

# BISCAYNE

October 2011

www.BiscayneTimes.com

Volume 9 Issue 8

**NEW THIS ISSUE**  
Christian Cipriani's Urbania p. 20  
Mark Sell's North Miami p. 56

# Times



# A City of Two Tales

THERE IS THE AFFLUENT BUT SHRINKING WHITE NORTH MIAMI,  
AND THERE IS EVERYTHING ELSE

P. 28

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opendoor *by Bonnie & Ilene*



**Turnberry Isle South, Aventura. 3,426sf home in the sky, enormous living & entertaining space, marble floors, custom built-ins, gourmet eat-in kit. w/ top of the line appl. Wrap around terrace overlooking ocean, Intracoastal & golf course.**



**Porto Vita Private Estate. ONLY single family residence in this exclusive community & it is being offered for the 1st time. Approximately 9,000 interior sf on a 16,175 sf lot on the Intracoastal Waterway with 240' on water.**



**Majestic Tower at Bal Harbour. Spectacular ocean views, 2/2.5, 2160sf, resort style amenities, priv. elevator, gourmet restaurant, ocean front gym, spa & tennis courts, beach serv., concierge & 24hr sec. Across from world renowned Bal Harbour Shops.**



**Bal Harbour Village. Great opportunity! