Did the poorer families move up to the middle class, or did they simply move away? Murray of the Metropolitan Center believes it's the latter, and blames a “lack of housing affordability.” As an example, he points to the median monthly rent in NMB. Over the past decade, it rose 51%, from \$643 to \$970.

Another aspect of a resort-style economy and shrinking middle class, according to Murray, is fewer families with children. In NMB, families with children declined by 16% between 2000 and 2010. Heid was perplexed by that figure. “We have a lot of young families coming in,” he says. “I would think [families with kids] would be on the rise.”

Aware that smart growth can create economic opportunity, North Miami Beach officials in 2005 created zoning codes encouraging mixed-use development. For example, a neighborhood known as Fulford City Center is now zoned for residential and commercial developments up to 15-stories in height. The goal: To create an urban, pedestrian-friendly environment. “Lincoln Road is Lincoln Road because density surrounds it,” Heid says.

Heid is confident that once the market turns around, developers will return to NMB. Already builders and investors are making inquiries: “It's a good sign that people are coming by to talk, because for a while they weren't.”

## North Miami

In the mid-1990s, Scott Galvin worked on immigration issues for Congresswoman Carrie Meek. “There was such a high volume of case work from Haitians coming from North Miami,” remembers Galvin, now a North Miami City Councilman. “Back then the city was vastly Anglo. There was one African-American member of the city council.”

By 2000, Haitians and other West Indian nationalities made up 37% of the city's population. As of 2009, 45% of the population was West Indian. Blacks overall (African-Americans, Haitians, and other residents of African descent) now make up 59% of North Miami's population.

Today Galvin notices that neighborhoods east of Biscayne Boulevard, which traditionally had Anglo majorities, are

## North Miami

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Total population 2000: **59,880**  
Total population 2010: **58,786**

Median age 2000: **31.8**  
Median age 2010: **34.4**

18 and under 2000: **16,815 (28.1%)**  
18 and under 2010: **13,958 (23.7%)**

65 and over 2000: **5,510 (9.2%)**  
65 and over 2010: **5,935 (10.1%)**

Hispanic 2000: **13,869 (23.2%)**  
Hispanic 2010: **15,959 (27.1%)**

Black 2000: **32,842 (54.9%)**  
Black 2010: **34,634 (58.9%)**

Non-Hispanic White 2000: **10,860 (18%)**  
Non-Hispanic White 2010: **7,287 (12.4%)**

Asian 2000: **1,152 (1.9%)**  
Asian 2010: **972 (1.7%)**

Median household income 1999: **\$29,778**  
Median household income 2009: **\$36,564**

Households making below \$14,999 annually in 1999: **4,941 (24.2%)**  
Households making below \$14,999 annually in 2009: **2,639 (14.8%)**

Households making above \$150,000 annually in 1999: **496 (2.5%)**  
Households making above \$150,000 annually in 2009: **682 (3.8%)**

Total households 2000: **20,541**  
Total households 2010: **19,275**

Family households 2000: **13,587 (66.1%)**  
Family households 2010: **12,899 (66.9%)**

Householder living alone 2000: **5,527 (26.9%)**  
Householder living alone 2010: **4,866 (25.2%)**

Total housing units 2000: **22,281**  
Total housing units 2010: **22,110**

Occupied housing units 2000: **20,541 (92.2%)**  
Occupied housing units 2010: **19,275 (87.2%)**

Vacant housing units 2000: **1,740 (7.8%)**  
Vacant housing units 2010: **2,835 (12.8%)**

For seasonal, recreational or occasional use 2000: **351 (1.6%)**  
For seasonal, recreational or occasional use 2010: **309 (1.4%)**

becoming increasingly Hispanic. “You are seeing a continually evolving city,” he says.

In fact North Miami's Hispanic population is growing at a faster rate than the black population. Between 2000 and 2010, Hispanic residents in North Miami increased by 15% while the black population grew only 6%.

According to Roseline Philippe, a Haitian-American activist who resides in North Miami, Hispanics are moving into houses all over the city. North Miami's

Continued on page 28



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**Museum of Contemporary Art in North Miami, a city that changed little over the past decade.**

**Who We Are**

Continued from page 26

gated, waterfront neighborhoods of Sans Souci Estates and Keystone Point are attracting homebuyers from South

America and also Europe. "You're not getting folks from New Jersey and New York, not anymore," she says.

These new folks do have money. The number of North Miami households earning more than \$150,000 a year



**Biscayne Park attracted affluent homebuyers, including a significant number of same-sex couples.**

increased by 38% over the past decade. Like other Biscayne Corridor cities, North Miami's Anglo population shrank between 2000 and 2010, by a substantial 33%. But it isn't just Anglos who are leaving North Miami. The city lost a

total of 1097 residents. There were also 1093 more vacant homes in 2010 than in 2000. Pam Solomon, spokeswoman for the City of North

Continued on page 30

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## Who We Are

Continued from page 28

Miami, says foreclosures emptied many of these homes. During that decade, despite the construction of 363 condo units at Biscayne Landing, North Miami also lost 171 housing units. Where did they go? City officials could not answer that question by deadline.

There were also 47% fewer households earning less than \$15,000 a year in 2010 than in 2000. "Working-class families probably moved," Philippe says. "The hotel industry has less and less need for workers. I know people who work in hospitals who used to work 40 hours a week. Now they're cut back to 35 hours or 30. Then, of course, you have the school system." Aside from teachers' jobs being in jeopardy, janitors, food-service workers, and other occupations are threatened by layoffs, she adds.

North Miami's poverty rate climbed to a disturbing 24% in 2009, the most recent data available. At least one in four North Miami families with children fell below the poverty line in 2009. A related figure: The number of families with children living in North Miami dropped by 21% between 2000 and 2010.

Galvin blames North Miami's past zoning for its current stagnation. From 1970 to 2003, new buildings were capped at four stories. As a result, developers avoided North Miami, inhibiting the creation of everything from affordable housing to new businesses. "North Miami has been very unchanged, in every regard — not just in our housing but in economics," he says.

Eight years ago, in an effort to revitalize the city's economy, North Miami officials created zoning to allow buildings up to 12 stories in certain areas of the city, Galvin says. Officials also partnered with Boca Developers to construct Biscayne Landing, which was envisioned as city within the city (6000 condo units), but the real estate market imploded and the developers defaulted on a \$169 million mortgage.

Still, Galvin remains optimistic about the future. He predicts families will begin moving back to the city thanks to "five brand-new schools opening up." The city will also pick a new developer for the Biscayne Landing site in September. As for the rest of the city, Galvin is confident the new zoning and North Miami's location between South Beach and Fort

## Biscayne Park

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Total population 2000: 3,269  
Total population 2010: 3,055

Median age 2000: 37.3  
Median age 2010: 40.4

18 and under 2000: 777 (23.8%)  
18 and under 2010: 658 (21.5%)

65 and over 2000: 368 (11.3%)  
65 and over 2010: 333 (10.9%)

Hispanic 2000: 867 (26.5%)  
Hispanic 2010: 1,076 (35.2%)

Black 2000: 605 (18.5%)  
Black 2010: 539 (17.6%)

Non-Hispanic White 2000: 1,658 (50.7%)  
Non-Hispanic White 2010: 1,326 (43.4%)

Asian 2000: 89 (2.7%)  
Asian 2010: 101 (3.3%)

Median household income 1999: \$48,313  
Median household income 2009: \$72,750

Households making below \$14,999 annually in 1999: 153 (11.7%)  
Households making below \$14,999 annually in 2009: 102 (9.1%)

Households making above \$150,000 annually in 1999: 48 (3.7%)  
Households making above \$150,000 annually in 2009: 137 (12.3%)

Total households 2000: 1,283  
Total households 2010: 1,201

Family households 2000: 831 (64.8%)  
Family households 2010: 760 (63.3%)

Householder living alone 2000: 321 (25%)  
Householder living alone 2010: 309 (25.7%)

Total housing units 2000: 1,341  
Total housing units 2010: 1,324

Occupied housing units 2000: 1,283 (95.7%)  
Occupied housing units 2010: 1,201 (90.9%)

Vacant housing units 2000: 58 (4.3%)  
Vacant housing units 2010: 123 (9.3%)

For seasonal, recreational or occasional use 2000: 8 (0.6%)  
For seasonal, recreational or occasional use 2010: 3 (0.2%)

Lauderdale will attract developers. "We can at least be part of the conversation," he says. "We couldn't 12 years ago."

## Biscayne Park

Like North Miami, the diminutive Village of Biscayne Park (3055 residents in three-fifths of a square mile) experienced a population loss over the past decade: a drop of 214 people. There were also 17 fewer dwellings in that decade. Patrick Duffy, president of Duffy Realty,

Continued on page 32

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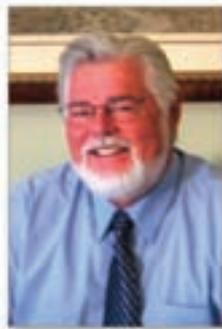
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## Who We Are

Continued from page 30

ascribes the village's housing and population shrinkage to an anomaly. "Quite a number of duplexes were converted into single-family homes," he says. Also "one or two houses burned down."

Biscayne Park is devoid of any commercial enterprises. It is strictly homes, trees, parks, and a log cabin housing the village administration. "It's a part of old Dade," says historian Paul George. Incorporated in 1931 on what was once farmland, Biscayne Park is the sort of place that George says you can drive by without realizing it: "It is a nondescript, very low-key, very small municipality."

Duffy says that Biscayne Park did get noticed at the height of the real estate bubble, thanks to an overflow of demand for homes in neighboring Miami Shores. As a result, Biscayne Park's median household income increased by 50% over the decade, with 89 more households earning above \$150,000. During that same period, there were 51 fewer households earning below \$15,000. The poverty rate also fell from 12% in 2000



**Miami Shores during the real estate bubble: "People were lining up with multiple offers. You could call it a feeding frenzy."**

to 8% in 2009, although the unemployment rate increased three points to 8%.

The hike in property values, even as the market waned and slumped, made

living in Biscayne Park pricier. The median monthly rent leaped by 62% from \$645 in 2000 to \$1054 in 2009. The median monthly costs for homeowners

with mortgages climbed 66%, from \$1331 to \$2213.

Continued on page 34

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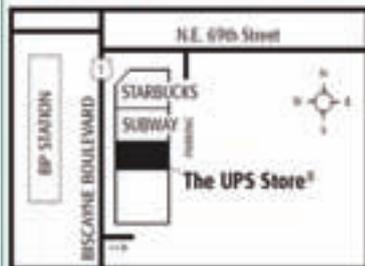
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## Who We Are

Continued from page 32

Anglos were still Biscayne Park's largest population group, although there were 332 fewer of them in 2010 than 2000, which amounts to a 20% decrease. On the other hand, the village gained 209 new Hispanic residents during that period, a hike of 24%. Other demographic changes in that decade include 66 fewer black residents, 12 more Asian residents, and a loss of 33 families with children.

One demographic change not revealed by the census is the apparent increase of same-sex households in Biscayne Park and Miami Shores. Duffy says the "double income" effect explains the dramatic increase in median household income for both municipalities.

## Miami Shores

The upscale village of Miami Shores still has single-family homes from the late 1920s, late 1940s, early 1950s, and a few from the 1960s, notes Realtor Patrick Duffy. "Miami Shores is a beautiful community," he says. "There really is not a whole lot that has changed in the past 50 years." There is still a fairly large contingent of old-time residents who have lived in the Shores for 60 years, Duffy adds.

To some extent, Miami Shores may have tried to wall itself off from change — literally. Starting in 1986, in an effort to combat crime, the village began closing off some of its residential streets to cars and pedestrians, creating a maze of cul-de-sacs, barriers, and historic homes with manicured lawns.

However, change did come to the Shores over the past decade. There were 958 fewer Anglos living in the village in 2010 compared to 2000, a drop of 19%. At the same time, there were 623 more Hispanics calling the village home, an increase of 28%.

Also in that decade, 99 housing units were added to the village's inventory, much of it coming in the form of a five-story, waterfront condominium at 1700 NE 105th St. known as The Shores Condo.

One force for change was the real estate bubble, which made Miami Shores a very hot community. "People were lining up with multiple offers in 2005, back in the heyday boom years," Duffy says. "It almost got to the point where you could call it a feeding frenzy."

In the wake of that frenzy, some homeowners in the single-family part of town decided to cash in and move. "There

## Miami Shores

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Total population 2000: **10,380**  
Total population 2010: **10,493**

Median age 2000: **37.7**  
Median age 2010: **39.9**

18 and under 2000: **2,332 (22.5%)**  
18 and under 2010: **2,099 (20%)**

65 and over 2000: **1,308 (12.6%)**  
65 and over 2010: **1,226 (11.7%)**

Hispanic 2000: **2,257 (21.7%)**  
Hispanic 2010: **3,215 (30.6%)**

Black 2000: **2,541 (24.5%)**  
Black 2010: **2,499 (23.8%)**

Non-Hispanic White 2000: **5,043 (48.6%)**  
Non-Hispanic White 2010: **4,420 (42.1%)**

Asian 2000: **254 (2.4%)**  
Asian 2010: **270 (2.6%)**

Median household income 1999: **\$56,309**  
Median household income 2009: **\$87,500**

Households making below \$14,999 annually in 1999: **328 (8.9%)**  
Households making below \$14,999 annually in 2009: **258 (8.2%)**

Households making above \$150,000 annually in 1999: **308 (8.3%)**  
Households making above \$150,000 annually in 2009: **696 (22%)**

Total households 2000: **3,631**  
Total households 2010: **3,627**

Family households 2000: **2,434 (67%)**  
Family households 2010: **2,367 (65.3%)**

Householder living alone 2000: **848 (23.4%)**  
Householder living alone 2010: **902 (24.9%)**

Total housing units 2000: **3,836**  
Total housing units 2010: **3,935**

Occupied housing units 2000: **3,631 (94.7%)**  
Occupied housing units 2010: **3,627 (92.2%)**

Vacant housing units 2000: **205 (5.3%)**  
Vacant housing units 2010: **308 (7.8%)**

For seasonal, recreational or occasional use 2000: **25 (0.7%)**  
For seasonal, recreational or occasional use 2010: **39 (1%)**

are a lot of Miami Shores people who sold their properties and moved into Quayside [in unincorporated Miami-Dade] or The Shores Condo," Duffy says.

The Shores experienced its share of foreclosures when the real estate market tanked, notes Duffy. Home prices also fell by as much as 60% in the Shores and the neighboring villages of Biscayne Park and El Portal.

Even with this wave of pain, U.S. Census data suggest that many Shores

Continued on page 36

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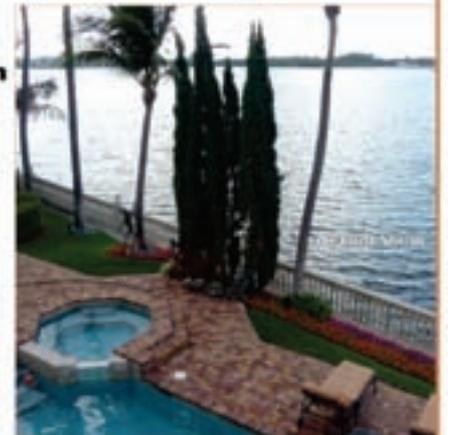
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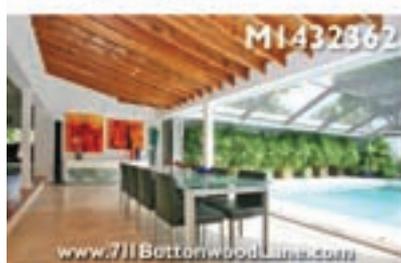
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## Who We Are

Continued from page 34

residents did well during much of the previous decade. There were 388 more households earning above \$150,000 a year in 2009 than 1999, an increase of 126%. The unemployment rate actually dropped in Miami Shores, from 9% in 2000 to 7% in 2009. The poverty rate also dipped from 9% in 2000 to 7% in 2009.

Not surprisingly, the cost of living also underwent a change — upward. Median monthly costs for homeowners with mortgages increased 69% from \$1354 in 2000 to \$2291 in 2009. The median monthly rent climbed 58% from \$743 in 2000 to \$1180 in 2009.

However, there were still 258 households earning less than \$15,000 a year in 2009, although there were 70 fewer of them than in 2009. “Miami Shores does have some affordable condominiums,” Duffy says. “A lot of them are rented for only about \$800 to \$1000 a month.”

## El Portal

For this quarter-square-mile municipality (and bird sanctuary), the real-estate market was quite a ride. Between 2005 and 2006, single-family houses were being sold for as much as \$600,000, says El Portal village manager Jason Walker. By 2008, property values had slumped by as much as 50%. That same year 60 houses were being foreclosed on, Walker says. Of those, 40 were in derelict condition. Some of these empty houses were burglarized for their copper wiring. “We actually caught one person who had hit ten homes,” he recalls.

Three years later, Walker notes that many of those houses are not only fixed up but filled with new residents. Which is why he doubts the U.S. Census claim that there were 92 empty housing units in El Portal in the year 2010, a 122% increase over 2000. “I don’t think so,” he says. “Maybe in 2008 or 2009, but not now.”

Walker says it’s also possible the Census Bureau undercounted his village, especially the somewhat chaotic 13-acre realm of Little Farm Trailer Park, which falls mainly within El Portal’s boundaries, where some undocumented immigrants are suspected to live. “I know they [U.S. Census workers] were counting, but it’s hard to have a real count because a lot of people don’t answer the door,” Walker explains. “Their status may not be legal, so they try to avoid the

## El Portal

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Total population 2000: **2,505**  
Total population 2010: **2,325**

Median age 2000: **36.5**  
Median age 2010: **40.9**

18 and under 2000: **636 (25.4%)**  
18 and under 2010: **440 (18.9%)**

65 and over 2000: **260 (10.4%)**  
65 and over 2010: **261 (11.2%)**

Hispanic 2000: **482 (19.2%)**  
Hispanic 2010: **665 (28.6%)**

Black 2000: **1,537 (61.4%)**  
Black 2010: **1,165 (50.1%)**

Non-Hispanic White 2000: **399 (15.9%)**  
Non-Hispanic White 2010: **441 (19%)**

Asian 2000: **20 (0.8%)**  
Asian 2010: **28 (1.2%)**

Median household income 1999: **\$39,681**  
Median household income 2009: **\$54,274**

Households making below \$14,999 annually in 1999: **150 (18.5%)**  
Households making below \$14,999 annually in 2009: **149 (17.2%)**

Households making above \$150,000 annually in 1999: **14 (1.7%)**  
Households making above \$150,000 annually in 2009: **51 (5.9%)**

Total households 2000: **837**  
Total households 2010: **847**

Family households 2000: **565 (67.5%)**  
Family households 2010: **574 (67.8%)**

Householder living alone 2000: **207 (24.7%)**  
Householder living alone 2010: **198 (23.4%)**

Total housing units 2000: **878**  
Total housing units 2010: **939**

Occupied housing units 2000: **837 (95.3%)**  
Occupied housing units 2010: **847 (90.2%)**

Vacant housing units 2000: **41 (4.7%)**  
Vacant housing units 2010: **92 (9.8%)**

For seasonal, recreational or occasional use 2000: **5 (0.6%)**  
For seasonal, recreational or occasional use 2010: **4 (0.4%)**

authorities as much as possible.” However, he has no plans to contest the census results: “The change is not so drastic.”

According to the census, there were 180 fewer people living in El Portal in 2010 than in 2000. Blacks now make up half of El Portal’s population, though that segment declined by 372 people, or 24%, between 2000 and 2010.

By contrast, Hispanics increased by 183 people, or 38%, during that period. Also on the rise: Anglos. Forty-two more

Continued on page 38

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## Who We Are

Continued from page 36

non-Hispanic whites resided in El Portal in 2010 than in 2000, an increase of 11%. Walker says El Portal's new residents include people who used to live in Miami Beach and City of Miami neighborhoods such as Buena Vista. Then there are the Europeans. "We have people from Germany and Italy," he says.

Between 2000 and 2009, there were 37 more households earning above \$150,000 a year, an increase of 264%. Just as significant, there were zero households in El Portal that earned more than \$200,000 a year in 1999. By 2009, there were 37 who earned that amount.

Still, El Portal's unemployment rate went from 7% in 2000 to 9% in 2009. The poverty rate also rose, from 12% in 2000 to 20% in 2009, when 26% of families with children were living below the poverty line.

Rental rates in El Portal increased by a mere 6% from a median of \$654 a month in 2000 to \$696 a month in 2009. Many of El Portal's rentals are found in Little Farm Trailer Park, which has received numerous citations for code,



**El Portal: Between 2000 and 2009, there were 37 more households earning above \$150,000 a year, an increase of 264%.**

safety, and environmental violations by county and village officials.

The cost of owning a single-family home, on the other hand, skyrocketed. Median monthly costs for homeowners with mortgages went from \$1008 in 2000

to \$2020 in 2009, a 100% increase.

### Past, Present, Future

The roots of Miami-Dade County's Hispanic population boom were established in the 1960s, when waves of Cuban

immigrants fleeing Fidel Castro's regime settled here. "After the arrival of Cubans, that's when the [Hispanic population increase] began," says Jaime Suchlicki of University of Miami's Institute for Cuban and Cuban-American Studies. "By the 1980s and 1990s, this town became a fairly Latin town."

Those immigrants paved the way for new arrivals throughout the Western Hemisphere, particularly Latin America and Haiti. At the same time, non-Hispanic populations were declining. Anglos began leaving "35 to 40 years ago," says Florida International University's Alex Stepick.

American-born blacks are also departing, particularly in recent years. "We are seeing a lot of African Americans moving to Atlanta or the Virginia-Washington, D.C. area," says Roseline Philippe of the Haitian-American Leadership Coalition. Some Haitians are also departing for Broward communities such as Pembroke Pines and Miramar, she adds.

These migration trends are being fueled by the high cost of housing in midst of a poor economy, argues Edward

Continued on page 40

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## August 4th to 7th



### The Life of Reilly

Directed by Frank Anderson & Barry Poltermann

If, in 1940, you had a lobotomized aunt, an institutionalized father, a racist mother, and were the only gay kid on the block, what do you think the odds would be that you'd end up a Tony winner, a staple of television, and a generational icon? Enter *The Life Of Reilly*. The cliché goes that truth is stranger than fiction. In this case, it is also funnier.



### Turtle: The Incredible Journey

Directed by Nick Stringer

The story of a loggerhead turtle, which follows in the path of her ancestors on one of the most extraordinary journeys in the natural world. Born on a beach in Florida, she rides the Gulf Stream up towards the Arctic and ultimately swims around the entire North Atlantic across to Africa and back to the beach where she was born.

## August 11th to 14th



### Troll Hunter

Directed by Andre Ovredal

The government says there's nothing to worry about -it's the bears making trouble in the mountains and forests of Norway. Local hunters don't believe it -and neither do a trio of college students who want to find out the truth. Armed with a video camera their persistence lands them straight in the path of the objects of his pursuits: Trolls. A fun journey that doesn't disappoint.



### Rejoice and Shout

Directed by Don McGlynn

A fascinating chronicle of the evolution of Gospel through its many musical styles -the spirituals, blues, swing, soul, and the blending of Rap and Hip Hop. Gospel music is in step with the story of African-American culture -slavery, rural existence and plantation work, the exodus to major cities, the Depression, World War II, civil rights and empowerment. A must see for people of all faiths and musical interests.

## August 18th to 21st



### These Amazing Shadows

Directed by Paul Mariano & Kurt Norton

What do the films *Casablanca* and *Blazing Saddles* have in common? The Library of Congress and specifically the National Film Registry, a roll call of American cinema treasures that reflects the diversity of film. This beautiful ode to America's history in celluloid and video is a love letter to movies that reveals how "American movies tell us so much about ourselves... not just what we did, but what we thought, what we felt, what we aspired to, and the lies we told ourselves."



### The Topps Twins: Untouchable Girls

Directed by Leanne Pooley

The utterly charming, endearing and funny story of the world's only comedic, singing, yodeling lesbian twin sisters, Lynda and Jools Topp, whose political activism and unique brand of entertainment has helped change New Zealand's social landscape. In the process they have become well-loved cultural icons. Winner of over 21 awards at Film Festivals all over the world, this is a film with lots of music, lots of laughter, and most of all, a lot of heart.

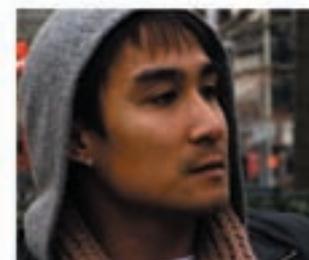
## August 25th to 28th



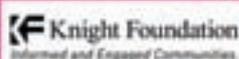
### Dressed

Directed by David John Swajeski

The inspiring story of self-taught clothing designer Nary Manivong, who defied the odds of a broken childhood and homelessness to pursue his ultimate dream: showing his collection at New York's Fashion Week. Nary's story shows the strength of the human spirit as he navigates through one of the toughest businesses to achieve his goal - the one joy that brings him hope in the face of his personal hardships. A truly inspiring story that unfolds against a backdrop of the fashion industry in New York.



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CINEMA

## Who We Are

Continued from page 38

Murray of FIU's Metropolitan Center, and can be seen in the reduction of families with children under the age of 18. "When you have a family," Murray says, "you need an affordable place to live."

Even if Miami-Dade ends up being an economy based on service to the wealthy, the providers of service — commonly poor immigrants working low-paying jobs — need somewhere to live. "The

people who work in restaurants and other businesses that serve the affluent moving downtown are having an increasingly hard time finding places to live," Stepick says. "The development brings amenities, but it crowds out affordable housing, and Miami is one of the worst places in the country to provide for affordable housing. The working classes, which may be decreasing but are still very large and are necessary for the city, are being forced into more crowded conditions — or they will simply have to leave."

In short, affordable housing is a key to the Biscayne Corridor's long-term health.

Another lesson to be learned from the past decade: A balanced mix of commercial and residential development can revitalize an area, as is happening with Midtown and downtown Miami.

So how soon will these demographic shifts affect the Biscayne Corridor's municipalities? Says Murray: "We may have to observe this trend for several years out."

Suchlicki is bullish. He points out that Miami-Dade's status as a "Latin town"

has encouraged corporations and banks from Latin American and the rest of the world to set up shop here. According to Miami's Beacon Council, 47 foreign banks and more than 1000 multinational companies maintain offices in Miami-Dade County, making it an important business hub for \$79.2 billion in annual global trade. "I think Florida will grow as a business center," he says, "and Miami will be an important international city."

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



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# A Waterfront Park for All to Enjoy

Remember “Parcel B,” the land behind the Miami Heat’s arena? You own it but can’t use it — yet

By Erik Bojnansky  
BT Senior Writer

On a locked gate just behind the American Airlines Arena a sign reads: “No Trespassing, Loitering or Fishing on This Property... Violators Will Be Prosecuted.” Another sign features a Miami-Dade County logo. It says: “Parcel B Bike Path and Shoreline Stabilization Project.”

Beyond the gate and the looming arena is Parcel B, three acres of land county leaders promised years ago to transform into a park.

Also gated is a new 611-foot-long seawall and bike path/baywalk that cost taxpayers \$6.1 million to build.

But the public can’t use the path or wander among Parcel B’s palms, planted for a 2005 MTV Music Video Awards show. Those trees and other “permanent improvements” cost taxpayers up to \$205,000, according to county documents.

A thousand feet to the north, another fence straddles the seawall, keeping out anyone who’d risk climbing over a pile of rocks to reach Parcel B.

“Ever since the arena opened, that area has *never* been open to the public,” grumbles Miami parks activist Steve Hagen.

But José Perez, director of the county General Services Administration’s design and construction division, claims the fences will come down after repairs to the county’s seawall, which cracked two days after it was built in 2009.

“Opening up a public area to the public? What a concept!” mocks Greg Bush, vice president of the Urban Environment League. Bush fears that some county officials still want to hand over Parcel B to a private developer. “I think Parcel B is absolutely being set up for failure and to privatize,” he says.



BT photo by Wendy Doscher-Smith

Instead of family picnics, Parcel B has played host to vagrants.

Perez insists that the county is determined to transform Parcel B into a park. “When we do get funding, we will finish that back area with landscaping and benches,” he assures.

All the land where American Airlines Arena stands was supposed to be a park. In 1981 the City of Miami bought 23 acres from the Florida East Coast Railroad for \$23 million. The intention was to merge the “FEC Tract” with Bicentennial Park. Instead, throughout the 1980s, the tract served as a track for the annual Miami Grand Prix, and as a hangout for vagrants.

In 1996 county voters blessed the concept of leasing much of the FEC tract from Miami and building a 19,600-seat, \$210 million new stadium for the Miami Heat. Helping to sell the idea was a promise that a portion of the tract

(Parcel B) would become a park. Hagen remembers that before the vote, the Heat sent out brochures with a color photograph depicting the arena’s backyard as a “soccer field on the water.”

The new arena had hardly opened when, in 2000, the Miami Heat Group proposed building a marina with restaurants and retail on Parcel B. That scheme mutated into a 23-story apartment building that was to be co-developed by Armando Codina. By 2003 the Heat and Codina had backed off the idea.

“The county and the Heat are in agreement that this should be a park,” Heat attorney Richard Weiss told *Miami Today*.

However, the county had never clearly zoned Parcel B as a park.

Continued on page 48

# A Peek into the Past

The renovation of the Bennett Building has uncovered old façades, rekindling memories of what NE 2nd Avenue once was

By Mark Sell  
BT Contributor

Like unwitting archeologists, work crews have peeled back a layer of history by ripping off the red brick façade from the Bennett Building on the northeast corner of 95th Street and NE 2nd Avenue in Miami Shores to reveal the long-gone A&P market.

Blink fast and you might still catch the old A&P logo on the building’s south

side, the last remnant of the supermarket that operated there from 1948 to 1972, or the old Chase Federal Savings sign on the corner (no relation to Chase Bank) that replaced the People’s National Bank, now Bank of America, when it moved to the handsome new red brick building across the street.

Richard and Theresa Caccamise, the stockbroker and mortgage broker who bought the Bennett Building from George Bennett for \$1.6 million late last



BT photo by Silvia Ros

George and Nancy Bennett are former owners of the Miami Shores building behind them, which housed the A&P market.

year, are revamping the whole structure in the perpetual NE 2nd Avenue hope of attracting retailers. “We’re trying to make it beautiful and bring it to 2011,”

says Theresa. Crews are raising the parapets, putting in Spanish tile, stone

Continued on page 46

# All Bets Are On

Savvy developers with deep pockets are investing billions in the Biscayne Corridor

By Erik Bojnansky  
BT Senior Writer

No doubt about it, there is a lot of bad economic news out there: high gas prices, Congressional debt-ceiling doubts, high unemployment, a nationwide foreclosure crisis that only seems to get worse. Closer to home, Miami-Dade County's unemployment rate, as of June, hovered just under 14 percent.

In spite of the gloom and uncertainty, Jamal Rahma is investing his time, energy, and money in the Biscayne Corridor. A few months ago, Rahma, who already owns two Miami-Dade grocery stores, bought the gas station at 5400 Biscayne Blvd., just a hop, skip, and a jump from 55th Street Station, the upscale, courtyard-style restaurant, retail, and office complex created by entrepreneur Mark Soyka. (Disclosure: Soyka is now the BT's landlord.)

The gas station's dingy appearance and reputation as a hangout for drug users and hookers didn't dissuade Rahma from buying it. "I've been after this gas station since I learned it was for sale about a year ago," he says. "It's a unique location in a very nice area."

Rahma is not alone in his upbeat outlook on the Biscayne Corridor. Developers, corporations, independent entrepreneurs, and government agencies are collectively investing billions of dollars from downtown Miami to Aventura in a surge of activity that promises to employ thousands.

"I think we are in for a nice long boom here," says Jeff Morr, president of Majestic Properties. Investors from South America, Europe, and Asia see South Florida's up-and-coming areas, like the Biscayne Corridor, as a place to deposit their money. "Property in Miami has become another commodity, like gold and silver," he says.

Timing and the optimistic belief in a global recovery have created much more activity than a year ago along the Biscayne Corridor, says Tibor Hollo, a

Miami developer for the past 55 years who has two new projects of his own planned in the corridor. "If you start something, it takes you two and a half years to finish," he explains. "It's perceived that in two and a half years, there will be an economic upswing."

But Biscayne Corridor residents and commuters won't have to wait that long to see results. Some projects have already broken ground, while retailers and restaurateurs have spent millions on recently opened ventures. Below are brief descriptions for 25 of them.

## 1. Brickell CitiCentre

Swire Properties, subsidiary of a Hong Kong-based company that developed much of Brickell Key, will invest \$700 million to build Brickell CitiCentre, a 4.8-million-square-foot mixed-use project designed by Miami's own Arquitectonica. Construction employing 1700 workers could begin as early as this year on nine acres of land at SW 8th Street and S. Miami Avenue, just south of the Miami River and west of U.S. 1, according to consulting firm Miami Economic Associates. Once completed, Brickell CitiCentre will employ an estimated 3800 people and will include condominiums, rental apartments, offices, restaurants, retail, nightclubs, an exclusive business hotel, a movie theater, and a bowling alley.

## 2. Big Fish

The iconic hidden restaurant, founded by the late Thomas Orren Sykes in the 1980s on the bank of the Miami River at 55 SW Miami Avenue Rd., will soon reincarnate in the form of a two-story building with dining terraces on the roof and a VIP lounge-café, says architect Dean B. Lewis, founder of Miami-based DB Lewis Architecture+Design.

Spanish developer Ignacio Vega and an unnamed "high-profile entertainer" are investing \$3 million to develop the restaurant, and spending another \$250,000 to repair the seawall, move FP&L lines underground,

and make other infrastructure improvements. Lewis says the two structures that once housed Big Fish have been demolished to make way for the development. The seawall's renovation will begin in the fall.

## 3. One Bayfront Plaza

In 2007 the Miami City Commission approved Tibor Hollo's dream of developing the tallest building in Miami: the 1049-foot-tall One Bayfront Plaza, 100 S. Biscayne Blvd., designed by Coral Gables architect Ignacio Permy of TERRA Architecture.

Hollo has since scaled back the design somewhat, settling on a height of 1010 feet, still tall enough to dwarf the 789-foot Four Seasons Hotel on Brickell Avenue. To help Permy revise his original design, Hollo hired Kohn Pederson Fox Associates, a New York architectural firm that designs skyscrapers such as the 1614-foot-high Shanghai World Financial Center and Hong Kong's 1588-foot-tall International Commerce Centre.

"The plans should be finished 14 months from now," says Hollo, who plans to demolish the current 19-story, 1950s-era office complex on the site and replace it with a \$1.8 billion twisting tower that will contain Class-A office space, a hotel, and retail.

## 4. FEC Railway Project

July 15 marked the groundbreaking of a \$46.9 million Florida East Coast Railway reconnection project that will link the Port of Miami to a rail yard near Miami International Airport. The project will also repair the rail bridge to the Port of Miami's Dodge Island that was knocked out by Hurricane Wilma in 2005. Scheduled for completion in 2014, the project will provide 833 jobs, the Port of Miami claims. It is funded by a \$22.8 million grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation, a \$10.9 million contribution from the Florida East Coast Railroad, \$10.9 million from the Florida Department of Transportation, and \$4.8 million from the Port of Miami.

## 5. Port of Miami Tunnel

Costing taxpayers \$1 billion, the underwater dual vehicular tunnel system will connect the western end of the MacArthur Causeway to the Port of Miami's road network. The tunnel project, which commenced last year, is scheduled for completion in 2014 and is expected to provide 400 jobs for local workers. Funding comes from the state (\$650 million), the county (\$402 million), and the City of Miami (\$50 million).

## 6. Resorts World Miami

Tan Sri Lim, CEO of the \$45 billion Malaysian-based Genting Malaysia



Continued on page 44

**All Bets**

Continued from page 43

Berhad, loves Miami so much that he's been visiting the city for 40 years. "I believe Miami is destined to be one of the most prominent cities in the world," he announced during a June 16 reception at the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts.

This past May, Lim's resort company shelled out \$236 million to buy 14 acres fronting Biscayne Bay from the McClatchy Company, owner of the *Miami Herald*, including One Herald Plaza, which has housed the newspaper since 1963. Lim plans to build Resorts World Miami, a \$3 billion, Arquitectonica-designed project that will include residential units, hotel rooms, retail, restaurants, and casino gambling (pending state approval). Aside from being close to the Arsht Center and the future Museum Park, Resorts World Miami will be within rowing distance of the terminal for Norwegian Cruise Lines, in which Genting owns a 50-percent stake.

**7. 1700 Biscayne**

At 1700 Biscayne Blvd., where a Burger King now operates, investors affiliated with Midgard Management plan to build three towers, ranging between 443 and 603 feet in height, designed by architect Bernard Zyscovich. Called 1700 Biscayne, the \$726 million project will include 672 residences, 505 hotel rooms, and nearly 182,000 square feet of retail, and will create 536 full-time jobs, according to a report from consultants Lambert Advisory.

**8. Sonesta Mikado Hotel**

Just 480 feet from the future 1700 Biscayne project, and less than a half-mile from the Resorts World Miami project is



Courtesy of Swire Properties

**Brickell CitiCentre will house a whopping 4.8 million square feet of residential and commercial.**

Tibor Hollo's second Biscayne Corridor project. Architect Zyscovich is designing the \$62 million, 250-room Sonesta Mikado Hotel. Under a deal approved by the Miami Community Redevelopment Agency this past April, Hollo's Florida East Coast Realty will receive a property tax rebate of up to \$9 million, paid over several years, if the hotel hires 268 Miami residents on a full-time basis. Hollo says he will break ground on the project "as soon as they issue the permit." Completion is scheduled for 2014.

**9. 18Biscayne**

On track to provide groceries, dietary supplements, banking services, and haircuts in an area of intensive development is 18Biscayne, a 57,200-square-foot, three-story, Publix-anchored retail project now being built at 1777 Biscayne Blvd. by the Fort Lauderdale-based Stiles Company. Set for completion in early 2012, 18Biscayne is already 98 percent leased, according to a July 27 Stiles news release. Besides the 49,200-square-foot Publix

with bakery, pharmacy, and café, tenants include a Wells Fargo branch, a GNC health store, and a Hair Cuttery.

**10. City Hall the Restaurant**

Restaurateur Steve Haas (who helped open eateries such as Tuscan Steak and Monty's) and executive chef Tom Azar (formerly of Emeril's South Beach) opened City Hall the Restaurant to much media attention in June. Located at 2004 Biscayne Blvd., the two-story, 201-seat American bistro took \$2 million and more than a year of planning to build.

**11. Midtown Miami Entertainment Complex**

Jack Cayre, principal of Midtown Equities Group, is intent on partnering with another developer within a year to build a \$60 million, 220,000-square-foot entertainment complex within Midtown Miami, a 56-acre community of condos, restaurants, retail, and offices at NW 36th Street and N. Miami Avenue. In an interview last month, Cayre told the

*South Florida Business Journal* that the future complex will include a 200-room boutique hotel and a 12-screen movie theater that will serve alcoholic beverages to adult patrons, as well as meals.

The complex would rise just east of Developers Diversified Realty's 645,000-square-foot Shops at Midtown Miami, on a four-acre plot now occupied by a jungle of trees and bushes that were supposed to be part of World Gardens at Midtown. Suzanne Schmidt, spokeswoman for Midtown Miami, says some of the landscaping will remain on site.

**12. Design District**

Just north of Midtown Miami is the Design District, a quarter-square-mile area that serves as home to 145 clothing boutiques, high-end furniture stores, restaurants, bars, art galleries, and other businesses. The district's largest landowner and developer, Dacra CEO Craig Robins, told the *Miami Herald* in May that he's investing \$40 million to increase his real estate holdings there, so he can build more commercial space, loft apartments, and a boutique hotel.

**13. Educating Hands School of Massage**

Once based in Brickell, this 30-year-old, accredited teaching institution took over a 10,000-square-foot office building at 3883 Biscayne Blvd. last fall. "The new place offered a fresh start in a fresh, up-and-coming neighborhood," says Iris Burman, director of Educating Hands. "The landlord [Odarp Inc.] put in a very substantial investment to renovate the building from its basic shell to the full build-out. In addition to their part, we've put in over \$150,000 to create a space that will serve us and our customers well for years to come."

Continued on page 47

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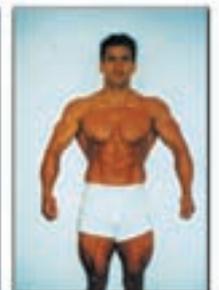
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**Peek**

Continued from page 42

columns, and lots of display windows. “I’m trying to go with French chateau Mediterranean to create an old carriage-house style with today’s flair.”

They hope the revamped digs will entice retailers to join Mooie’s ice cream parlor, Impact Fitness, the Flower Bar, Miss Jane’s Music Studio, and the existing medical and law offices. Her business, Preferred Mortgage Lenders, will stay where it is in the Sklar complex across NE 2nd Avenue.

When finished, perhaps by year’s end, they will rename the building Downtown Village Square.

George Bennett of Miami Shores, now 86 years old, bought the southern half of the block, including the A&P, in 1971 from People’s National Bank for \$400,000 and covered it with red brick that reminded him of his native Madison, Georgia.

In 1982 he bought the northern half of the block — which included the old Shoreland Arcade that once housed the Shoreland Company, the original and bankrupted developer of the village,



**Local historian Seth Bramson provided this undated view of NE 2nd Avenue and 95th Street, with the A&P at the far right.**

and Miami Shores Village Hall — for \$500,000 from Bill and Claude Mercer of the Mercer Seed Company, and paid off the mortgage in five years.

In 2004 he sold the block-long building to Ruben Matz for \$3.9 million, took

back the mortgage as a deed-in-lieu in 2010, and sold it late last year to the Cacamis for \$1.6 million.

“I never dreamed I’d buy the building when I first came here in 1946 and ‘47,” Bennett says. “I started grade school

in Madison, Georgia, in my bare feet in 1930. We grew up without electricity, but when the war came, I joined the navy and became an electrician. I was just out of the navy in 1946 and working for Western Electric.

“I met Nancy at Rader Methodist Church down the street and swore if I ever got back here I’d marry her. Western Electric transferred me to Georgia and then to the Carolinas, and then, by a fluke, I came back here. And we got married. It’s been 63 years and a great run.”

Bennett founded and built the Bennett Electric Company, and bought the building just before NE 2nd Avenue entered its slow decline. At that time, the A&P, the five-and-dime, the Mercer Seed Company (on the present site of Mooie’s), three service stations and barbershops, and plenty of doctors’ offices were open for business.

North Shore Hospital, a bit more than a mile to the west, had not yet built its medical office complex, which drew many doctors from Miami Shores. Up the street, the Shores Theater was still

Continued on page 49

Photo courtesy of the Seth and Myra Bramson Collection





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## All Bets

Continued from page 44

### 14. Bay Point Center

Just across the street from Educating Hands, renovation work by G & L Real Estate is nearly complete at the 43,000-square-foot Bay Point Center at 3915 Biscayne Blvd. "A lot of medical professionals are looking to move their practice there," says Mauricio Zapata, a broker associate of Chariff Realty Group. The \$5 million project is expected to receive a temporary certificate of occupancy within three months.

### 15. Kubik at Palm Grove

It isn't all positive news on the development front. Since 2004, LAB Developers has sought to build Kubik, twin 130-foot-tall, loft-style residential buildings on 2.5 acres at 5582 NE Fourth Ct., right across the road from Mark Soyka's 55th Street Station. Earlier this year, after LAB spent years in litigation with a small band of Morningside homeowners, the Third District Court of Appeal ruled that Kubik will have to head back to the

Miami City Commission. Otherwise the developers will have to settle for a project below the 35-foot height limit that now covers Biscayne Boulevard between 50th and 77th streets.

Paul Murphy, one of Kubik's developers, says he and his partners believe that heading into "the appeal circus all over again" is a "total waste of time and money." He adds that the height limit kills "any rational development" in the Upper Eastside. "In the meantime," Murphy says, "you have to admit, it's a pleasant-looking piece of nonproductive land."

The land became pleasant-looking last month, when a giant crane, an abandoned sales trailer, and assorted construction debris was removed from the site, prompting rumors that the Kubik project had been revived. Murphy explains that the material was removed at the request of the city's code enforcement department.

Neighbors are hoping that the fence surrounding the property will come down and a new lawn will come up. "We will sod the property," Murphy reports. "The fence is an insurance issue.

The city wants it down. The insurance company wants it up. At the moment, no resolution."

### 16. Milebella

The 35-foot height limit hasn't stopped developer and restaurateur Steve Pericone and his partner Jay Solowsky. The pair will soon break ground on a brand-new, \$1 million, 10,000-square-foot commercial retail building at 6101 Biscayne Blvd. Named Milebella, the 35-foot-tall structure's MiMo-inspired design will include a double-height glass façade, a V-shape chevron roof canopy, covered terraces and entrances, rear gated parking, and landscaping, according to project architect Dean Lewis. "It'll make a difference in the MiMo/Boulevard landscape," he says. "We're not looking at a typical cinder block." Once work begins, Lewis expects the project will take six months to complete.

### 17. 6405 Biscayne Blvd.

Four blocks away from Milebella, an Argentine developer purchased a 15,000-square-foot lot at 6405 Biscayne Blvd. from Midtown developers Joe

Cayre and Michael Samuel. Chariff Realty Group's Zapata, who closed the deal in May, declines to name the investor or sale price, but says the new owner intends to build retail.

### 18. Wonderland at the Boulevard

After six months and \$1.5 million in remodeling, Wonderland at the Boulevard should be open for business "within three to four weeks," says adult entertainment entrepreneur Leroy Griffith.

During the 41 years Griffith has owned the Boulevard Theater, the 14,000-square-foot building has operated under various names as an adult movie house, a female strip joint, a gay club featuring male strippers, and a female topless sports bar. But for the next 15 years, Griffith will be leasing his theater to Sofa Entertainment Group, which will reportedly feature a gourmet restaurant and nude female entertainment. "They put in new marble floors, new stages, and new bathrooms," Griffith says.

Continued on page 50

## Keystone Point Marina

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**Parcel B**

Continued from page 42

Records show that both the arena and Parcel B are in an “8002 Parks & Recreation zone,” yet their legal description is “maritime arena.”

The land languished for a few years before another idea was proposed. In September 2007, the county commission approved a resolution to study the feasibility of constructing a five-story museum and parking garage devoted to the failed Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba. But no further action was taken. “I think the museum has gone away,” Bush says.

While the county contemplated what to build, or not to build on Parcel B, the City of Miami was investing more than \$20 million improving the waterfront area between the MacArthur Causeway and the arena, says city spokeswoman Cristina Fernandez. Among the enhancements was a \$10 million seawall along the FEC slip that was completed in 2006, and a new \$1.5 million bollard system capable of docking vessels more than 400 feet long.

Thanks to those enhancements, the FEC slip area has “become an

exceptional venue for hosting tall ship events, around-the-world races, military ship visits, the Miami International Boat show, and a variety of other maritime activities and events,” Fernandez writes in an e-mail to the *BT*.

Then, unexpectedly this past June, Miami-Dade County Commission Chairman Dennis Moss proposed studying the feasibility of filling the FEC slip with material dredged from the Port of Miami tunnel project. After an outcry from Miami officials, the study suggestion was pulled from the commission’s July agenda.

The city’s waterfront activity inspired county officials to perform shoreline improvements of their own. In 2008 the county commission hired Shoreline Foundation, Inc. to renovate the crumbling seawall behind Parcel B and connect it to the new FEC slip seawall. The county’s GSA department recommended the Fort Lauderdale-based company because it had also built the seawalls for the FEC slip and Bicentennial Park.

On December 16, 2009, the county’s new seawall, which includes a 16-foot-wide walking and biking path, was completed. Two days later a severe storm

hit Miami. “It rained like crazy,” recalls the GSA’s José Perez. The rain seeped through the “millions of holes” still present in the older portions of the seawall. At the same time “the brand-new seawall stopped the water from flowing,” he explains. Because the water “had to find a way out,” it ruptured a three-foot hole in the corner where it connects with Miami’s portion of the seawall.

Spencer Crowley, a commissioner with the Florida Inland Navigation District, says a design flaw caused the rupture. “The intersection of these two seawalls did not match up quite right,” Crowley states. “That’s what caused the problem.”

Perez denies the damage resulted from faulty design, claiming that the county’s wall “flexed” as it was meant to do. (Shoreline Foundation did not return a phone call from the *BT*.)

Regardless of the how the hole was caused, the rupture threatened to undermine the both the county and city portions of the seawall. Without repairs, “the ground could keep going under the seawall and into the water,” Crowley explains. If that happens, “we would have

to replace the corner of that seawall, and that could be an expensive project.”

Finally on July 7, Shoreline Foundation went to work, repairing the wall substantially by July 27 at a cost of \$167,000, a contingency amount already in the project’s budget, Perez says. In the event of another flash flood, the fixes will allow “the water to go over the edge.”

Meanwhile, the City of Miami is also making some progress with its plan to “complete a signature baywalk around the entire Bicentennial Park, FEC slip, and north toward I-395,” states city spokeswoman Fernandez. Construction on the baywalk should commence in spring 2012, she adds. That baywalk, Perez notes, will be connected to the Parcel B bike path by a sidewalk.

At deadline, neither Perez nor Fernandez could say when the fences blocking access to Parcel B would be removed.

Parks advocate Steve Hagen remains skeptical that Parcel B will ever open to the public as recreational open space. Says Hagen: “I will believe it when I see it.”

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

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## Peek

Continued from page 46

screening first-run films.

Local historian Seth Bramson's book *Boulevard of Dreams: A Pictorial History of El Portal, Miami Shores, and North Miami*, unpeels more layers of NE 2nd Avenue history. One striking hand-drawn map by Melvin Mishler, who homesteaded 80 acres in the neighborhood in 1900, reveals a 1904 "Piney Woods Church" (on the present Bank of America site), north of the Moore packinghouse on NE 2nd Avenue and 91st Street.

Move forward almost a generation, and you can see the devastation of the 1926 hurricane on the Shoreland Arcade with the blown-out storefronts for United Cigars and the remnants of Shoreland's sales offices.

Dave Watson, born in 1922, grew up in the neighborhood. His memories begin about 1928. He remembers the Margaret Ann grocery store on 2nd Avenue near 98th Street (later renamed the Food Palace), a smaller store where the butcher would cut your meat to order,

predating the A&P. He also remembers swimming in the Little River by the Miami Avenue wooden, humpback bridge in the late 1930s when he went to Edison High.

After graduating in 1940, he worked as a plumber's apprentice and courted his wife-to-be Eleanor, who worked behind the soda fountain at Black's Drug Store at the present site of the Village Café. In 1943 he went off to war and flew seaplanes in the Pacific, followed by the GI Bill, college, the launch of an engineering career, and recall to naval duty in Key West during the Korean War.

He returned to Miami Shores in 1954 as a modern Rip Van Winkle after 11 years. The community had matured. The new Tropical Cafeteria, pillbox-shaped like a Cinerama theater, had opened on the present Catholic Charities site at 99th Street, along with the present village hall and library.

The A&P displaced its competitors as the place to shop. It was the superstore of its day at 10,000 square feet, about one-fifth the size of the current Miami Shores Publix.

The Great Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company (hence the A&P) is now a shadow of its old self, but in the late 1940s and early '50s, it was the world's second-largest purveyor of goods, behind only General Motors. *Time* magazine, in November 1950, wrote that the A&P sold one in seven cups of coffee, one in 14 pounds of butter, and one in 28 eggs in the United States.

*Time* called the A&P "the real melting pot of the country, patronized by the boss's wife and the baker's daughter, the priest and the policeman," and said that "going to the A&P" was "almost an American tribal rite."

And why not? During torrid summer days, nothing could beat the 20-ton air-conditioning unit that the A&P installed in 1948. It was still working well when Ruben Matz replaced it 56 years later.

But after the A&P closed in the early 1970s, NE 2nd Avenue was not the same. The new I-95 and larger Publix and Winn-Dixie supermarkets along Biscayne Boulevard drew shoppers away like magnetic fields. A&P left Florida and retrenched. The cafeteria restaurant had closed, and some, if not all, of the

doctors had decamped to North Shore.

For NE 2nd Avenue merchants, recapturing the traffic of a long-ago time is a tricky proposition, made all the more difficult by a lack of sewers. (Nearly all of Miami Shores uses septic tanks, commercial as well as residential properties.) Specialty food stores, restaurants of any size, and doctors' offices are challenged to launch without replacing the present septic tanks with sewers. Despite civic task forces and supportive city officials, the problem seems intractable.

In the meantime, the Caccamises (Richard's grandfather worked at an A&P in the Northeast) are going after national retailers to pay the new mortgage.

Now that he is out of the real estate game, George Bennett counsels patience to current and would-be Miami Shores landlords. "Rental rates of 28 or 30 bucks a square foot have to come to a screeching halt," he says. "We need more competitive rental rates to keep these buildings occupied. You can't expect to make a fortune on these buildings overnight."

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**All Bets**

Continued from page 47

**19. Biscayne Plaza**

Designed by architect Robert Fitch Smith and opened in 1954, the Biscayne Plaza shopping center, at 561 NE 79th St., will soon undergo a several-million-dollar renovation, according to Terranova Corporation, the property's manager. Sabor Tropical Supermarket also will pour \$1 million into upgrades on the 24,000-square-foot space the company will be leasing for the next decade.

**20. Antiques Plaza**

On the border between Miami's Upper Eastside and the Village of El Portal, the collection of furniture stores known as Antiques Plaza (8650 Biscayne Blvd.) is going through a \$500,000 expansion that will add 6000 square feet of retail space. Danceney Reyes, representative of Regalands Properties, Inc., says, "the project is supposed to be finished in approximately four and half months."

**21. Chase Bank**

Two months ago, North Miami Beach city officials approved Chase Bank's



BT photo by Wendy Doscher-Smith

**When Borders closed its doors, electronics specialists hgregg saw an opportunity.**

application to build a new branch where a BP gas station now operates at 14590 Biscayne Blvd. Chris Heid, North Miami Beach's chief planner, says it will take six months to a year for Chase Bank to obtain the necessary permits to build on the site. Some 20 blocks to the south, at 1865 NE 123rd St., TotalBank recently moved into a new branch office that

is part of the new Causeway Square development.

**22. Biscayne Landing**

In September the North Miami City Council will choose between two development teams interested in completing Biscayne Landing, a 183-acre, city-owned tract at 150th Street and Biscayne

Boulevard that was to contain thousands of condos until the real estate crash derailed the project in 2009.

Ian Bruce Eicher, developer of the 40-story Continuum condominium in South Beach and Cosmopolitan Resort and Casino in Las Vegas, wants to build up to one million square feet of big-box retail in less than four years, followed by a medical pavilion, an assisted-living facility, luxury rentals, student dorms, and a 150-room hotel.

Eicher's rival is Oleta Partners LLC, which consists of Biscayne Landing's original developer, Michael Swerdlow, plus Haitian-American broadcasting executives Manny and Jenn Cherebun and the LeFrak Organization, a century-old New York-based real estate company. Oleta Partners proposes to build one million square feet of retail, 3000 residential units, a 200,000-square-foot film and production studio, 300 hotel rooms, and a 7000-square-foot community center.

**23. Duffy's Sports Grill**

The Florida-based sports bar chain picked the Intracoastal Mall at 3929 NE 163rd St. to open its first restaurant

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## All Bets

Continued from page 50

in Miami-Dade County and its 24th in South Florida. Open since June in the 24,000-square-foot space occupied by the Water Club just five months prior, Duffy's Sports Bar has 700 seats, extensive covered patio seating, 200 plasma televisions, and an outdoor swimming pool with its own bar, says Tricia Thomas, the restaurant's public relations representative. Sitting along

the Intracoastal Waterway, Duffy's also has 500 feet of dockage for boats.

### 24. hhgregg

The \$2 billion nationwide electronics store spent \$1 million transforming the 30,000-square-foot former Borders bookstore at 19925 Biscayne Blvd. into its Aventura outpost. According to Jeff Pearson, hhgregg's vice president of marketing, the Biscayne Corridor location was ideal. "Our Aventura location is in a high-traffic retail area that is visible

to consumers and convenient to access," he says in an e-mail to the *BT*. Since opening in July, the hhgregg Aventura store has employed 50 people, says company spokeswoman Kim Paone.

### 25. Winn-Dixie

In response to Aventura's growing Jewish Orthodox population, mega grocer Winn-Dixie completed a \$3.5 million facelift in May. The refurbished Winn-Dixie at 20417 Biscayne Blvd. offers an expanded kosher

department supervised by the Orthodox Rabbinical Board, a South Florida-based nonprofit organization.

*For more images of these projects, go to [www.biscaynetimes.com](http://www.biscaynetimes.com). Biscayne Times will continue tracking development along the Biscayne Corridor. Please send relevant information to senior writer Erik Bojnansky at [erik.bojnansky@biscaynetimes.com](mailto:erik.bojnansky@biscaynetimes.com)*

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# Cat Fight

How a simple pet adoption turned into a showdown over kitty declawing

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

I'm an animal lover. Always have been. I'd venture to say that I like animals more than I like people. And after I tell this story, you may see why.

It began a few weeks ago, when my mother-in-law decided that she wanted a kitten. It was a huge decision; she vowed there'd be no more pets after her 15-year-old Yorkie passed away.

I can understand that. She's 71 years old and doesn't want more responsibility, nor does she want her heart broken again when the inevitable happens. But like all animal lovers, the allure of fur often outweighs any potential pain down the line. And so off to

my local PetSmart we went.

Ah, the Aventura PetSmart on Biscayne Boulevard and 210th Street. I know it well. I'm there constantly. It's where I buy food for my two cats and my dog, and where I go when I want a kitten fix.

Which brings me back to my story. Nervous chatter filled the air as we neared the "Adopt A Stray" cat cages. And while there only for moral support, my husband and I were as excited as my in-laws. Always even-keeled, they feigned nonchalance. We looked, we saw, we selected the sweetest little white and brown Siamese mix.

My mother-in-law immediately knew the one she wanted. She was

head-over-heels in love. They played. They bonded. Done deal. My in-laws filled out the requisite forms, and instead of having them drive back to Boynton Beach hungry, we went to lunch before completing the adoption.

Fast-forward one hour and we're back in PetSmart, the anticipation incredibly high. "We're here for the Siamese mix," said my mother-in-law to Edie, an elderly volunteer.

Edie, whom I have seen many times, pulled out the application and simply said, "No."

"What do you mean, no?" I asked.



"It says on her application that she intends to declaw. We do not award kittens to people who are going to declaw. Sorry," she matter-of-factly said before turning away.

Within seconds, the look of confusion on my mother-in-law's face turned to pure sadness. The queen of



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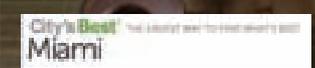
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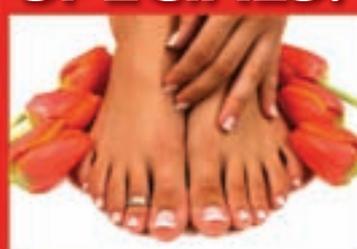
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nonemotion was about to cry.

"Seriously?" I asked Edie sharply. "You are joking, right?"

"Um, no. She cannot have the kitten. We do not release kittens to people who intend to declaw them," she repeated.

Her tone wasn't nasty or angry; it was more deadpan, like it was just another day. And to her, it was. But to Mom, it was the end of the world. Her heart was being broken once more, and I had to stand there and watch. But anyone who knows me knows that I will never let someone I love get hurt.

"This is unacceptable," I shot back. "You're telling me that you'd rather a kitten remain homeless than be brought into a loving, caring home because it may get declawed? That's ridiculous."

"Have you ever read about the declaw process?" she asked, starting to condescend. "If you've ever read what it entails, you'd know why... [condescending tone getting worse, my tolerance waning]. Do you know what they do? They..."

"I know what they do," I snapped back. "I've had cats since I was eight years old."

"Well, then you should certainly understand."

"No, I don't understand. Not even a little. Not at all. As a matter of fact, I don't agree, nor do I find this acceptable. A woman wants to give an animal a good home, filled with warmth and food and lots of love, and you won't let that happen. Seriously? It's not for you to make that call."

And I was just getting started.

But rather than recount word-for-word the blossoming "discussion" that ensued, let's skip to where my mother-in-law simply shook her head, looked at the ground, and, her voice cracking, hoarsely whispered, "C'mon, let's go. I'll find another."

It was devastating. And then we left.

Adopt A Stray, a nonprofit foster-care program, preaches that abandoned and abused animals deserve a chance for better lives. They claim they look for "long-term, compatible relationships for the animal and the family."

Then why was my in-laws' adoption quashed? I can't understand how an organization that spays and neuters animals can turn squeamish when it comes to another procedure, especially when someone who would provide a great home is involved. I was so incensed that

I went back to PetSmart two weeks later to speak with the Adopt A Stray people.

I didn't see Edie, but I did see that poor homeless kitty still awaiting adoption, and I was so angry that it was probably better that Edie was nowhere in sight. I did speak with a sympathetic and reasonable woman named Marlene Blauder. She tried to explain their rationale — it's cruel, it's mean, it's inhumane — and all I could think was: "Is her husband circumcised? That's pretty brutal, too, isn't it?"

I admit the declawing process is pretty appalling, but sometimes it's a necessary evil. And I believe it should be a personal choice — between my pets and me.

I don't have a problem with PetSmart. I like the folks at my local store and choose to frequent it rather than Petco or any other big-box pet store. I did want to find out if it officially supports the "no declaw" policy, as I spend a lot of money there and won't accept the brand condoning such a ban. I can only equate it to pro-lifers who vehemently impose their beliefs on others.

Unfortunately, when I went to the manager, she clammed up and redirected

me to the national office. When I reached out to PetSmart national, Jeff Davis, senior communications manager of PetSmart Charities in Arizona, responded.

His first e-mail consisted mostly of canned stats and facts (but I learned they "don't support" declawing), and although I asked to speak with him, he flatly refused, stating, "I prefer e-mail because you told Kelley at PetSmart that your column would not be portraying PetSmart in a positive light. That type of comment indicates that your mind is made up no matter what we say, so I prefer to document my responses."

That's one weak response from Mr. Davis. He should've picked up the phone and had a conversation with me. Instead he hid behind e-mail. I'm a reasonable person and never thought about trashing PetSmart. (Nor do I know who "Kelley" is.) And while it should choose adoption partners more carefully, I don't hold bad policy against the store. That's all on Adopt A Stray.

In fact, the only thing wrong with PetSmart is its choice of media-relations people.

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



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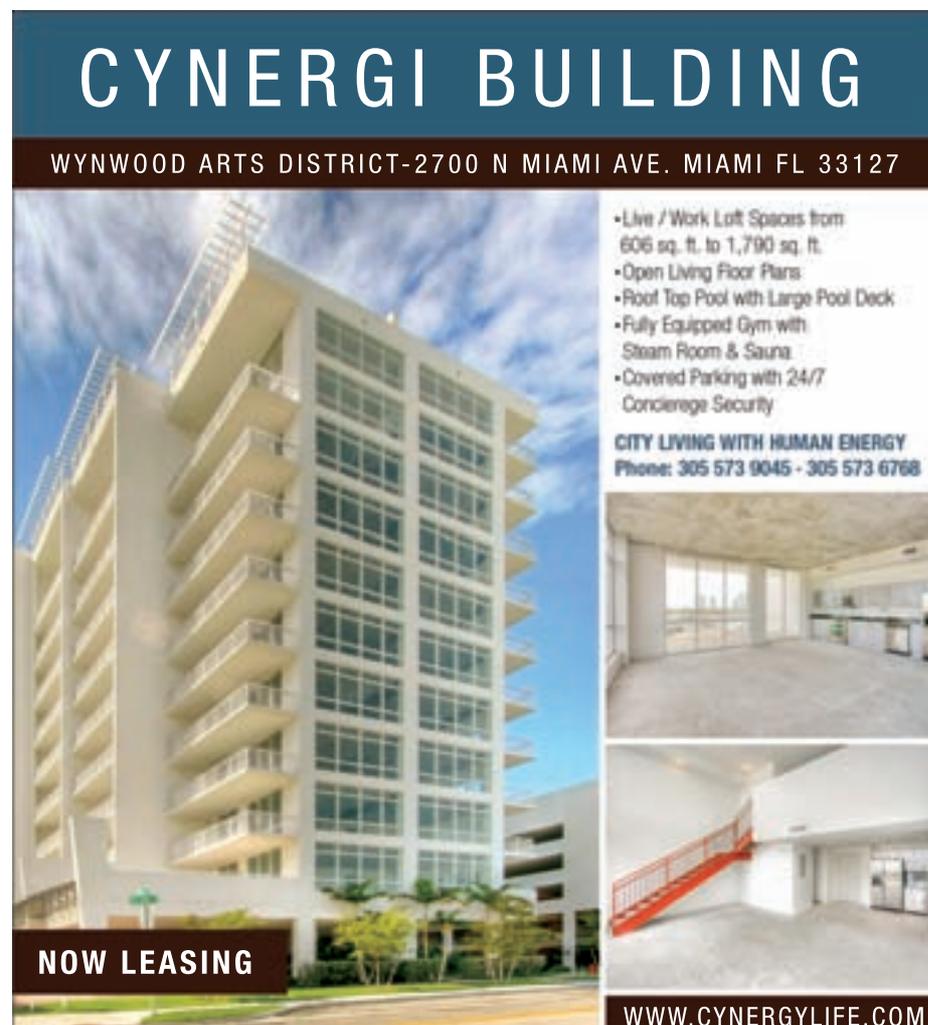
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# The Municipal Ref

It's the Miami city manager's job to put an end to the running feud between the mayor and the police chief

By Frank Rollason  
BT Contributor

The saga of the dysfunctional City of Miami family goes on and on. The latest chapter finds the newly appointed city manager, Johnny Martinez, issuing a clarifying memo on July 5 to Chief of Police Miguel Exposito, reiterating a previous verbal directive and lambasting the chief for "understanding neither the scope or [sic] the intent of my instructions."

The manager went on to write: "In an effort not to be misunderstood, I'm reducing the intent of my instructions to you in writing. Therefore, regarding news inquiries...I am directing you to

cease engaging with any media without my express written permission. You are also directed to extend this order to your officers." The manager closed with this: "Should you violate this order, I will be forced to act pursuant to the authority provided me under both the city charter and city ordinance."

Let's dissect this missive and focus on a couple of key statements that are perhaps indicative of things to come. "In an effort not to be misunderstood" translates to "Oops, I have been advised to cover my ass; I should have put this directive in writing!"

Regarding the part about "You are also directed to extend this order to your officers," I'm not sure the manager



has the authority to tell the police chief what he can order his personnel to do or not do. The manager can hold the chief accountable for the performance and actions of his officers, but I do not think he

can give the chief a direct order that he is obligated to pass on to the troops.

The most notable "gotcha" is the typical catch-all: "Should you violate this order, I will be forced to act pursuant to

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the authority provided me under both the city charter and the city ordinance.” What the manager is conveying to the chief in everyday city-government parlance is that, if you open your mouth in any derogatory manner toward our beloved Mayor Tomás Regalado, I will be forced to fire your ass on the spot! Seems pretty clear to me — and probably long overdue.

Just for the record, this is not the first time such a gag order has been issued to a police chief. A few years back there was quite a public battle between then Police Chief Donald Warshaw and Mayor Xavier Suarez. The mayor wanted Warshaw gone immediately, and the first city manager he appointed failed miserably in carrying out that assignment. So the mayor fired that manager and brought me in for a test run.

Mayor Suarez made it clear to me he would be thrilled if I were to fire the chief, but he coyly reminded me that the decision to fire or retain the chief was “strictly up to me.” Yeah, right! He then appointed me as interim manager until he could bring my appointment before the commission for confirmation, and

sent me merrily on my way.

What was exceptionally clear to me — aside from the fact that my employment as city manager hinged on my next move — was that the ongoing verbal jousting in the media between the mayor and the chief had to come to an end. And since I had no authority to control what the mayor said or did, I had to control the chief. So on the weekend following the Friday that the mayor gave me the dubious honor of being “the next city manager,” I invited the chief to my home to discuss the current state of affairs.

I knew Warshaw from various activities when I was in the fire department and understood him to be a polished professional and, more important, well respected by his troops and by the police community nationally. We discussed the situation and he explained to me that it went much deeper than an alleged incident of insubordination. He said he’d be free to provide me more detail once I was officially confirmed as manager.

I then instructed him to refrain from any comments to the press having to do with the mayor and their differences. He responded that he was not sure he could

do that because the mayor was on the attack. I told him that, if he did not obey this direct order from me, I would fire him, plain and simple. Furthermore, I assured him, I would evaluate the mayor’s complaint and take whatever action I deemed appropriate. He verbally agreed and buttoned his lip, thus no written memo of the “cover your ass” variety was ever necessary.

To make a long story short — I know, too late! — I decided not to fire the chief and wrote my now infamous memo to the mayor informing him of this. The mayor, true to his word, fired me and went on the hunt for yet another manager who would do his bidding. (I returned to the fire department.)

I have no problem with the current manager issuing a similar edict to the current police chief. The guy should keep his trap shut and the manager should thoroughly, yet quickly, evaluate the pros and cons of keeping this chief around. Contrary to what seems to be the popular belief, the manager may fire the chief for no reason other than he wants to “take the police department in a different direction.” In fact he does not even have

to say that much. He can simply give him the boot.

Under the charter, the police chief has the right to appeal that dismissal to the full commission and they may uphold the manager’s action or they may overrule the manager and put the chief back to work. (I find the latter option highly unlikely.) This ongoing feud needs to come to an end and it does not require any big payoff to get Chief Exposito out.

The manager does not need to tolerate one of his subordinates continuing a running battle with the mayor. You have to wonder why this crap continues. (Does the chief have not only the photos, but the negatives, too?)

It’s not healthy for the city and its residents, and it is certainly not healthy for our police department; it perpetuates cliques and factions within the department, which in the long run are detrimental to morale and the delivery of service. It needs to come to an end.

So, Mr. Manager, it is time for you to step up to the plate and make a decision. We are all waiting.

*Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com*



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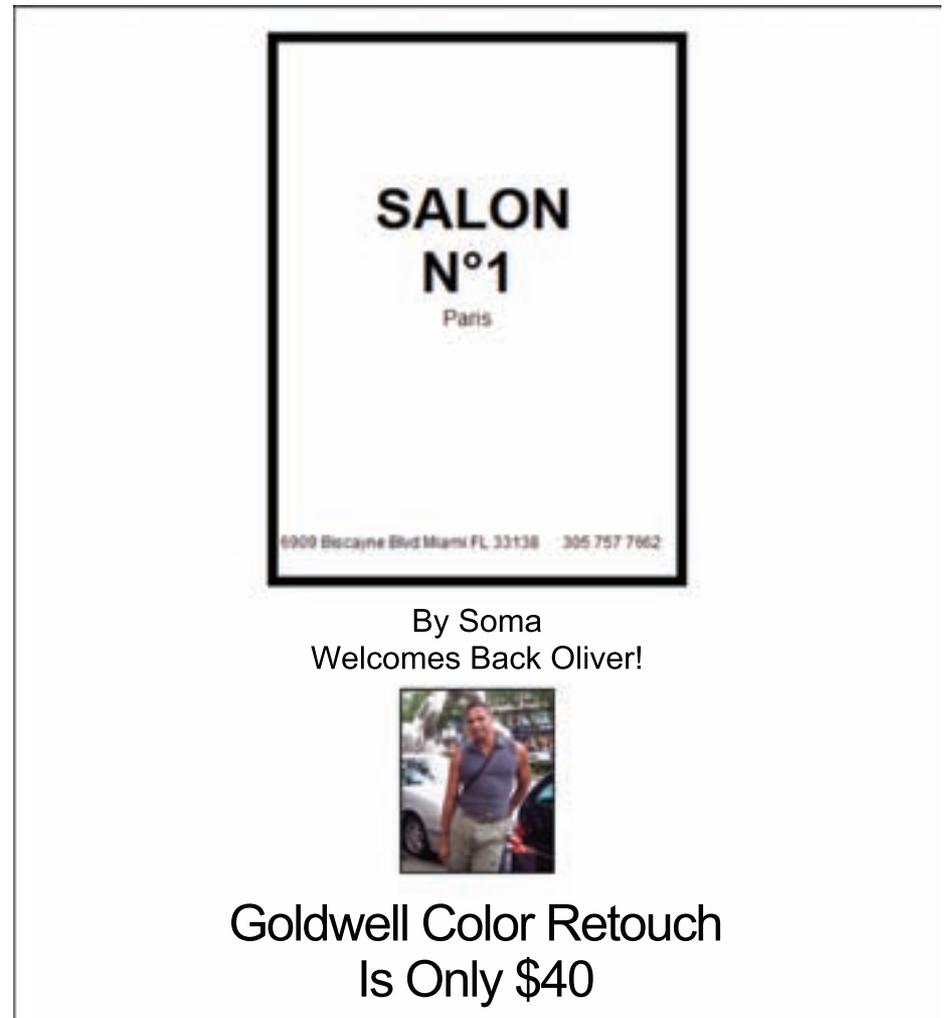
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# Keeping It Local

Hosting a bat mitzvah, the Upper Eastside way

By Jen Karetnick  
BT Contributor

With my nearly 20-year career of global dining experiences behind me, you might think that I wouldn't delegate any of the food-oriented tasks of planning my daughter's bat mitzvah. You might think I'd really want to take my time and tour a ton of venues, taste the fare from dozens of caterers, sift through countless bakeries. You might think I wouldn't rest without micromanaging every morsel and covering, as a colony of ants would, every single crumb.

Hardly. In truth it's quite the opposite. I've been tasting and testing all my adult life; like women who are first-time

brides in their 40s, I feel like I've had decades to weigh every detail. Even with taking Zoe's preferences into account, I knew exactly what I wanted, if not exactly how to get it.

Hence the need for a weekend of checking out a number of businesses between Temple Israel of Greater Miami, some 15 blocks south of Midtown, and our home in Miami Shores.

In other words, my husband and I wanted to keep her celebration "all in the family," spreading our wealth, such as it is — or more to the point, isn't — throughout the Upper Eastside and Biscayne Corridor. Five years ago, Zoe's party might have looked something like this: We would have been limited to a reception at



Photo courtesy of Prelude

the Miami Shores Country Club, a brunch in our backyard, and hotel bookings at the Hilton downtown (formerly the Omni) for our out-of-town guests.

Now with the almost magical, sudden cityscape of MiMo, we had our choice of businesses both big and boutique, run by friends or otherwise friendly strangers. In fact our circle of casual acquaintances has widened to the point where we probably are offending

people by *not* hiring them to work on Zoe's day.

For instance, we could have called on Miami Shores residents and husband-wife Creative Tastes Catering team Frank Randazzo and Andrea Curto-Randazzo. We've known each others' kids — their three girls, my daughter and son — since their respective births. Or we could have tagged Shores neighbor and The Forge executive chef Dewey LoSasso,

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whose eldest shares the Zoe moniker with ours; the girls have had play dates together. Dewey's wife, Dale, also in the restaurant biz, and I even come from the same neck of the New Jersey woods.

But with the Randazzos, I would've still had to rent a hall. With the LoSassos, it would be centerpieces and other details falling, probably literally, into my lap while I was also pregnant with a book, due only a week before the bat mitzvah. In the end, we went with one of the first people I met in Miami, Barton G., the uninhibitedly creative party impresario who was happily demonstrating his facility with exotic flora and fauna when our paths crossed that long-ago summer night in 1992. Two decades later, our sons are in the same class at Miami Country Day and Barton G. has three restaurants, one of which includes event space at the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts.

It helps that my daughter's date at Temple Israel is at the very beginning of the school year, and just before the arts season truly kicks off. We don't have to compete with Barton's roster of one-woman shows for the use of Prelude at the

Arsht Center, and as a bonus, we also get to take over Bacardi USA's Bombay Sapphire Lounge space.

The hotels in the immediate area — mere blocks away — include the Miami Marriott Biscayne Bay, which has just been renovated to the tune of \$38 million. It's still considered the slow summer season, so prices are almost laughably low for our weekend guests. And I firmly believe that Steve Haas, the man behind Miami Spice, opened his new City Hall the Restaurant on Biscayne and 20th Street just for us, so we could host the Oneg Shabbat there in a private room after the Friday service for my incoming relatives. After all, nothing says bat mitzvah like "Thick-Cut Applewood Bacon with Shaved Truffles, Mache, and Drizzled White Truffle Oil," "Maine Lobster, Shrimp, and Scallop Pot Pie with Parsnip Mashed Potatoes, English Peas, Sweet Corn, and Seafood Velouté" and "Grilled Pork Chop with Bourbon-Whipped Sweet Potatoes, Southern-Cooked Collard Greens, and Creole Mustard Reduction." Right?

Even finding the cake, the one task I truly dreaded, turned out to be a piece of,

well, red velvet with cream-cheese filling. We'd already seen some of the artistic cake designs of Shores-based Enchanting Creations on their website, but I was skeptical that cakes that looked so funky and appealing would be edible. I'm delighted to have been proved wrong.

At the tasting — the first and only one we had to go to, as it turned out — owner, baker, and designer Karen Matamoros, a native Venezuelan who trained as an artist and who has been living in the Shores since she was ten, welcomed us by appointment into her green-and-pink village storefront. There she served us coffee, along with the three-to-four flavors of cake that we'd chosen beforehand, with two-to-three fillings and two-to-three icings, done as cupcakes (which, incidentally, you can also order).

While we were debating the moistness of crumb and whether this flavor butter cream complements that type of cake, she calmly explained layers and serving sizes. She estimates the cut of her slices, she says, at three times that of other bakers.

Almost on that alone, I was sold. Not to mention that the customized

sketches she has produced for my daughter echoed her invitation and theme beautifully, and tastefully.

In the end, we've kept the party addresses so tightly localized, my parents and siblings aren't even renting cars — and I can sprint over to Temple Israel for rehearsals more easily from my classroom at Miami Arts Charter on Biscayne Boulevard and 39th Street than I can from my office at home in the Shores.

There are other advantages, too, which will be especially helpful in case of trouble. We'll be dashing home between services and parties to walk the dogs and feed the cats (and, in my case, hide for a few minutes when I need time to breathe).

If one of my guests loses her luggage, or eats too much Maine lobster pot pie — and the only ones who won't are kosher — she can pop into Julian Chang or Lori Lester for custom cocktail attire and Rebel for a pair of designer stilettos.

And if the entertainment doesn't show up, some of my MAC students are going to very quickly realize a new definition for "house band."

*Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com*



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# Did You Just Say Bovine?

A series of unfortunate events leads to the oral surgeon's chair — and a very strange conversation involving a cow

By Wendy Doscher-Smith  
BT Contributor

Homey, I'm home! No, really I am. Which reminds me... I need to get a Miami driver's license. This is a very good thing for two reasons: 1) My MUFT (Merciless Un-Frozen Tundra) of Binghamton, New York, license is an embarrassment deserving of a spot in driver's license photographic hell. The thing is rivaled only by Nick Nolte's infamous mug shot. And 2) every time I take that piece of plastic out of my purse, pocket, or bra, I am reminded of the fact that I once lived there. Shudder.

No more! Bye-bye killer skies of indif-ferent shades of blah. Uggs? Snow boots?

eBay! Debilitating allergies causing rivers of phlegm, demon red and itchy eyes, and newly budding suspicions of flowers? Exit stage right. Horseshoes? That MUFT-y summer pastime from that cursed region three hours northwest of New York City? Eat me! *I hate horseshoes!*

The privilege of calling my hometown my current and hopefully permanent town did not come easy or cheap — for anyone involved. My stays at the haunted Brickell cotel (condo-hotel) were not exactly free, and neither were the monthly trips from the MUFT to Miami that my husband, Jeremy (a.k.a. Angry J.), endured.

The job market here pretty much sucked and continues to suck even worse



BT photo by Wendy Doscher-Smith

than the national one. Yet somehow Angry J. managed to score a decent job in Miami. The chances of that occurring were about as good as, to borrow an old cliché, winning the lottery. Or to borrow another one, getting hit by lightning. Actually, that is not that unlikely in Miami. We take our drama in any form we can get it.

So the fact that Angry J. actually scored a job down here, thereby negating my yearly Trek of Doom back to

the MUFT, which always led to suicidal tendencies, is, as far as I'm concerned, an act of God. That's right. Just like it says on the life insurance policies. After all, it makes sense.

God is the one in charge of life and death, right? And since I was always hanging on the edge of death in the MUFT, in the form of driving into a river or using my body as a cutting board or mixing Drano cocktails, I have deduced (since I'm a



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semi-narcissist) that this means God no longer hates me!

I mean, Angry J. garnering employment down here couldn't possibly have anything to do with Angry J. himself, his skills, or job-interviewing abilities, could it? Maybe. But the odds were stacked way against him. Stacked against us. Big stacks. Stacked like a pyramid of Double Stuf Oreo cookies perched on the highest counter, while a desperate, carb-starved Dachshund looks on longingly. (Hint: The dog is a symbol of me.) Add to that the fact that Angry J. doesn't care where he lives, and you are left with only me! It really is all about me! (Just as I always suspected.)

So yeah. God no longer hates me. This is very exciting news! I can work this! But not so fast.

Owing to recent events, I have decided that, while God may no longer hate me, God definitely is holding a decent-size grudge. See, while Angry J. may have gained employment here, our health insurance benefits are on hold for three months. You know, the typical corporate makes-no-sense-so-it-must-mean-they-make-money-on-it move: the three-month long "probationary period."

Naturally, we lost our insurance benefits just when I needed them most. For example, as I type this column, sitting on the toilet (don't judge), my left wrist is in a brace and it is not happy with me right now. In fact, it hurts. A lot. As luck would have it (or not) my wrist started hurting just as we witnessed the last of our health insurance benefits slip away. Coincidence? I think not! Warning: Insertion of requisite Judy Blume reference up next. *Hello, God? It's me, Wendy. Um... Why?*

The wrist started aching at the base. Then the shooting pain up my arm started, only to be closely followed by alternating tingly and numb fingers. Well, I thought to myself, this blows, but I'll just call the... Oh.

I'll be calling nobody because I have joined the ranks of the uninsured. Oh, tingle, tingle, little star. For a mere \$1000 per month I could elect to continue my health insurance via Cobra. Ouch.

Anyway, what's important to note is that I blame Granny, my 17-year-old, curmudgeonly cocker spaniel. Granny prefers to do her business immediately and then go back to sleep. So

whenever I encouraged walking, she would haunch down, mid-walk, jarring my wrist. Of course, I also blame God. For holding a grudge.

And then there is my mouth. Always problematic for one reason or another, this time my right bottom rear molar needs to be pulled. By an oral surgeon. I determined this after going to my dentist, who bears an uncanny resemblance to Steve Martin. The oral surgeon doesn't resemble anybody, except the Prince of Darkness, as that is what he is going to plunge me into when he puts me into "deep sedation."

*Hello, God. It's me, Wendy. Um... WTF?*

Arguably worse than being temporarily faux killed is paying for it. Without insurance. But there is something even worse than that: What they use to get the job — in this case, a bone graft — done.

Dr. Probably Death: Blah, blah, so then we take a bovine blah, blah...

Me: Stop! Did you just say bovine?

Dr. Probably Death: Yes.

Me: As in cow?

Dr. Probably Death: Yes. We use cow bone for the bone graft.

Me (wide-eyed): But what if you are vegan?

Dr. Probably Death: Well then we... What? What's that?

Me: Look, vegans have nothing to do with animal consumption. They don't even eat honey. There can be no cow bone in their mouths! I mean, do you know how the cow was killed? Was it done humanely?

Dr. Probably Death (studying me carefully): I'm sure the cow was killed in a humane way, probably for medical experimentation at a college, and then all parts utilized and eaten.

Me: Medical experimentation? No, no, no! And how do you know for sure that it was treated humanely?

Dr. Probably Death (following a pause): Okay, we can use human bone.

Me: What? That's even worse. What if the person was a jerk? I don't need any more bad-mouth mojo.

Dr. Probably Death: (Speechless.)

Nurse: (Hand over mouth. Poor attempt at concealing laughter.)

Me: Hello, God. It's me. Moo!

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# Big Ideas in Little Havana

The dynamic duo behind 6th Street Container can draw a crowd

By Anne Tschida  
BT Contributor

On this Friday evening in July, after a long, dry spring and early summer, the skies opened up dramatically and unexpectedly, with the kind of torrential rain that keeps most rational people home. Not a good omen for the opening night of an art exhibition. It could be especially challenging for a small, off-the-beaten-path gallery such as the 6th Street Container, in Little Havana, far away from Wynwood and not even on Calle Ocho.

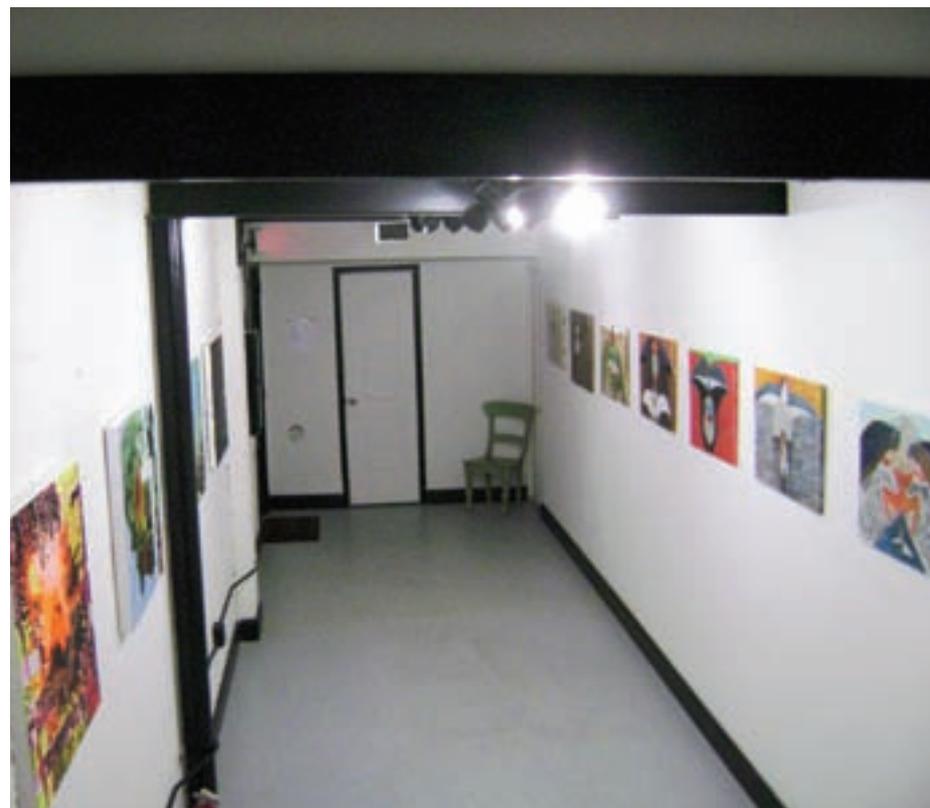
And indeed the sidewalks were flooding, with street drains clogged and parking tricky in the best of weather. But there inside the narrow, elongated space, at the back of a building accessed through an alley, a crowd had persevered to see “marlene marlene,” the latest exhibition at the alternative gallery that opened a year ago. Why such determination?

The 6th Street Container might be filling a gap that has widened as Miami’s art scene has become increasingly commercialized, and focused myopically on young talent. Part of the



**Crammed container for the opening of “marlene marlene.”**

gallery’s mission is “to exhibit the work of established local, national, and international artists, artists who have been forgotten by the mainstream.”



Photos courtesy of 6th Street Container

**Looks kind of like a container, which makes for display challenges.**

It may not be a coincidence that on the other side of town, off of 125th Street, the Bridge Red alternative space has also opened its doors with a similar goal — and both are finalists for a Knight Arts Challenge grant to bring higher visibility to later-career artists.

But 6th Street is also a hybrid. This evening’s exhibit featured two women, both named Marlene: one is a young video artist, Marlene Lopez; the other is a more established photographer, Marlene de Lazaro. The latter artist likely knows that the location of 6th Street Container has a history that gives it special alt cred, which could be an additional part of the appeal.

Lazaro was once part of “Surreal Saturday,” an avant-garde performance

and art evening that used to take place on weekends at PS 742, on SW 6th Street. It was just one of the funky happenings centered here a decade ago.

And Adalberto Delgado was in the middle of it all.

Delgado, the owner and director of the 6th Street Container, along with his partner Maria Amores, was the first to arrive at the corner of 6th and 12th, as it became known, to open his gallery 6G Art Space, which showed artists well known on the scene today, such as Lynne Gelfman and Gavin Perry. Delgado added rumba to his Friday nights, and “Rumba on 6” turned into an unprecedented jam session for Miami. While this part of Little Havana is densely urban and somewhat forlorn, it is lively, filled with

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Portrait photography by Marlene de Lazaro.

people, churches, and walk-up cafecito windows. Very much unlike Wynwood. These evenings morphed into happenings in themselves, organically grown.

But the scene changed, and moved on. Delgado decided to concentrate on his rumba alone, forming his own group. "It's the most instant form of gratification there is," he says of the music. After a life-changing health crisis, however, he returned to the visual arts (he studied film and photography at the University of South Florida), and took a studio space back at his old haunt on SW 6th Street.

Although the art scene had grown by leaps and bounds throughout the first decade of the new millennium, he saw that it was becoming a wealth of exposure for a limited few. He wanted to expand that exposure — and exhibit his friends.

The strangely shaped space below his studio, which resembled a shipping container, piqued his interest, and he decided to enter the gallery world again.

In the summer of 2010, he and Amores picked out nine artist friends

who worked in nontraditional media such as video and sound, called it "Nine on 6th and 12th," and an audience of young and old packed the place.

More officially, they opened up "Get It Fresh," featuring Julio Antonio, Luisa Basnueva, Elisabeth Condon, Robert Huff, and Janet Paparelli as the fall show — all artists that Delgado thinks deserve much wider visibility than they had received. This past March, 6th Street featured a solo show from another long-established artist, Tom Schmitt, which again attracted a crowd that was hungry for substance and dialogue.

Although the gallery space is irregular, with beams that interrupt surfaces (and give it that container look), it makes for some innovative ways to display — for instance, using the ceiling. And there is a courtyard, which Delgado will be using as a live-music space. He explains that he wants to create a destination center once again, where people come not just to see art and then leave, but to interact and stick around for a broader experience.



The "Get It Fresh" show from last fall.

Which can include an *experimental* experience.

During Art Basel Miami Beach last year, he and Amores came up with a Dumpster Art competition, which they hope to do every year. Sponsored by the General Hauling Service, the competition calls for artists to transform dumpsters into works of art, which are then placed around Wynwood during the fair, with a first-place prize of \$500.

The winning dumpster last year, says Delgado with a grin, was stolen after two days. In response, the winning artistic duo of Cat Dove and Kyle Chapman returned to 6th Street Container for the May show and called it "Farewell to the General," an installation that was a "wake" and "viewing" for the now dead dumpster.

"Keep an eye on them!" says Delgado of these still-emerging artists and their quirky output.

Back at the drenched July opening, looking down at the packed space from Delgado's studio up the staircase, he explains that he'd like to add video and film nights, maybe dinner-and-conversation

evenings. He clearly loves the neighborhood he calls "LiHa," and wants people to get to know it, although he acknowledges it may soon be changing, this time for real.

"The development is moving west, from Brickell, from downtown, and with the Marlins Stadium going up," he says. It won't look like this forever. But on this night, the video pieces from Marlene Lopez were set on the floor, projected on the archway above a beam.

Then the rain started to seep in, and the director darted off to plug the leaks, mainly under the door, while intrepid smokers and talkers remained under umbrellas out in the courtyard, in the downpour. Just as alternative as it should be.

"marlene marlene" runs through August 15. Next up: a site-specific installation by Honduran artist Alma Leiva, opening on August 19, 1155 SW 6th St., Little Havana (rear entrance through the alley); 786-587-5279; [www.6thstreetcontainer.com](http://www.6thstreetcontainer.com).

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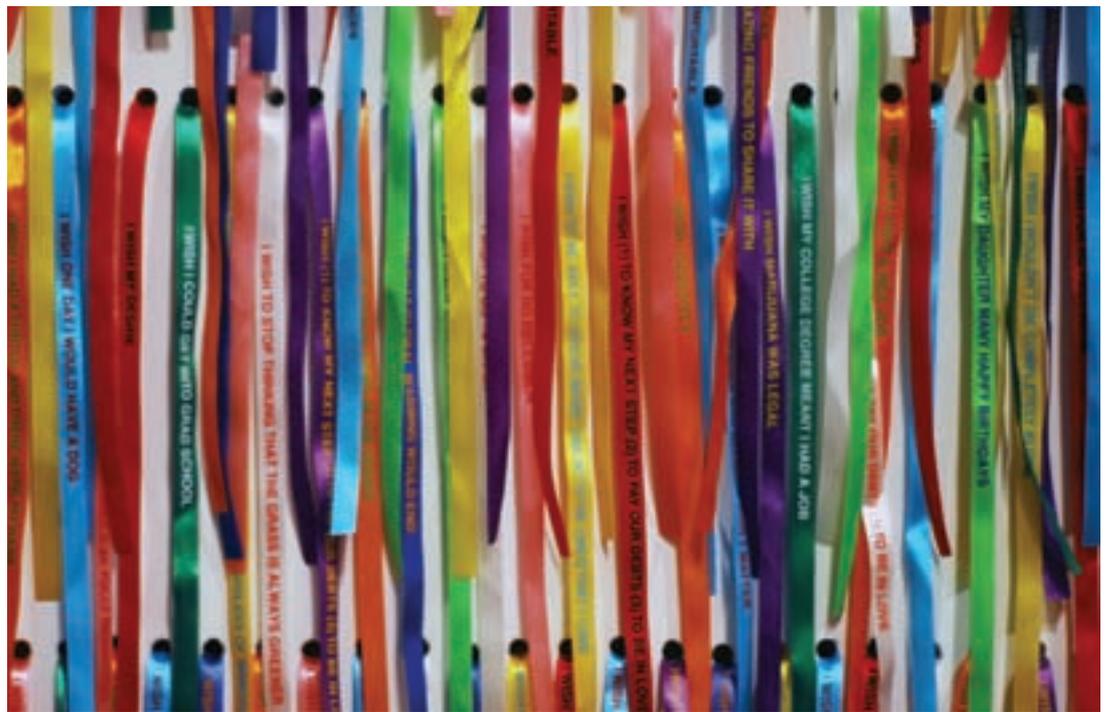
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Through August 6:  
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305-674-8278  
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"GGG Presents the Pop Up" with Hugo Moro, David Lario, Damian Sarno, Natasha Duwin, Venessa Monokian, Nina Surel, Adriana Carvalho, and Augustina Woodgate

**BASS MUSEUM OF ART**

2100 Collins Ave., Miami Beach  
305-673-7530  
[www.bassmuseum.org](http://www.bassmuseum.org)  
Through October 16:  
"At the Same Time (Al Mismo Tempo)" by Sandra Gamarra

**CIFO (Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation)**

1018 N. Miami Ave., Miami  
305-455-3380  
[www.cifo.org](http://www.cifo.org)  
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**George Sanchez-Calderon, *The Family of Man, Solari train station sign, 2011, at The de la Cruz Collection.***

**DE LA CRUZ COLLECTION CONTEMPORARY ART SPACE**

23 NE 41st St., Miami  
305-576-6112  
[www.delacruzcollection.org](http://www.delacruzcollection.org)  
August 13 through October 8:  
"The Family of Man" by George Sanchez-Calderon  
**Reception August 13, 7 to 10 p.m.**

**FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY FROST ART MUSEUM**

10975 SW 17th St., Miami  
305-348-2890  
[thefrost.fiu.edu](http://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 Cooper, Michael Genovese, Francis Bishop Good, Nolan Haan, Sibel Kocabasi, Beatriz Monteavaro, Glexis Novoa, Jonathan Rockford, Bert Rodriguez, FriendsWithYou, TM Sisters, and Tonia 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](http://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](http://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 October 16:  
"A Day Like Any Other" by Rivane Neuenschwander

**MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART**

770 NE 125th St., North Miami  
305-893-6211  
[www.mocanomi.org](http://www.mocanomi.org)  
August 27:  
"Optic Nerve XIII" film festival with various artists  
Through September 4:  
"Any Ever" by Ryan Trecartin

**THE MARGULIES COLLECTION**

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*Compiled by Melissa Wallen*

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BT photo by Silvia Fos

### Free Flicks at Frank's Place

While the main draw to the spectacular Frank Gehry-designed New World Center (500 17th St., Miami Beach) is classical music, this amazing new cultural hub has some other things going for it. For instance, throughout August on Wednesday nights, the huge outdoor wall will be given over to screening such blockbuster hits as — get ready — *Spider-Man* on **Wednesday, August 10** and *Back to the Future* on **Wednesday, August 17**. It's part of what is called the **Soundscape Cinema Series@ExoStage**, and it's intended to help introduce the public to the center, and to just get the public out. Sponsored by the Arts in the Park program of the City of Miami Beach, the shows start at 8:30 p.m. Go to [www.miamibeachfl.gov](http://www.miamibeachfl.gov) for more information.

### Moonlight Adventure

Forget that glaring sun. Now is the time to experience the much cooler and calmer moon. And this month, on **Saturday, August 13**, the moon will be full, so no better time to kayak underneath it through Bear Cut Preserve and offshore Key Biscayne. In fact it's a *perfect* time. But it is still hot and buggy, so bring water and spray and, as the **Crandon Park Sunset and Moonlight Kayak Adventure** does indeed start at sunset, maybe some sunscreen or a hat. One requirement: closed-toe shoes. Cost is \$40. Meet at the Crandon Park Visitors and



### Paradise Rediscovered

The rest of the nation may have experienced the intense heat and humidity of Miami this summer thanks to the "heat dome," but they will never enjoy the incredible tropical vegetation that can sprout up here. Which is reason enough for us locals to take advantage of the **Free Days at Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden** (10901 Old Cutler Rd., Coral Gables), every Sunday this month, starting on **Sunday, August 7**, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Fairchild's 83 acres include serene lakes, winding paths, carefully cultivated botanical specimens, along with all those orchids, fruit trees, and palms. If nature itself isn't enough, free Sundays will also host live music, yoga classes, and a sale of plants particularly suited to South Florida. Go to [www.fairchildgarden.org](http://www.fairchildgarden.org) for details.

Nature Center, 6767 Crandon Blvd., Key Biscayne, at 6:30 p.m. For reservations call 305-365-3018.

### Category 5 Fun

It's called **Family Fun Day**, but the topic this month at HistoryMiami (101 W. Flagler St., Miami) on **Saturday, August 13** might not strike everyone as fun: "Trouble in the Tropics: Here Come the Hurricanes." Yet it behooves everyone to be prepared, and let's be honest, storm stories can be riveting. Eco-historian Frank Schena will combine the need-to-know information with tales of some of the most infamous hurricanes in history. Hurricanes are a part of life in Florida, and the more we know about them the better. Family Fun Day, which starts at noon and goes to 5:00 p.m., is free. For more info, call 305-375-1492 or go to [www.historymiami.org](http://www.historymiami.org).

### Huge Happening in Little Haiti

**Big Night in Little Haiti**, which launched last winter and takes place on every third Friday of the month, has already turned into a big deal. Revolving around the handsome Little Haiti Cultural Center (212-260 NE 59th Terr., Miami), the music, art, and culture night has become a huge draw, and rightly so. Stores and studios leave their doors open, food is abundant, and seriously good live acts can be heard. This **Friday, August 19** should be no exception. The

Montreal-based jazz saxophonist Jowee Omicil, who is of Haitian descent, will take center stage. He's become an underground sensation, playing with the likes of Branford Marsalis and Wyclef Jean. The evening begins at 6:00 p.m. and ends at 10:00 p.m., although some venues stay open later. Go to [www.big-nightlittlehaiti.com](http://www.big-nightlittlehaiti.com).

### Me Tarzan, You Sweat

An obstacle race in the middle of a Miami summer. Insane or part of the point? For the **Tarzan's Cup Race**, it's part of the point. Tarzan's Cup holds "heat" races, of 5K and 10K distances, in various parks in Miami-Dade from May through September. This month it's being held at Oleta State Park (3400 NE 163rd St., North Miami Beach) on **Saturday, August 20**. It'll be a 5K course. Start times are 8:00, 9:00, 10:00, and 11:00 a.m. Through mangrove jungles and swamps, may the best Tarzan or Jane win. To register and find out more, go to [www.tarzanscup.com](http://www.tarzanscup.com).

### Don't You Forget About Me

*The Breakfast Club* set the tone not just for Generation X (before we were called that), but for Hollywood for years to come. It introduced the Brat Pack, '80s hairstyles, lip gloss, and songs we still like to crank when we're in the car. And it's back. On **Thursday, August 25**, the John Hughes hit is rekindled as part of

the **Flickin' Summer Movies** at the Gusman Center for the Performing Arts (174 E. Flagler St., Miami). The screening is at 7:00 p.m., but there is a happy hour starting at 6:00. Come on, Judd Nelson's John Bender dares you to come early — and dress the part! Tickets are \$10. For more info visit [www.gusmancenter.org](http://www.gusmancenter.org).

### An Eyeful at MOCA

One of deep summer's most anticipated cultural events is the long-running **Optic Nerve Film Festival** at the Museum of Contemporary Art (770 125th St., North Miami). The festival, to be held this year on **Saturday, August 27**, with two screenings at 7:00 and 9:00 p.m., is always fully booked, with reservations now mandatory to get a seat. The juried experimental fest has been a springboard for many local artists, as the winning entry is purchased for the museum's permanent collection. Call 305-893-6211.

### Judaism in the Tropics

As its name implies, the **Guava Rugelach Festival** highlights and celebrates specifically Southern, and tropical, Jewish traditions and music. The guava is tropical, like Miami, and references the heritage of Sephardic Judaism, from North Africa, the Middle East, Spain, and eventually Cuba. In its fourth incarnation, hosted by Next@19th, and taking place on the campus of Temple Israel (137 NE 19th St., Miami), Guava Rugelach will feature an eclectic group of international performers on **Saturday, September 3** and **Sunday, September 4**. Film, music, and much more. Get details by calling 305-542-7732 or visiting [www.nextat19th.org](http://www.nextat19th.org).

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



### Reel Brazil

Brazil's World Cup soccer teams haven't made it to the top lately — but almost everything else from Brazil is golden. From its economy to its music, arts, and film, the country is dominating much of the Western hemisphere. So what will the 15th annual **Brazilian Film Festival** unveil? Another *Central Station* or *City of God*? A likely hit will be the recent *Soulbound*, about a 20-year-old man fueled by "his guitar, poetry, and alcohol." The festival starts on **Friday, August 19** and runs through **Saturday, August 27**. Most films will be shown at the Colony Theatre (1040 Lincoln Rd., Miami Beach), but the tribute screenings will be held at the new home of the Miami Beach Cinematheque (1130 Washington Ave., Miami Beach). For more info, go to [www.brazilianfilmfestival.com](http://www.brazilianfilmfestival.com).

# Biscayne Crime Beat

Compiled by Derek McCann

## North Miami Fire Sale

125th Street and N. Miami Avenue

One would hope that in case of crisis, neighbors would be kind enough to help one another. A fire occurred at a residence and the owners were removing what they could salvage from the home and placed those items on the front porch, behind an iron gate. After the fire was subdued, a U-Haul pulled up. The driver and passenger of that U-Haul pried open the gate and began, according to the victim's brother, loading their truck with those items. They then drove off. Unfortunately, the brother missed the plate number and could not get a good description of the vultures.

## Sanitized Police Report

11900 Block of N. Bayshore Drive

A family watched a video on the mother's cell phone and heard a loud knock on the door. The mother, leaving the door chain on, opened the door, and a seemingly drunken man began to try to kick in the door while banging his fist against it. She struggled to get the door closed but the man kept banging. Police were called and they found the shirtless man roaming the hallways. They told him he was under arrest, to which he responded, "You're just racist and want to arrest me." Subject is white. Once inside the police vehicle, he consistently used profanity at police. The officer who wrote the report described being called "numerous vulgar names,

which included the name which describes the male sex organ" by the suspect. Thanks to the NMPD for their discretion. This is, after all, a family publication.

## A Stand-up Guy?

12300 Block of NE 6th Avenue

We like it when people take responsibility for their actions. In this case, a perpetrator stole copper wire from the roof of a business. Police observed him in the act. The 57-year-old-male, only a few years from that steady Social Security check, screamed at officers and said, "I don't care, no big deal. I'll do the time. It's only wire." Police promptly arrested him. The value of the wire was \$15. While we can't condone thievery, we do admire the perpetrator's forthrightness when cornered.

## Two-Legged Vermin

900 block of NE 82nd Street

Once again — though it has not happened for a while — we



have a fumigation robbery incident. This home was tented to get rid of those pesky critters, but it invited another type of critter — criminal sleaze. The crooks cut the tent open and, despite the hazardous fumes, managed to break into the residence. There are no witnesses. Guess we just need to accept those palmetto bugs and termites. Either that, or come up with a way to tent the crooks.

## Safe Sex on the Cheap

200 Block of NE 51st Street

The ex-boyfriend of the victim came by and wanted to talk to her about his

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current squeeze. Apparently he was having problems. The conversation became very strange and the victim repeatedly asked the ex to leave. He refused and said, "Call the police." He remarked that he needed to have his condoms back. He then locked himself in the bathroom. The victim heard him rummaging through the vanity closet. A short time later he came out of the bathroom and entered the victim's bedroom and searched her drawers: "I'm looking for my condoms." He found the victim's house and car keys and promptly left the home. To our knowledge he never found those condoms. At press time police have been unsuccessful in locating him. We suggest Pleasure Emporium, but that might be a miss as well, since he seems to be too cheap to spring for new condoms.

### He Said His Name Was Peter Parker

*1600 Block of N. Bayshore Drive*  
After dropping off a passenger from Miami Beach, a cabdriver asked for his fare. The passenger refused and jumped out of his vehicle and ran toward the Marriott, where he was staying. He ran through a unit (not his), followed

by police, went onto the balcony, and jumped to the balcony below. He entered that unit but found it occupied, so he jumped to the balcony below. That unit occupied as well so he then — you guessed it — jumped again and found an unoccupied unit, where he was able to escape. Searches done immediately after the incident yielded no results, although one bystander was heard to say that the guy "looked like a spider man or something..." We can't wait for the sequel.

### Billfold Blues

*55th Street and NE 2nd Avenue*  
Victim got out of his car in the parking lot and began to change his clothes before entering the bar down the street. He placed his wallet on top of an adjacent car as he changed. He then walked away after dressing and realized he had forgotten his wallet. A suspicious male was near the car when he returned. Not seeing his wallet, victim questioned the male and the male offered to help him look for it. It never turned up. Remember: After a few drinks, you're not going to care how you're dressed and neither will the bar — so long as you have your wallet.

### Heat Are Losers Again

*601 Biscayne Blvd.*

It's bad enough the Heat lost in the finals, breaking the hearts of many Miamians. To show loyalty, lots of fans still display their Heat gear, but what about biting the hand of those you root for? Someone — we assume a Heat fan — stole a banner from the exterior of American Airlines Arena. Perhaps we should be grateful that we have at least one team whose gear is worth filching. (They can't give Marlins stuff away.) There are no witnesses to this early-morning crime.

### Laws of Mutual Attraction Violated

*30 NE 11th St.*

Those big, scary, stoic guys who hover over you at the clubs should be a reassurance that all is okay and your safety is guaranteed. Not in this case. A group of bouncers, according to the victim, had insisted that he buy drinks for a group of guys who were trying to talk to him. It is unclear if the men were hitting on him or if the bouncers were trying to play matchmaker. The victim refused, so the bouncers threw him down the stairs and

shoved him outside, where he was beaten by lowlife criminals... er, we mean the bouncers. There has to be a kinder, gentler way to "fix people up."

### A Case for the Fashion Police?

*NE 8th Street and N. Miami Avenue*

A Russian tourist visiting from Brooklyn was stopped on the street by a man who had just gotten out of the passenger side of a vehicle. The man demanded the victim's wallet and, when the victim refused, grabbed the victim's pants. The ensuing struggle resulted in the victim's pants being ripped off. In his underwear, the victim continued to struggle with the attacker and the two exchanged punches. In an effort to hold him, the victim grabbed the attacker's shirt, but the human slug slithered out of his shirt and ran back to the waiting vehicle. Picture the crime scene: pair of pants over here, shirt over there, and a tourist standing around in his tighy-whities. There are eight million stories in the naked city.

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# Call of the Wild

Highland Oaks Park's natural charm beckons visitors to stroll — just watch out for the crocodiles

By **Jim W. Harper**  
BT Contributor

**W**e know Aventura Mall is frequented by a diverse population: elderly power walkers getting in their morning exercise before the stores even open, Latin American tourists on designer-jean-and-jewelry shopping sprees, technology geeks lined up three-deep at the Apple Store, the business-lunch crowd at the signature eateries, the teenagers with nothing but time to kill, and the occasional celebrity. (I once saw George Hamilton drink an Arnold Palmer at Bella Luna. I think that counts.)

But who would have thought that crocs ventured so close to South Florida's retail paradise? Not just the rubbery shoes, but the actual endangered crocodile has earned an *Aviso* warning sign in Highland Oaks Park on 203rd Street, only a few blocks from the mall.

Just last month, an eight-foot alligator was spotted in the same area, which makes it seem that dinosaurs of both the reptilian and human variety are cohabitating in this retirement Mecca. (Though they have different means of grabbing the early-bird. No corner booths required for the crocs and gators.)

The possibility of a passing crocodilian adds a dash of danger to the

otherwise sedate, upscale neighborhood that surrounds the park. But don't be afraid to have your own adventure in Highland Oaks Park. While it has a wild side, most of the park serves up a civilized mixture of open vistas and concrete pathways that cover a few blocks.

Operated by Miami-Dade County, the park offers green space next to the public Highland Oaks middle and elementary schools. The schools may have tennis and basketball courts, but the park has a nifty playground, baseball diamond, and large soccer field, so it must be teeming with kids during the school year. (Enjoy it now before the kids return to school and compete with the reptiles for dominance!)

Essentially the park is a two-for-one deal, with half of it serving as a nature preserve and the other half offering civilized zones for activities. The neighborhood gets full access because of entrances on every side, and some lucky homeowners get the park as a second backyard.

For adults, the park's main attraction is a trail that winds around a scenic lake (and away from the schools). Beyond the main lake, portions of the trail cut through a jungle of tropical trees that gives a temporary sensation of being deep inside an Everglades hammock. This area may be where



BT photos by Jim W. Harper

The park is a two-for-one deal: lush nature preserve and busy activities area.

the wild things are, but no respectable crocodile or alligator would remain in this oasis when larger bodies of water can be found south of here. A tributary of the Oleta River extends north into the park, but midway through, it loses its natural, winding course, passes through an industrial lock, and becomes a straight and narrow canal.

While fishing and swimming are not allowed for humans, you will see some birds doing both. Resident wildlife includes large brown ducks and honking geese that congregate along the canal. A tin pan under a tree indicates that they are being fed, and they do not behave skittishly when approached. They have it made in the shade.

So do the rest of us. Great shade can be found under the park's huge banyan and strangler fig trees, and the picnic benches under them beckon you to meditate. Or eat. Other noteworthy trees are the pond apples scattered throughout the park. Their fruit resembles a mango in shape and turns yellow when ripe. They are common in Everglades National Park but can be hard to find in urban and drier areas. They like it wet.

The park's mature trees are impressive, and newer ones have even earned an award. Last year, the Florida Native Plant Society recognized a professional ecosystem restoration in the park. Completed in 2006 by Coastal Systems, the Highland Oaks Mitigation Project restored 3.2 acres of wetlands and native plants as compensation for a private development. The growth is so thick as to be inaccessible to the casual visitor. But it means a lot to the

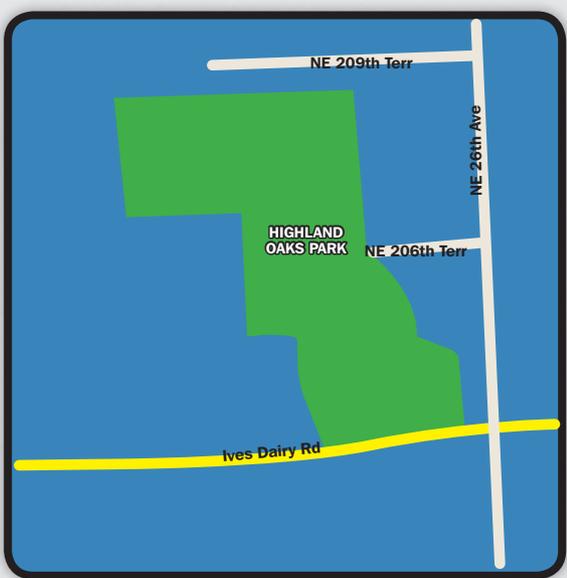


Ducks and geese share space with at least one alligator and a rare crocodile.

turtles and the fish that live there.

Leaving the wetlands and the lakes behind, the park's fields are a different kind of sanctuary. A plaque on the baseball diamond states: "In Memory of a Dear Friend... May His Dreams Come to Life on this Field."

Current human activity revolves around the soccer field and recreation buildings close to 203rd Street. The resident Brazilian Soccer Training Center, led by former professional player Joao Roberto de Moraes, uses the field all year and for all ages. Check out its Pee



## HIGHLAND OAKS PARK

**Park Rating**



**20300 NE 24th Ave.**  
**305-932-2164**

**Hours:** Sunrise to sunset

**Picnic tables:** Yes

**Barbecues:** Yes

**Picnic pavilions:** No

**Tennis courts:** No

**Athletic fields:** Yes

**Night lighting:** Yes

**Swimming pool:** No

**Playground:** Yes



Soccer fields accommodate games as well as a training center.



A scenic trail winds around the lake, then into a tropical jungle.



NE 203rd Street at the park's edge, and beyond that: shopping!

Wee League on YouTube.

Baseball leagues take advantage of a well-kept, broad field and a batting cage, and flag football teams also meet here. Near the park's entrance is a volleyball court in a sand pit for those wishing to indulge in a match or two.

The two central buildings appear spotless, and they host an after-school program for ages 6 to 14. One building was dedicated in 2006 to the late William "Bill"

Koppel, and a plaque on the adjacent building identifies that it was completed in 1995 with the support of the Sky Lakes-Highland Lakes Home Owners Association.

One thing lacking in the park is water fountains, as all that running around builds up one's thirst to the point of madness, and the one small water fountain in between the bathrooms does not beat the heat. There is a soda machine, but it remains locked up inside, and currently out of order.

With the summer heat, the park could use some sort of Slip 'n' Slide or open fire hydrant to cool down the kids bouncing around soccer balls. It feels like a sauna without any showers nearby.

Although the park closes officially at sunset, attractive lampposts line the walkway around the lake, and because of the park's inviting, open borders, one suspects that nearby residents make good use of it after dark. Moonlight on the lake must be magic.

Highland Oaks Park is a delightful surprise because it defies its urban surroundings while serving its people. With two schools next door, this park probably sees more tweens on an average day than the hyperactive mall down the street. Thank God for that.

Any place that keeps kids active and away from the food court deserves to be the real center of town.

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



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# The Price of Puppy Love

Finding just the right dog may mean a greater investment of time — not necessarily money

By Lisa Hartman  
BT Contributor

How much is that doggie in the window? The singer of that song was seeking a puppy — “the one with the waggly tale” — to accompany her beau to California, and she was willing to shell out for it. It was a big hit for Patti Page in the 1950s (and has now been introduced to a new generation courtesy of the *BioShock* Xbox game). Unfortunately, the lesson stuck: The cost or price of an animal is still one of the first and most important questions on people’s minds when procuring a pet.

Another reason why people choose one dog over another is looks. A cute face, fluffy hair, or a coat that doesn’t shed is the other top factor in their decision-making process.

So then what *should* a person look for? Listed below are items to consider when choosing your next pet. An animal that may share your home for 15 years or more. A member of the family.

For starters, price does not mean quality. The most expensive dogs are probably the little ones labeled “teacups.” This is not an actual term in the canine world of showing dogs. Rather it is a term developed for marketing and selling dogs to people

who want the latest fad or a minuscule animal they can tote around. I know many people who have paid in excess of \$5000 for a teacup this or that (fill in the blank, the list keeps growing).

Teacups, too-tiny dogs, dogs in colors you’ve never seen before, and the like are usually the product of unscrupulous pet stores and breeders. They are breeding to make money and produce what they believe people will buy, not a quality animal. At a pet store, or “puppy palace,” they pay rent for the store and therefore always need a constant supply of puppies to keep business going. The only way to do this is to be supplied by a mill or mass production. Most overly expensive dogs are bought from stores supplied by less than quality sources.

Quality breeders would never allow their puppies to be sold off by a second

**Don't just fall in love with your friends' perfect dog and seek to get one. Find out about their needs, and then expect the unexpected.**

party such as a store. Caring breeders do not breed for money, but rather the betterment of the breed they love. The dogs stay with them until they are bought



by the right home, one that is a suitable match for the dog. Furthermore, socialization is paramount to good breeders, and they would not want their pups to be stuck in a store during the most critical socialization stage of a dog’s life. A dog from a quality breeder often will cost less than a dog from a store.

As a dog trainer, the cost of acquiring and keeping a dog is one of the last considerations on my checklist when looking to add a canine to my family. Paying an exorbitant amount of money for a dog or something deemed “designer” (a marketing term for “mutt”) doesn’t mean the dog comes house-trained or possesses magical powers and will be the perfect pet. “Papers” are no guarantee of this, either. As I’ve written in previous columns, papers given to you by a pet store serve you best as floor lining for house-training your new puppy.

The best dog for you is the one you are willing to work with. A puppy is a puppy, and your dog and you will need to attend puppy school as soon as possible to provide him with socializing and the skills necessary to live in your world.

You need to be involved in his rearing to be sure you know how to give clear direction and to strengthen the relationship between you. Save your money for positive training lessons, then more advanced positive training lessons as the dog matures. Don’t spend it on the price of the dog or a fancy dog bed. Great dogs are made, not born.

If you are not willing to work with your puppy daily or if you work an eight-hour-plus day and need to leave the dog alone for hours on end, do not get a puppy. You do not have the time or ability to raise one properly. Pick up

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a nice, well-adjusted adult dog from a local shelter, one that will be happy with a daily walk through the neighborhood and hanging around the house with you on weekends.

The time you have available is probably the most critical component in choosing a dog — time to train and raise it, time to exercise it, and just as important, time to play with it. You must also have the time to work on issues that may arise, and the dedication to do what's necessary to resolve them.

Do your research. Don't just fall in love with your friend's perfect dog or the cute dog in the store window and then run out to buy one. Learn as much as you can about their needs, if they are good with kids (another important consideration), and then expect the unexpected.

I know golden retrievers that don't swim or retrieve, German shepherds that never bark, and Yorkshire terriers that aren't feisty or energetic. Apparently they didn't read the breed book on how they are supposed to behave. This

is especially true with store-bought dogs that aren't bred to retain breed attributes.

As with human children, you must be dedicated to working with what you have and doing right by them. In many cases where I work with people who didn't get what they bargained for with an animal, that pet becomes their favorite when they put some effort into it and spend more quality time with it. They certainly give the owners great stories to tell. ("Oh, did you know my Rocky retriever is afraid of the water?")

So do your research and spend your money, time, and energy on raising and training your dog. And with that, you may just find the perfect dog — for you.

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

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# Rooting for the Home Team

Forget the league standings — here's how our local sports mascots are doing in the real world

By Jim W. Harper  
BT Contributor

With baseball season winding down and football season on the way (after months of negotiations between owners and players), now is an opportune time to reflect on that most neglected of sporting figures, the team mascot. Usually an animal, the mascot embodies the team spirit and gives the fans a channel for their cheers: Go Marlins!

Mascots are typically loved without a second thought. But what do we really know about the animals behind the mascots? The caricature of a cute and lovable bear may obscure the fact that real bears in the wild are headed toward extinction.

Just when you thought your opinion of South Florida's professional teams could not get any worse, here we go. Representing their species in the wild, animal mascots in South Florida have the following status:

- T.D. the Dolphin: Depleted
- Billy the Marlin: Vulnerable
- Stanley C. Panther: Endangered

It's a good thing these teams don't use live animals as mascots, because they might have trouble finding a healthy one.

Actually the Miami Dolphins had a live mascot swimming around in the old Orange Bowl. Can you imagine? Football's Flipper was active in the 1960s, around the same time as the Miami-based TV series. Whenever the team

scored, the dolphin would — well, flip.

Today the Dolphins' mascot is named T.D. and has a warm and fuzzy appearance. T.D. is clearly a bottlenose dolphin, the marine mammal most commonly seen around Florida's shores and in theme parks.

Bottlenose dolphins in the wild are doing much better than the other two animals on our list, and efforts from the 1970s onward to establish dolphin-safe tuna have reduced the numbers caught and killed accidentally. (The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, to limit the impacts of commercial fishing, created the Bottlenose Dolphin Take Reduction Plan in 2006.) But as the documentary *The Cove* shows, dolphins are still harvested for food in Japan and a few other countries.

On Florida's east coast, dolphins have been documented as suffering from high rates of contamination, such as from mercury and from debilitating diseases like herpes. (The dolphins' "depleted" status refers to a subset of dolphins near the U.S. Atlantic coastline.) Across Biscayne Bay, researchers have identified more than 200 dolphins. Yup, they even swim past downtown, and that can't be good for them. I mean, would you let *your* kids swim around Bayside Marketplace?

At least dolphins get attention, whereas fish get eaten. Billy the Marlin, who, judging by his looks, probably

tastes like plastic, has an extensive online biography, but it does not indicate exactly what species he is.

He was born in the Atlantic Ocean and his bill measures 22 inches. From his robust appearance, he probably represents the largest of the marlin family, the Atlantic blue marlin (*Makaira nigricans*). This behemoth was featured in Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*. It is a fighter.

The majestic and treasured prize of anglers, blue marlin are hunted commercially for food outside of U.S. waters, but they are protected here. Within 200 miles of the U.S. Atlantic coastline, all billfish caught are supposed to be released, with some exceptions for sport fishing. Atlantic billfish, including marlin, spearfish, and sailfish, may not be sold or purchased.

On a global scale — and not just the National League East — marlin are far from winning. This year, three species of marlin were labeled "endangered" by the experts on extinction, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature. Blue marlin and white marlin are listed as "vulnerable," and the striped marlin is "near threatened." While these labels do not invoke the strongest protections under U.S. law, they still raise the alarm. Marlin populations are headed in the wrong direction.

Marlin are often caught unintentionally by commercial longliners seeking tuna, and discarded as bycatch. In response, the Fort Lauderdale-based Billfish Foundation has launched a campaign



to banish billfish from restaurant menus. Greenpeace International includes marlin on its Red List of imperiled fish.

As for the Florida panther, you probably know the story. Officially an endangered species, their total population hovers around 130. Check out the statistics — and the kittens! — on FloridaPantherNet.org.

Sad story alert (involving kittens, so skip to the next paragraph if you're sensitive): In May, four panther kittens, barely five weeks old, died during a wildfire in Big Cypress National Preserve. (This incident is unusual. Most panther deaths can be attributed to cars.)

On the bright side, Florida panthers have their own sperm bank and, in 1994, another radical step was taken to counteract inbreeding. Eight female Texas cougars — the real kind, not the ones who prowl primetime — were introduced into the wild, and it seems to have worked. Numbers are up.

South Florida's mascots, representing highly treasured animals, have some reasons to cheer for their species, but not many. Sadly, some species have already reached the two-minute warning. Here's hoping they make a comeback.

Send your tips and clever ideas to: [goinggreen@biscaynetimes.com](mailto:goinggreen@biscaynetimes.com).

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# The Name Game

Figuring out what to call your kid has only gotten tougher

By Crystal Brewé  
BT Contributor

My OBG refused to sign our birth certificate with the name we wanted to give our first daughter six years ago. “I just don’t want you to regret your decision,” she said. “Give it a couple of days; get to know her.”

Two days later, my husband and I, still firm on our initial name choice, tried again. “Now, what about Wrigley?” offered our doctor, as if she had given it some serious thought. “You love baseball, and aren’t you from the Chicago area?”

She finally signed off on Matilda. It’s not like our name choice was Blanket, or Rocket, or Dweezil. It’s an old name meaning “fierce warrior,” perfect for a little girl born prematurely, who fought through a rough pregnancy.

Parenting is full of pressures, and we believe every decision and action affects our children’s potential. Choosing a name for baby can be one of the most stressful decisions of parenthood; it’s so... permanent. So much hangs on a moniker. Will your child not succeed in life if he or she is tied to the wrong title?

My name, “Crystal,” lands in the top-20 white-girl names chosen by parents with low educational status, according to *Freakonomics*. I actually like the name and, while strippers seem to gravitate toward it, it’s really the nickname

that my family still uses that rubs me the wrong way. I vowed in the third grade to eradicate “Crissy” from my life; it feels like a wet sock in my ears. I am so not a “Crissy,” yet my close family persists.

I’ve noticed many of my friends don’t share their name choices pre-birth. “Do you believe that some girl at my office told me that the name ‘Oscar’ reminded her of a kid she went to grade school with, who used to pick his nose and eat it?” relayed my pregnant friend Jennifer. This naysayer actually prevented Jennifer and her husband from naming their little one Oscar.

“Everyone wants to be different,” says Laura Wattenberg, author of *The Baby Name Wizard: A Field Guide to Baby Names*. It’s true. Who wants the teacher to call out four other kids with their same name during attendance? It certainly can’t do much for building a sense of uniqueness. Before you know it, your kid is wearing black lipstick and fishnets just to be the Jennifer that stands out. Punk Jennifer, Bad Jennifer, Preppy Jennifer, Wild Jennifer.

According to the Social Security Administration (SSA), in the 1950s, James and Linda were the top names. In the 1980s, Michael and Jennifer topped the charts. Today’s most popular names are Jacob and Isabella. There’s a 100-year cycle in name trends, according to Wattenberg.



Many parents today are going back to their great-grandparents’ generation for name inspiration. It seems as though our own names are too run-of-the-mill, our parents’ are too lackluster, and our grandparents’ just seem old. Our great-grandparents, on the other hand, have sweet and sepia-tinged names like Henry, Pearl, Charlie, and Opal. We just weren’t exposed to names like these, so they are now new again.

One of my favorite Wattenberg blog entries muses on the rising popularity of villainous names: Bellatrix, Stryker, Kraven. To some they suggest a beguiling mixture of danger and sophistication and, sure enough, the SSA confirms that these names are increasing in popularity.

Parents are getting more and more creative, inventing names and spellings. Is this a trend we’ve adopted from celebrities? When Gwyneth named her baby Apple, or Erykah Badu named her baby Mars, or “TomKat” named their baby Suri, did the world just follow suit with equally quirky names?

A teacher friend of mine recently shared some of the interesting names he comes across in his classroom. My favorite was La-a, (pronounced luh-DASH-uh). I had heard of this name and always

thought it an urban legend, but no, La-a is alive and well and living in Indiana.

Our second daughter’s name is Everly. Not Emily, not Evelyn, not Beverly. Everly, like the brothers. We had a list of preferred names (that we did not share with friends or family) and, at the top, was Everett Fox Brewé. Well, Everett came out a *she* and we quickly decided that we would make up a name we had never heard before, while still being able to use “Ever” as a nickname.

My father-in-law has spent the past 15 years joking about changing his name. One fateful night, one of his employees, a young college student, uncomfortably explained to him: “I just can’t call you Dick. You’re my boss. I would much prefer to continue calling you Mr. Brewé.” Ever since, Dick has tried on new names for size. He spent a good two years mandating that we call him “Clark,” having been inspired by Chevy Chase.

He jokes, but I think some part of him would really like to pull the trigger on a name change. I’m just hoping he doesn’t go for Voldemort.

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# Rosé Is the New Summer Blockbuster

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

By Bill Citara  
BT Contributor

Rosé wines are like action movies. The people love 'em. The critics, eh... not so much. I mean, we're all highly evolved sentient beings here, worldly and sophisticated, sensitive and caring, driven by the need to understand the deeper meaning of life and to meditate on both the personal and universal elements of the human condition.

And yet it's really fun to see stuff blow up.

Of course, the interminable musings of some neurotic French filmmaker on the finer points of sexual obsession can be great art. But they're still not half as much fun as a really great car chase.

Three hours of incomprehensible muddling by some frustrated Hollywood auteur may speak hauntingly to the estrangement of our id from our cud or whatever. But when Clint or Bruce or Arnold ride into town and beat the holy shiitake out of the bad guys, that's something to get excited about.

And so it goes with rosé.

While most certified cork dorks will grudgingly allow that the rosés of Provence are worthy, "serious" wines, and that a handful of producers in Italy, Spain, and the U.S. turn out rosés they wouldn't have to be tortured by rack and thumbscrew and Barry Manilow tunes to imbibe, they pretty much dismiss everything else as so much insipid, characterless pink plonk.

That is so wrong.

True, most inexpensive rosés from anywhere are hardly Domaine Tempier or Domaine Ott or Billecart-Salmon Brut. But that doesn't mean there aren't plenty of affordable, accessible rosés that, like a good action movie, are fun, tasty, and well worth spending time with. And they won't leave you buried under a mound of hopelessly existential ennui.

Tell you the truth, I picked up the nonvintage **Yellowtail Rosé "Bubbles"** as a joke. You know, something to get snarky about, to work over with a verbal two-by-four. After all, Yellowtail wines have about the same cachet with wine writers as phylloxera. They started the whole execrable "critter wine" phenomenon, took already simple, stupid California Chardonnays and made them even simpler and dumber, the oenological equivalent of turning Sarah Palin into Michele Bachmann.

But as it turned out, the joke was on me. These pink critter bubbles actually make for a pretty decent wine. You won't confuse it with fine French Champagne or even good California sparklers, but with its clean, bright cherry-strawberry fruit, zingy citrus acidity, soda pop fizz, and low (11.5 percent) alcohol, it's a terrific wine for backyard sipping and would make an awesome base for sparkling sangria.

The other surprise of the tasting was the **2010 Sobon Estate "ReZerve"**. Its deep, rose-red color in the bottle made me wonder if it was another overwrought California fruit bomb, but it seemed to miraculously lighten up in the glass, and in the mouth it masterfully split the

difference between ripe and fruity California and lean, minerally Provence. It's an idiosyncratic blend of Grenache, Syrah, Muscat Hamburg, Viognier, and Petite Syrah, and for ten bucks is a damn good value.

In the Provencal style, but a little bigger all the way around is **Les Rastellains' 2009 Côtes du Rhône**. A blend of Grenache, Cinsault, and Syrah, it smells of strawberries and peaches and rose petals, with some floral flavors that carry over to your mouth, stiffened by a crisp, lemon-mineral backbone.

The **Casita Mami 2009 Grenache Rosé** delivers the classic fruit-earthy red Grenache experience with rosé's lighter touch. It's a little closed at first, but given time in the glass it opens up, first with a shot of ripe strawberry-raspberry fruit, then with a balancing shot of minerals and earth, and finally with a long, tart, lemon-lime finish. It's a wine that can play well with a lot of different foods, but I'd like to try pouring it with a good paella.

More muscular than that are the **2010 Maipe Malbec Rosé** from Argentina and the **2010 Nostrada** from the Catalan region of Spain. There's not a lot of complexity in the Maipe. It spurts out of the bottle tasting of berries and rose petals — rich, ripe, almost cloying, a



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little cough syrupy — yet still manages to come off as dry rather than sweet. It's a good sangria wine and would stand up to burgers and barbecue.

The Nostrada, as its name implies, plays on the dark side of rosés, with a deep coral-red color, but surprisingly faint fruit aromas. On the palate, it's all berry fruit and citrus acidity, as simple and elemental as an action movie.

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# Warming Up to Aroids

Thermogenic plants can be a nice addition to the yard

By **Jeff Shimonski**  
BT Contributor

Normally when you think of things that can get hot and sweaty, plants are not the first subject that comes to mind. Who ever heard of a plant getting hot? Many years ago, when I was learning about the aroid family that includes the many species of *Philodendron*, the tasty malanga, and the ubiquitous Pothos (*Epipremnum aureum*), a professor of mine told me to grab the spadix of an aroid and tell him what I noticed.

The spadix is actually the spikelike structure, usually white, that holds the many minute flowers of the plant. Upon grabbing the spadix, I immediately noticed that this plant part was very warm to the touch. This was amazing, and I learned that it was caused by a process known as thermogenesis.

Thermogenic plants have the ability to raise their temperature above that of the surrounding air. The process, in this particular case, attracts pollinators by volatilizing scents. These distinct odors spread through the air to attract insects that will aid in the pollination of the plant's flowers, somewhat the same concept for humans with perfume and cologne.

The Swiss cheese plant, or *Monstera deliciosa*, is one of the most common aroids in our local landscape. It is a very distinctive shade- and

humidity-loving plant with large, green, hole-filled leaves, and likes to climb onto the trunks of trees and beyond. It is not an aggressive plant and requires very little maintenance.

To propagate it, you can just cut a couple of feet of stem and lay it on a bed of very well broken-down, moist mulch. The photograph with this article shows the fruit of *Monstera deliciosa*, which gives off a sweet pungent odor when it begins to ripen. I'm always on the lookout for this delicious fruit. The sweet taste is somewhat like a cross between a ripe pineapple and an overripe banana mashed together.

One very important fact to keep in mind when handling any part of an aroid, including its foliage, roots, and fruit, is that they contain a nasty compound within them — minute needle-like structures of calcium oxalate. This can cause some nasty itching on your skin, and worse symptoms if you eat it. (The fruit will ripen gradually with the scales at the tip of the fruit falling off first. Place the fruit in a closed paper bag when the first scales begin to loosen and, once they come off, the sweet edible fruit will be exposed underneath. Do not eat the scales!)

There are about 60 other species of *Monstera*, including some with very attractive foliage. (*Monstera deliciosa* has the largest foliage of this new world tropical genus.) Their slow-growing nature makes them great candidates to plant at



BT photo by Jeff Shimonski

**The fruit of the *Monstera deliciosa* is quite tasty.**

the base of a tree, so they can climb up the trunk. There is also a dwarf form of *Monstera deliciosa* that makes a nice bed plant. I've used many species of aroids to grow onto the trunks of trees with great results. The slower-growing species may take a few years to cover a trunk, but waiting for some of the *Philodendron* species is worth it. Many put out new foliage that is pink or red, which contrasts nicely with the rest of the dark green foliage.

Some aroids are very aggressive. Pothos, for example, should only be grown in a container, because when it gets a chance to grow up a tree trunk, it will quickly get into the canopy and shade the tree's foliage, often causing the tree stress. It can also get very heavy, causing branches to break. I grow it on tree trunks, but when it gets too high, I just cut all of the trunks and roots of the pothos at a certain height and let everything in the canopy die out.

Malanga, another aroid, is a starchy potato-like food that many of us eat on a regular basis. The tuberous root of this species of *Xanthosoma* is what is edible.

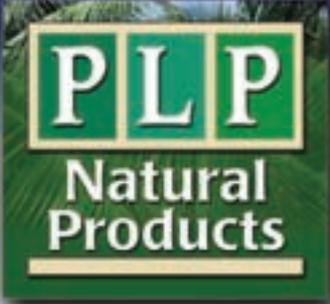
Like the fruit of the *Monstera*, malanga contains calcium oxalate crystals and must be cooked before it is eaten.

There are several distinctive species of malanga that are eaten. The species with which we are most familiar locally is also called elephant ear and is an excellent ornamental when grown either in the ground or in a container. This very tropical plant does need to be kept out of windy spots and prefers moist locations.

I have grown *Xanthosoma* and other similar species to heights reaching 15 feet, with leaves four feet wide. These can be beautiful plants in a garden and do not seem to be as common as they once were. Just remember to be careful of the sap when you cut the leaves off. You do not want to get it on your skin.

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

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# Dining Guide

## Restaurant Listings

The Biscayne Corridor's most comprehensive restaurant guide. Total this month: 278.

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

\$= \$10 and under

\$\$= \$20

\$\$\$= \$30

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

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

### MIAMI

#### Brickell / Downtown

**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 windows showcase Biscayne Bay. But diners prefer ogling the raw-bar-fronted open kitchen, where globe-trotting chef Joel Huff crafts imaginative, often multi-part dishes – some Asian-inspired (like oysters with fresh wasabi, hibiscus granita, and Asian pear), as one would expect from the Mandarin Oriental's top eatery. But most of Huff's dishes are strongly European-influenced, primarily by New Spanish cuisine. Elegant, playfully molecular gastronomy-accented almond gazpacho with foie gras "snow," or "eggs, bacon & toast" (suckling pig, tempura duck egg, truffled potato, and speck "air") tell the story. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

**Balans**  
901 S. Miami Ave., (Mary Brickell Village),  
305-534-9191

Open until 4:00 a.m. on weekends, this London import (Miami's second Balans) offers a sleeker setting than its perennially popular Lincoln Road progenitor, but the same simple yet sophisticated global menu. The indoor space can get mighty loud, but lounging on the dog-friendly outdoor terrace, over a rich croque monsieur (which comes with an alluringly sweet/sour citrus-dressed side salad), a lobster club on onion toast, some surprisingly solid Asian fusion items, and a cocktail is one of Miami's more relaxing experiences. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

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

While Indonesian food isn't easy to find in Miami, downtown has secret stashes – small joints catering to cruise-ship and construction workers. This cute, exotically decorated café

has survived and thrived for good reason. The homey cooking is delicious, and the friendly family feel encourages even the timid of palate to try something new. Novices will want Indonesia's signature rijsttafel, a mix-and-match collection of small dishes and condiments to be heaped on rice. Note: bring cash. No plastic accepted here. \$\$\$

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

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

**bistro e**  
485 Brickell Ave., 305-503-0373

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

**Boteco 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 pastes 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). \$\$\$

**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 to 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. \$\$\$

**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 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

### MIAMI

#### BRICKELL / DOWNTOWN

**Eternity Coffee Roasters**  
117 SE 2nd Ave., 305-609-4981

Normally we list only full restaurants, but even a (not so) simple cuppa joe from Chris Johnson and Cristina Garces's sleek micro-roastery will convince anyone possessing taste buds that fine coffee can be as complex as fine wine, and as satisfying as solid food. A changing selection of superior single-origin beans (many varieties from the Garces family's Colombian farm; most others from Ethiopia and Kenya), roasted in-house, produces "slow-pour" regular brews with amazing nuances of fruits, chocolate, and more. The espresso is so smooth sugar isn't necessary. Other treats: flaky chocolate-stuffed "cigars" and other locally baked pastries. Free parking. \$

**neMesis Urban Bistro**  
1035 N. Miami Ave., 305-415-9911

Truly original restaurants are hard to find here, and harder to describe in standard sound bites. But they often are the attention-grabbing people-magnets that spark revivals of iffy neighborhoods. That's our prediction for this quirkily decorated bistro, where the kitchen is helmed by *Top Chef* contestant Micah Edelstein. The intensely personal menu of creative dishes inspired by her global travels (plus her fascination with unfamiliar ingredients) changes constantly, but scrumptious signatures include South African smoked veal bobotie, and Peruvian pinoli pancakes with housemade chicken/apple sauce, hibiscus syrup, and maple granules. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

**Largo Bar & Grill**  
401 Biscayne Blvd.  
305-374-9706

Sure, Bayside Marketplace is touristy. But it can be fun to spend a day playing visitor in your own city. If you do, this waterfront place overlooking Miamarina is a superior food choice. Expect nothing cutting edge, just tasty, familiar favorites solidly prepared. You won't go wrong with stone crab claws and Cajun mustard dip; inauthentic but delicious fish tacos in hard blue corn tortillas with two sauces (cilantro and chipotle), generously portioned fish sandwiches (grouper, mahi, snapper, or daily catch), and festive cocktails. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

**Scalina**  
315 S. Biscayne Blvd.  
305-789-9933

Comparisons between this new Tom Billante venture and the other (slightly pricier) Italian eatery in the same building are inevitable, especially considering similarities like key personnel from NYC's Il Mulino, Mulino-style abundant free appetizers, and a power-dining crowd. But why focus on competitive nonsense when you can relax on the river-view terrace enjoying chef Enrico Giraldo's specialties, including an elaborate take on Venice's famed fegato (calf's liver and onions), upscaled with Luicanica sausage and a balsamic reduction. Or maybe an even more evocative Roman ice cream tartufo? Mangia! \$\$\$

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 flavored 40-ounce bone-in ribeye, described as "part meat, part weapon"); king crab legs that dwarf the plate; cocktail shrimp that could swallow the Loch Ness monster whole; two-fisted cocktails that would fell a T-Rex. Not for the frail. \$\$\$

**Crazy About You**  
1155 Brickell Bay Dr. #101, 305-377-4442  
The owners, and budget-friendly formula, are the same here as at older Dolores, But You Can Call Me Lolita: Buy an entrée (all under \$20) from a sizable list of Mediterranean, Latin, American, or Asian-influenced choices (like Thai-marinated churrasco with crispy shoestring fries) and get

### MIDTOWN / WYNWOOD / DESIGN DISTRICT

**Best Friends**  
4770 Biscayne Blvd., 786-439-3999

On a restaurant-starved stretch of Biscayne Boulevard, this spot serves the same sort of simple but satisfying Italian fare (antipasti, soups, salads, pizzas) as its older sibling, South Miami's Blu Pizzeria, plus burgers. The thin-crust, pliable pizzas, though lacking burn blisters, are brick-oven cooked, as are "blues," unusual calzones (like the blu oceano, fatly filled with mozzarella, prosciutto crudo, arugula, and fresh tomatoes). Hefty half-pound burgers come similarly stuffed rather than topped. A sheltered patio and full bar make the place a pleasant neighborhood lounge, too. \$\$

**City Hall the Restaurant**  
2004 Biscayne Blvd., 305-764-3130

After 30+ years spent guiding other owners' restaurants to success, Miami Spice program creator Steve Haas has opened his own expansive, two-floor place, on a stretch of Biscayne Boulevard that's suddenly looking fashionable. The vibe is a mix of power-dining destination and comfy neighborhood hangout, and chef Tom Azar (ex-Emeril's) has designed a varied menu to match. Highlights: an astonishingly thin/crunchy-crust pizza topped with duck confit, wild mushrooms, port wine syrup, and subtly truffled béchamel; crispy calamari (rings and legs) with light, lemony tomato emulsion; and tuna tartar that is refreshingly free of sesame oil. Big portions and a full bar to boot. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

**NoVe Kitchen & Bar**  
1750 N. Bayshore Dr., 305-503-1000

At NoVe, the restolounge at the Opera Tower condo in NoVe (new nickname for the bayfront neighborhood north of the Venetian Causeway), the food is East-West. Meaning you can get burgers, pasta, and so on, or try the inventive Asian small plates and sushi specialties Hiro Terada originated at his past posts, Doraku and Moshi Moshi: the Atlantis roll (tempura conch with asparagus, avocado, scallions, and curry sauce); spicy, crunchy fried tofu atop kimchi salad; much more. Open 6:00 a.m. for breakfast to 3:00 a.m., it is kid-friendly and dog-friendly, too. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

### NORTH MIAMI BEACH

**Duffy's Sports Grill**  
Intracoastal Mall  
3969 NE 163rd St., 305-760-2124

Located in a sprawling indoor/outdoor space at the Intracoastal Mall, Duffy's, part of a popular chain that identifies as the official sports grill of every major Miami team, features roughly a zillion TVs and an equally mega-size menu of accessibly Americanized, globally inspired dishes designed to please crowds: stuffed potato skins, crab Rangoon, coconut-crust fish fingers with orange-ginger sauce, jumbo wings of many flavors. Imagine a sports-oriented Cheesecake Factory. What makes this particular Duffy's different and better? Location, location, location – fronting the Intracoastal Waterway. There's even a swimming pool with its own bar. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

**Cvi.che 105**  
105 NE 3rd Ave., 305-577-3454

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



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## Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

Chalam fried rice (packed with jumbo shrimp, mussels, and calamari) are also fun, as well as surprisingly affordable. \$\$

### Damm Good Burger 20 Biscayne Blvd., 305-718-6565

At restoloounge 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 housemade 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). \$\$

### db Bistro Moderne 345 Avenue of the Americas, 305-421-8800

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

### The Democratic Republic of Beer 255 NE 14th St., 305-372-4161

The food here? Beer is food! The DRB serves 400 beers from 55 countries, ranging from \$2 Pabst Blue Ribbon to \$40 DeuS (an 11.5% alcohol Belgian *methode Champenoise* brew). But for those favoring solid snacks, tasty global small-ish plates include fried fresh zucchini with dip (cheese recommended); chorizo with homemade cilantro 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. \$\$\$

### 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 focaccia or crunchy ciabatta; even the vegetarian version bursts with complex and complementary flavors. During weekday dinners, try generous plates of risotto with shrimp and grilled asparagus; homemade pastas like seafood-packed fettuccine al scoglio; or delicate Vitello alla Milanese on arugula. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

### Fresco California Bistro 1744 SW 3rd Ave., 305-858-0608

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

### Garcia's Seafood Grille and Fish Market 398 NW N. River Dr., 305-375-0765

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

### Giovana Caffè 154 SE 1st Ave., 305-374-1024

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

### Grimpa Steakhouse 901 Brickell Plaza, 305-455-4757

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

### Half Moon Empanadas 192 SE 1st Ave., 305-379-2525

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

### Il Gabbiano 335 S. Biscayne Blvd., 305-373-0063

Its location at the mouth of the Miami River makes this 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 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 piguilo 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 Nicoise with grilled fresh tuna, seared salmon with mango salsa, and other yuppie favorites. \$\$\$

### La Provence 1064 Brickell Ave., 786-425-9003

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

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

### Lime Fresh Mexican Grill 1 W. Flagler St., Suite 7, 305-789-9929

(See Midtown / Wynwood / Design District listing.)

### 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-crust 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

**Appetizer Selections**

- Escargot Bourguignon in Mushroom Caps
- Bluepoint Oysters: Rockefeller or Moscow
- Bacon Wrapped Prawns with a Honey BBQ Sauce
- Mussels Marinara
- Homemade Lobster Bisque
- Bleu Romaine Hearts with Diced Tomatoes, Croutons and Walnuts

*Executive Chef - Rolf Fellhauer*  
Swiss Continental Cuisine, Seafood & Steaks

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**Entrée Selections**

- Prime New York Steak Madagascar
- 10 oz. Florida Lobster Tail
- Shrimp Francaise tossed in Linguine
- Grilled Ahi Tuna Steak with a Hoisin Teriaki Sauce
- Lamb Chops Provencale
- Roasted ½ Duckling with a Blueberry Sauce

*Served with roasted potatoes and fresh vegetables*

**meal also includes intermezzo and choice of dessert**

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## Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

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. \$-\$\$\$

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

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

### **Oceanaire Seafood 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. \$\$\$

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

### **Pega Grill** 15 E. Flagler St., 305-808-6666

From Thanasios Barlos, a Greek native who formerly owned North Beach's Ariston, this small spot is more casually contemporary and less ethnic-kitschy in ambiance, but serves equally authentic, full-flavored Greek food. Mixed lamb/beef gyros (chicken is also an option), topped with tangy yogurt sauce and wrapped, with greens and tomatoes, in fat warm pita bread, are specialties. But even more irresistible is the taramasalata (particularly velvety and light carp roe dip), available alone or on an olive/pita-garnished mixed meze platter. \$\$

### **Pasha's** 1414 Brickell Ave., 305-416-5116

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

### **Peoples Bar-B-Que** 360 NW 8th St., 305-373-8080

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

### **Perricone's** 15 SE 10th St., 305-374-9449

Housed in a Revolutionary-era barn (moved from Vermont), this market/café was one of the Brickell area's first gentrified amenities. At lunch chicken salad is a favorite; dinner's strong suit is the pasta list, ranging from Grandma Jennie's old-fashioned lasagna to chichi focchi 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 fraiche ice cream pop. \$\$\$

### **Puntino Downtown** 353 SE 2nd Ave., 305-371-9661

The first U.S. venture of a hotelier from Naples, this stylish little place is open Monday through Saturday for dinner as well as lunch. Ambiance is fashionably cool Milanese rather than effusively warm Neapolitan. The food too is mostly contemporary rather than traditional. But in true Italian style, the best stuff stays simple: an antipasto platter of imported cold cuts with crostini and housemade marinated veggies; crisp-fried calamari and shrimp; airy gnocchi with sprightly tomato sauce, pools of melted bufala mozzarella, and fresh basil. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

### **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 Box** 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 gyoza skins with fusion fillings like raw salmon, miso, chili-garlic sauce, and sour cream), three tasty flash-marinated Asian/Latin tiraditos; addictive rock shrimp tempura with creamy/spicy dip. Also irresistible: four festive new sake cocktails. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

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

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

### **Thai Angel** 152 SE 1st Ave., 305-371-9748

Inside a colorful courtyard that rather resembles Munchkinland, this downtown "insider's secret" serves serious Thai food till 9:00 p.m. daily. Tasty classics like the four curries (red, green, panang, and massaman) come custom-spiced – mild to authentically brain-searing – and are so

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

### **Tobacco Road** 626 S. Miami Ave., 305-374-1198

Prohibition-era speakeasy (reputedly a fave of Al Capone), gay bar, strip club. Previously all these, this gritty spot has been best known since 1982 as a venue for live music, primarily blues. But it also offers food from lunchtime to late night (on weekends till 4:00 a.m.). The kitchen is especially known for its chili, budget-priced steaks, and burgers. There's also surprisingly elegant fare, though, like a Norwegian salmon club with lemon aioli. A meat-smoker in back turns out tasty ribs. \$\$\$

### **Tre Italian Bistro** 270 E. Flagler St., 305-373-3303

"Bistro" actually sounds too Old World for this cool hangout, from the owners of downtown old-timer La Loggia, but "restolounge" sounds too glitzy. Think of it as a neighborhood "bistrolounge." The food is mostly modernized Italian, with Latin and Asian accents: a prosciutto-and-fig pizza with Brazilian catupiry cheese; gnocchi served either as finger food (fried, with calamata olive/truffle aioli), or plated with orange-ginger sauce. But there are tomato-sauced meatballs with ri'gawt for Grandpa Vinnie, too. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

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

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

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

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

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

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

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## Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

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/steak and flash-cooked eye round). All can be customized with sprouts and fresh herbs. Also impressive: Noodle combination plates with sautéed meats, salad, and spring rolls. \$\$\$

### Adelita's Café 2699 Biscayne Blvd., 305-576-1262

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

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

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

### Bengal 2010 Biscayne Blvd., 305-403-1976

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

### Bin No. 18 1800 Biscayne Blvd., 786-235-7575

At this wine bar/café, the décor is a stylish mix of contemporary (high loft ceilings) and Old World (tables made from wine barrels). Cuisine is similarly geared to the area's smart new residents: creative sandwiches and salads at lunch, tapas and larger internationally themed Spanish, Italian, or French charcuterie platters at night. Though the

place is small and family-run friendly, chef Alfredo Patino offers sophisticated snacks like the figciutto: arugula, gorgonzola dolce, caramelized onions, pine nuts, fresh figs, and prosciutto. Free parking behind the building. \$\$

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

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

### Buena Vista Bistro 4582 NE 2nd Ave., 305-456-5909

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

### Buena Vista Deli 4590 NE 2nd Ave., 305-576-3945

At this casual café/bakery, co-owned by Buena Vista Bistro's Claude Postel, the day starts in authentic French fashion, with fresh breakfast breads, chocolate almond croissants, and other delights. At lunch comichon-garnished baguette sandwiches (containing housemade pâtés, sinfully rich pork rillettes, superb salami, and other charcuterie classics) are irresistible, and a buttery-crustied, custardy quiche plus perfectly dressed salad costs little more than a fast-food combo meal. As for Postel's homemade French sweets, if you grab the last Paris-Brest, a praline butter-cream-filled puff pastry, we may have to kill you. \$\$\$

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

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

### Catch Grill & Bar 1633 N. Bayshore Dr., 305-536-6414

A location within easy walking distance of the Arsht 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 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

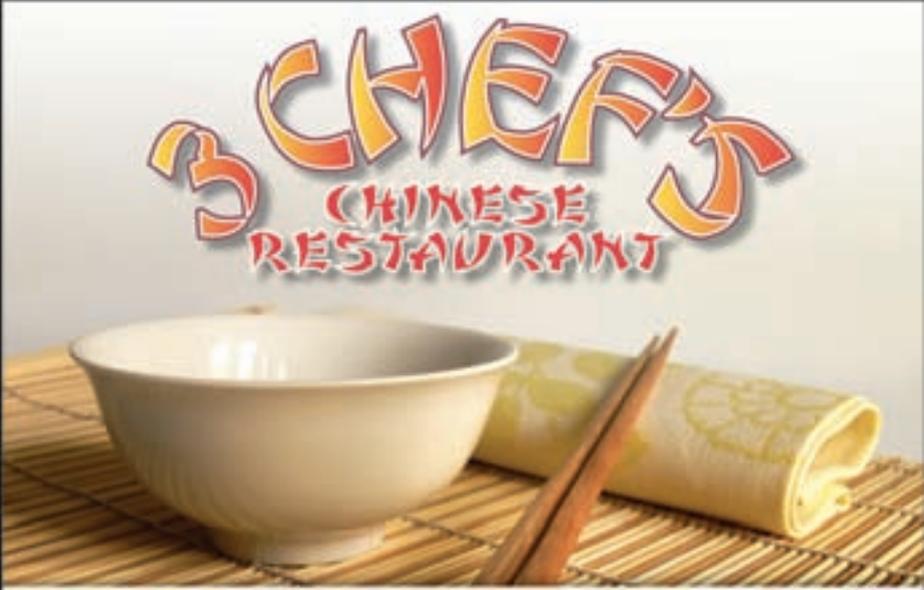
Seafood is the specialty at this pleasant Peruvian spot, as it was at the nearby original Delicias, run by members of the same family. The food is as tasty as ever, especially the reliably fresh traditional ceviches, and for those who like their fish tangy but cooked, a mammoth jalea platter. As for nonseafood stuff, Peru practically invented fusion cuisine (in the '80s), 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 foul, a hummus-like but lighter Egyptian dish of fava beans, 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



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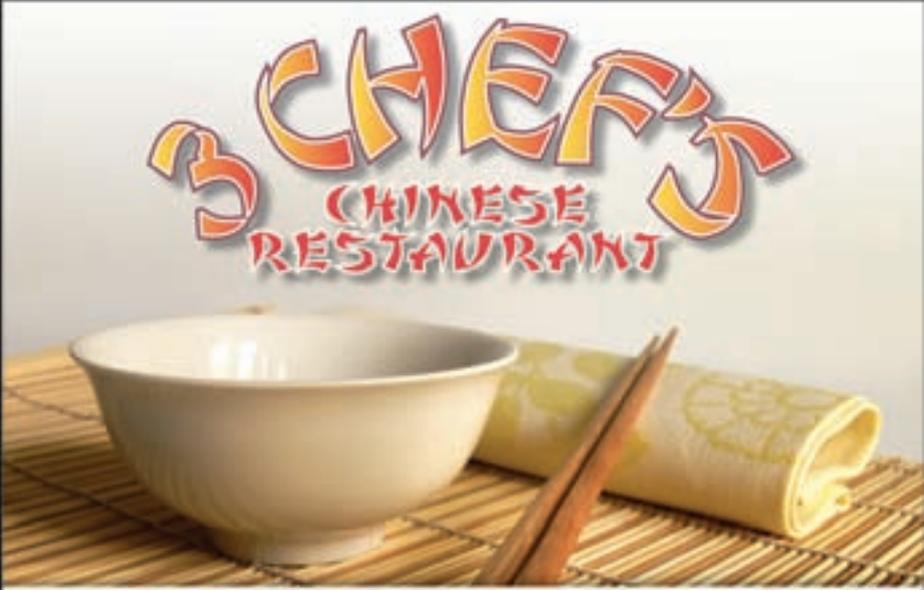
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## Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

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. \$

### Frattelli Lyon

4141 NE 2nd Ave., 305-572-2901

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

### Gigi

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

As befits its location in artful, working-class Wynwood, Gigi has minimalist modern diner ambiance paired with truly creative contemporary Asian-influenced comfort food from Top Chef contender Jeff 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 Grrrrlz of Sandwich

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

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

### 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/lucafied 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 straightforward Italian concept of veteran Lincoln Road restaurateur Graziano Sbroggio seems a more universal lure for the Design District's central "town square." The mostly outdoor space remains unaltered save a wood-burning oven producing flavorfully char-bubbled pizza creations,

plus a vintage meat slicer dispensing wild boar salami, bresaola (cured beef), and other artisan salumi. Other irresistibles: fried artichokes with lemony aioli; seafood lasagna with heavenly dill-lobster sauce. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

### Mandolin Aegean Bistro

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

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

### Mario the Baker

250 NE 25th St., 305-438-0228

(See North Miami listing)

### Mercadito Midtown

3252 NE 1st Ave., 786-369-0423

Some people frequent this fashionable restoulounge, festooned with graffiti-style murals designed to evoke a bustling Mexican street market, just for the dangerously smooth margaritas. But the main must-haves here are tacos, encased in a rarity: genuinely made-from-scratch corn tortillas, small but fatly-stuffed. Of 11 varieties, our favorite is the carnitas (juicy braised pork, spicy chili de arbol slaw, toasted peanuts). A close second: the hongos, intensely flavorful huitlacoche and wild mushrooms, with manchego and salsa verde — a reminder that vegetarian food need not be bland. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

### Michael's Genuine Food and Drink

130 NE 40th St., 305-573-5550

An instant smash hit, this truly neighborhood-oriented restaurant from chef Michael Schwartz offers down-to-earth fun food in a comfortable, casually stylish indoor/outdoor setting. Fresh, organic ingredients are emphasized, but dishes range from cutting-edge (crispy beef cheeks with whipped celeriac, celery salad, and chocolate reduction) to simple comfort food: deviled eggs, homemade potato chips with pan-fried onion dip, or a whole wood-roasted chicken. There's also a broad range of prices and portion sizes to encourage frequent visits. Michael's Genuine also features an eclectic, affordable wine list and a full bar. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

### Mike's at Venetia

555 NE 15th St., 9th floor, 305-374-5731

This family-owned Irish pub, on the pool deck of the Venetia condo, for more than 15 years has been a popular lunch and dinner hang-out for local journalists and others who appreciate honest cheap eats and

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## Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

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 fries that rival Belgium's best; mouthwatering maple-basted bacon; miraculously terrific tofu (crisply panko-crusted 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, fiochi 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/arugula — would be draw enough. But pastas also please: diners' choice of starch, with mix-and-match sauces and extras. And the price is right, with few entrées topping \$20. The capper: It's open past midnight every day but Sunday. \$\$

**Primo Pizza Miami**  
3451 NE 1st Ave., 305-535-2555  
Just a few years ago, chain pizza joints were dominant most everywhere. Today many places now offer authentic Italian or delicate designer pizzas. But a satisfying Brooklyn-style street slice? Fuhgedit. Thankfully that's the speciality of this indoor/outdoor pizzeria: big slices with chewy crusts (made from imported NY tap water) that aren't ultra-thin and crisp, but flexible enough to fold lengthwise, and medium-thick — sturdy enough to support toppings applied with generous all-American abandon. Take-out warning: Picking up a whole pie? Better bring the SUV, not the Morris Mini.

### Sakaya Kitchen Shops at Midtown Miami, Buena Vista Avenue 305-576-8096

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

### Sake Room 275 NE 18th St., 305-755-0122

Sake takes a back seat to sushi — and sophisticated décor — at this small but sleek restorolounge. 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 restorolounge, where dedication to local, sustainable food comes with considerable humor. Fare includes playful items like "wet" fries (with mouthwatering gravy), corn dogs, house-made 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." \$\$\$-\$\$\$

### 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. \$\$\$

### 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 open oven) that are this popular pizzeria's specialty, along with executive chef Frank Crupi's famed Philly cheese steak sandwiches. Also available are salads and panini plus reasonably priced wines and beers, including a few unusually sophisticated selections like Belgium's Hoegaarden. \$\$

## Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

### Anise Taverna

620 NE 78th St., 305-758-2929

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

### Balans Biscayne

6789 Biscayne Blvd., 305-534-9191

It took longer than expected, but this Brit import's third Miami venue finally opened, and rather quietly — which has an upside. It's easier to get a table here (and to park, thanks to the free lot on 68th Street) than at Lincoln Road or Brickell. This, along with the venue's relatively large, open-to-the-street outdoor area, contributes to a more relaxed, neighborhood-focused vibe. The fun menu of global comfort food is the same (ranging from a creamy-centered cheese soufflé through savory Asian potstickers and, at breakfast, fluffy pecan/maple-garnished pancakes) and prepared as reliably well. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

### Boteco

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

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

### Le Café

7295 Biscayne Blvd., 305-754-6551

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

### Chef Creole

200 NW 54th St., 305-754-2223

Sparkling fresh Creole-style food is the star at chef/owner Wilkinson Sejour's two tiny but popular establishments. While some meatier Haitian classics like griot (fried pork chunks) and oxtail stew are also available — and a \$3.99 roast chicken special — seafood is the specialty here: crevette en sauce (steamed shrimp with Creole butter sauce), lambi fri (perfectly tenderized fried conch), 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 dripping wonderful pan con lechon), rich flan, and the fresh tropical juices that justify the aforementioned excesses. For even heartier eaters, there's a changing buffet of daily specials and sides. \$\$\$

### Europa Car Wash and Café

6075 Biscayne Blvd., 305-754-2357

Giving new meaning to the food term "fusion," Europa serves up sandwiches, salads, car washes, coffee with

croissants, and Chevron with Techron. Snacks match the casual chicness: sandwiches like the Renato (prosciutto, hot 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 multimeal plans customized for individual diner's nutritional needs. \$\$

### Go To Sushi

5140 Biscayne Blvd., 305-759-0914

This friendly, family-run Japanese fast-food eatery offers original surprises like the Caribbean roll (a festively green parsley-coated maki stuffed with crispy fried shrimp, avocado, sweet plantain, and spicy Mayo), or a wonderfully healthy sesame-seasoned chicken soup with spinach, rice noodles, and sizable slices of poultry. Health ensured, you can the 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 focaccia. Dine either inside the architect-designed restaurant or outdoors on the patio. Beer and wine. \$\$\$

### Michy's

6927 Biscayne Blvd. 305-759-2001

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

### 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

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

### Moonchine

**7100 Biscayne Blvd., 305-759-3999**  
 Like its Brickell-area sibling Indochine, this friendly Asian bistro serves fare from three nations: Japan, Thailand, and Vietnam. Menus are also similar, split between traditional dishes like pad Thai and East/West fusion creations like the Vampire sushi roll (shrimp tempura, tomato, cilantro, roasted garlic). But it also carves out its own identity with original creations, including yellow curry-spiced fried rice. Nearly everything is low in sodium, fat, and calories. A large rear patio is inviting for dining and entertainment. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

### Moshi Moshi

**7232 Biscayne Blvd., 786-220-9404**  
 This offspring of South Beach old-timer Moshi Moshi is a cross between a sushi bar and an izakaya (Japanese tapas bar). Even more striking than the hip décor is the food's unusually upscale quality. Sushi ranges from pristine individual nigiri to over-the-top maki rolls. Tapas are intriguing, like arabiki sausage, a sweet-savory pork fingerling frank; rarely found in restaurants even in Japan, they're popular Japanese home-cooking items. And rice-based plates like Japanese curry (richer/sweeter than Indian types) satisfy even the biggest appetites. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

### News Lounge

**5582 NE 4th Ct., 305-758-9932**  
 Mark Soyka's new News is, as its name suggests, more a friendly neighborhood hangout and watering hole than a full-fledged eatery. Nevertheless the menu of light bites is — along with other lures like an inviting outdoor patio and rest rooms that resemble eclectic art galleries — part of the reason visitors stay for hours. Especially recommended are fat mini-burgers with chipotle ketchup; a brie, turkey, and mango chutney sandwich on crusty baguette; and what many feel is the original café's Greatest Hit: creamy hummus with warm pita. \$

### Red Light

**7700 Biscayne Blvd., 305-757-7773**  
 From the rustic al fresco deck of chef Kris Wessel's intentionally downwardly mobile retro-cool riverfront restaurant, you can enjoy regional wildlife like manatees while enjoying eclectic regional dishes that range from cutting-edge (sour-orange-marinated, sous-vide-cooked Florida lobster with sweet corn sauce) to comfort (crispy-breaded Old South fried green tomatoes). Not surprisingly, the chef-driven menu is limited, but several signature specialties, if available, are not to be missed: BBQ shrimp in a tangy Worcestershire and cayenne-spiked butter/wine sauce, irresistible mini conch fritters, and homemade ice cream. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

### Revaes Italian Ristorante

**8601 Biscayne Blvd., 305-758-1010**  
 Owned by two couples (including former Village Café chef Marlon Reyes), this eclectic eatery occupies the former space of Frankie's Big City Grill, and fulfills much the same purpose in the neighborhood as an all-day, family-friendly place with affordable prices. The menu includes wraps and elaborate salads of all nations. But simple yet sophisticated Italian specialties like spaghetti ai fiume (with pancetta, tomato, garlic, basil, and a touch of cream) or yellowtail française (egg-battered, with lemon-caper-wine sauce) are the must-haves here. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

### Royal Bavarian Schnitzel Haus

**1085 NE 79th St., 305-754-8002**  
 With Christmas lights perpetually twinkling and party noises emanating from a new outdoor Biergarten, this German restaurant is owner Alex Richter's one-man gentrification project, transforming a formerly uninviting stretch of 79th Street one pils at a time. The fare includes housemade sausages (mild veal bratwurst, hearty mixed beef/pork bauernwurst, spicy garliowurst) 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 fians. \$

## NORTH BAY VILLAGE

### Bocados Ricos

**1880 79th St. Causeway, 305-864-4889**  
 Tucked into a mall best known for its Happy Stork Lounge, this little luncheonette services big appetites. Along with the usual grilled churrascos, there's bandeja paisa, Colombia's sampler platter of grilled steak, sausage, chicharron, fried egg, avocado, plantains, rice, and beans. Don't miss marginally daintier dishes like sopa de costilla, if this rich shortrib bowl is among the daily homemade soups. Arepas include our favorite corn cake: the hefty Aura, stuffed with chorizo, chicharron, carne desmechada (shredded flank steak), plantains, rice, beans, and cheese. \$\$\$

### The Crab House

**1551 79th St. Causeway, 305-868-7085**  
 Established in 1975, this Miami fish house was acquired by Landry's in 1996 and is now part of a chain. But the classic décor (knotty pine walls, tile floors, booths, outdoor waterfront deck) still evokes the good old days. Though the all-you-can-eat seafood/salad buffet (\$20 lunch, \$30 dinner) is a signature, freshness fanatics will be happiest sticking to à la carte favorites like the All-American fisherman's platters, or global specials like Szechuan shrimp, that change seasonally. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

### Japanese Market and Sushi Deli

**1412 79th St. Causeway, 305-861-0143**  
 Inside a small market that is widely considered Miami's premier source of Japanese foodstuffs, the "Sushi Deli" restaurant component is nothing more than a lunch counter. But chef Michio Kushi serves up some sushi found nowhere else in town. Example: traditional Osaka-style sushi — layers of rice, seasoned seaweed, and marinated fresh mackerel, pressed into a square box, then cut into lovely one-bite sandwich squares. While raw fish is always impeccable here, some unusual vegetarian sushi creations also tempt, as do daily entrées. \$

### Kabobji

1624 79th St. Causeway, 305-397-8039  
 (See North Miami Beach listing)

### Mario the Baker

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

### Oggi Caffè

**1666 79th St. Causeway, 305-866-1238**  
 This cozy, romantic spot started back in 1989 as a pasta factory (supplying numerous high-profile restaurants) as well as a neighborhood eatery. And the wide range of budget-friendly, homemade pastas, made daily, remains the main draw for its large and loyal clientele. Choices range from homey, meaty lasagna to luxuriant crab ravioli with creamy lobster sauce, with occasional forays into creative exotica such as seaweed spaghetti, with sea scallops, shiitakes, and fresh tomatoes. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

### Shuckers Bar & Grill

**1819 79th St. Causeway, 305-866-1570**  
 "Cheap eats and a million-dollar view" is the sound bite manager Philip Conklin uses to describe this outdoor beach bar, hidden in back of a bayfront motel. The joint dates from South Beach's late 1980s revival, but the kick-off-your-shoes vibe couldn't be farther from SoBe glitz. The food ranges from classic bar favorites (char-grilled wings, conch fritters, raw or steamed shellfish) to full dinners featuring steak, homemade pasta, or fresh, not frozen, fish. \$\$\$

### Sushi Siam

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

### 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

## Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

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

### K'Chapas 1130 Normandy Dr., 305-864-8872

Formerly the Peruvian restaurant Pachamama, this space is now both Peruvian and Venezuelan – but not fusion. The Venezuelan sisters who run the place keep dishes true to country. Most Big Food comes from Peru: fresh ceviches, classic cooked entrées. But it's the Venezuelan breakfast/snack items that keep us coming, especially signature cachapas, somewhat similar to arepas but harder to find in restaurants. These moist pancakes, made from ground corn kernels instead of just corn meal, are folded over salty white cheese for a uniquely bold balance of sweetness and savor. \$\$\$

### 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 Miami eat here? Not ambience. There isn't any. But when friends from the Pacific Northwest, where foodies know their fish, tout the seafood's freshness, we listen. There are some surprisingly imaginative makis, like the 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, ambience 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. \$\$

### Moogie's 9545 NE 2nd Ave., 305-754-3666

"Kid friendly" generally means restaurants will tolerate youngsters. Moogie'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 Moogie's mainstay: ice cream, dense yet creamy-soft Blue Bell. Pistachio almond is our pick. \$

### Village Café 9540 NE 2nd Ave., 305-759-2211

After closing for several months in early 2009, this café, spruced up to look like a bistro rather than a luncheonette (but with the same bargain prices), has been reopened. The kitchen has also been rejuvenated, with head honcho Adam Holm (Whitticar's original sous chef) serving up new, globally influenced dishes like mint/pistachio-crusted lamb or tuna tartare with siracha 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. \$\$\$

### Canton Café 12749 Biscayne Blvd., 305-892-2882

Easily overlooked, this strip-mall spot serves mostly Cantonese-based dishes. However, there are also about two dozen spicier, Szechuan-style standards like kung po shrimp, ma po tofu, and General Tso's chicken. And there are a few imaginative new items, like the intriguingly christened "Shrimp Lost in the Forest," Singapore curried rice noodles, crispy shrimp with honey-glazed walnuts, and Mongolian beef (with raw chilis and fresh Oriental basil). Delivery is available for both lunch and dinner. \$\$

### Captain Jim's Seafood 12950 W. Dixie Hwy., 305-892-2812

This market/restaurant was garnering critical acclaim even when eat-in dining was confined to a few Formica tables in front of the fish counter, owing to the freshness of its seafood, much of it from Capt. Jim Hanson's own fishing boats, which supply many top restaurants. Now there's a casual but pleasantly nautical side dining room with booths. Whether it's garlicky scampi, smoked-fish dip, grilled yellowtail or hog or mutton snapper, perfectly tenderized cracked conch or conch fritters, everything is deftly prepared and bargain-priced. \$\$

### Casa Mia Trattoria 1950 NE 123rd St., 305-899-2770

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

### Chéen-huyae 15400 Biscayne Blvd., 305-956-2808

Diners can get some Tex-Mex dishes here, if they must. But the specialty is Mayan-rooted Yucatan cuisine. So why blow bucks on burritos when one can sample Caribbean Mexico's most typical dish: cochinita pibil? Chéen's authentically succulent version of the pickle-onion-topped marinated pork dish is earthily aromatic from achiote, tangy from bitter oranges, and meltingly tender from slow cooking in a banana leaf wrap. To accompany, try a lime/soy/chili-spiced michelada, also authentically Mexican, and possibly the best thing that ever happened to dark beer. \$\$\$

### Chef Creole 13105 W. Dixie Hwy., 305-893-4246 (See Miami listing)

### 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

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## Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

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-the-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 homemade sausage. And no one leaves without garlic rolls, awash in warm parsley oil and smashed garlic. New branches are now open in Miami's Midtown neighborhood and in North Bay Village. \$

### Pastry Is Art 12591 Biscayne Blvd., 305-640-5045

Given owner Jenny Rissone's background as the Eden Roc's executive pastry chef, it's not surprising that her cakes and other sweet treats (like creamy one-bite truffle "lollipops") look as flawlessly sophisticated as they taste – perfect adult party fare. What the bakery's name doesn't reveal is that it's also a breakfast and lunch café, with unusual baking-oriented fare: a signature sandwich of chicken, brie, and caramelized peaches and pecans on housemade bread; quiches; pot pies; even a baked-to-order Grand Marnier soufflé. The pecan sticky buns are irresistible. \$\$\$

### Petit Rouge 12409 Biscayne Blvd., 305-892-7676

From the mid-1990s (with Neal's Restaurant and later with Il Migliore), local chef Neal Cooper's neighborhood-oriented Italian eateries have been crowd-pleasers. While this cute 32-seat charmer is French, it's no exception, avoiding pretense and winning fans with both classic and nouvelle bistro fare: frisée salad with lardons, poached egg, and bacon vinaigrette; truite Grenobloise (trout with lemon/caper sauce); consommé with black truffles and foie gras, covered by a buttery puff pastry dome; perfect pommes frites, and equally perfect apple or lemon tarts for dessert. \$\$\$

### Rice House of Kabob 14480 Biscayne Blvd., 305-944-4899

Since 2006, South Beach's original Rice House has been serving up mountainous platters of basmati rice and Greek salad topped with Persian-style marinated/char-grilled meat, poultry, seafood, or veggie kabobs – for very little money. This branch of what is now a growing chain has the same menu (which also features wraps, for lighter eaters) and the same policy of custom-cooking kabobs, so expect fresh, not fast, food. Sides of must-o-keyar and must-o-mooseer (thick yogurt dips with herbed cukes or shallots) are must-haves. \$\$

### 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. \$

### Toky Bowl 12295 Biscayne Blvd., 305-892-9400

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

### Venezia Pizza and Café 13452 Biscayne Blvd., 305-940-1808

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

### Wong's Chinese Restaurant 12420 Biscayne Blvd., 305-891-4313

The menu reads like a textbook on how to please everyone, with food ranging from traditional Chinese to Chinese-American to just plain American. Appetizers include honey garlic chicken wings or Buffalo wings. A crab-claw starter comes with choice of pork fried rice or French fries. Seafood lovers can get shrimp chop suey, or salty pepper shrimp (authentically shell-on). And New Yorkers will find a number of dishes that are mainstays of Manhattan Szechuan menus but not common in Miami: cold sesame noodles, Human 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 sauces. Our personal pick is carbonara, correctly creamy-coated (via egg thickening, not cream overload); Bolognese is a wise choice for those who like sauces rich and red. Many options exist for vegetarians and pescatarians as well as carnivores, all clearly coded on the menu. \$\$

## NORTH MIAMI BEACH

### Bamboo Garden 1232 NE 163rd St., 305-945-1722

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

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

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

### China Restaurant 178 NE 167th St., 305-947-6549

When you have a yen for the Americanized Chinese fusion dishes you grew up with, all the purist regional Chinese cuisine in the world won't scratch the itch. So the menu here, containing every authentically inauthentic Chinese-American classic you could name, is just the ticket when nostalgia strikes – from simple egg rolls to pressed almond duck (majority breaded boneless chunks, with comfortingly thick gravy). \$\$\$

### Chipotle Mexican Grill 14776 Biscayne Blvd., 305-947-2779

Proving that national fast-food chains don't have to be bad for either diners or the environment, Chipotle serves what the company calls "food with integrity." The fare is simple, basically tacos and big burritos: soft flour or crisp corn to rtilas 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 Gouvêla, originally from British Guyana, the wrapper is a far more substantial and tasty roti, a Caribbean mega-crepe made from chickpea flour. Most popular filling for the flatbread is probably jerk chicken, bone-in pieces in a spiced stew of potatoes, cabbage, carrots, onions, and more chickpeas. But there are about a dozen other curries from which to choose. Take-out packages of plain roti are also available; they transform myriad leftovers into tasty, portable lunches. \$

### Empire Szechuan Gourmet of NY 3427 NE 163rd St., 305-949-3318

In the 1980s, Empire became the Chinese chain that swallowed Manhattan – and transformed public perceptions of Chinese food in the NY metropolitan area. Before: bland faux-Cantonese dishes. After: lighter, more fiery fare from Szechuan and other provinces. This Miami outpost does serve chop suey and other Americanized items, but don't worry. Stick with Szechuan crispy prawns, Empire's Special Duck, cold sesame noodles, or similar pleasantly spicy specialties, and you'll be a happy camper, especially if you're an ex-New Yorker. \$\$

### Flamma Brazilian Steakhouse 3913 NE 163rd St., (Intracoastal Mall) 305-957-9900

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

### El Gran Inka 3155 NE 163rd St., 305-940-4910

Though diners at this upscale Peruvian eatery will find ceviches, a hefty fried-seafood jalea, and Peru's other expected traditional specialties, all presented far more elegantly than most in town, the contemporary Peruvian fusion creations are unique. Especially recommended are two dishes adapted from recipes by Peru's influential 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. \$\$\$



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## Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

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

### Little Saigon

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

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

### Mary Ann Bakery

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

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

### The Melting Pot

15700 Biscayne Blvd., 305-947-2228

For 1950s and 1960s college students, fondue pots were standard dorm accessories. These days, however, branches of this chain are generally the only places to go for this eating experience. Start with a wine-enriched four-cheese fondue; proceed to an entrée with meat or seafood, plus choice of cooking potion (herbed wine, bouillon, or oil); finish with fruits and cakes dipped in melted chocolate. Fondue etiquette dictates that diners who drop a skewer in the pot must kiss all other table companions, so go with those you love. \$\$\$

### Miami Prime Grill

16395 Biscayne Blvd., 305-949-5101

Don't be confused by the name, suggesting a steakhouse. It's really a reinvented sports bar, which has been packing in more varied crowds than the average man-cave by offering more varied food and entertainment options. No worries, sports fanatics. For you there's an astonishing array of high-def TVs plus all sports snacks known to mankind. But food fans should check out the special deals on full meals, offered daily. Our favorite day: Thursday, which hosts both Ladies Night (free drinks for us!) and Lobster Night (a Maine lobster plus two sides for \$16). \$\$\$-\$\$\$

### New China Buffet

940 North Miami Beach Blvd., 305-957-7266

The venue (a former 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)

305-917-7255

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. \$\$

### The Rumcake Factory

2075 NE 163rd St., 786-525-7071

When ex-Louisianian (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. \$\$\$

### Sang's Chinese Restaurant

1925 NE 163rd St., 305-947-7076

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

### Shing Wang Vegetarian, Iced & Tea House

237 NE 167th St., 305-654-4008

At this unique, 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 nisa – mixed with scallions and dressed with habit-forming honey-miso mustard sauce. Other favorites include goma ae (wilted spinach, chilled and dressed in sesame sauce), garlic stem and beef (mild young shoots flash-fried with tender steak bits), or perhaps just-caught grouper with hot/sweet/tangy chili sauce. Open till around 3:00 a.m. \$\$

## 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

## Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

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 pimentos. This classic (whose carb components make it satisfying without à la carte sides, and hence a relative bargain) isn't on the menu anymore, but cooks will prepare it on request. \$\$\$\$

## AVENTURA / 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 portobello, 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

Enscorced 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 char-broiled 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 fringing 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. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

### Pilar

20475 Biscayne Blvd. 305-937-2777

Chef/owner Scott Fredel previously worked for Norman Van Aken and Mark Mittlelo. 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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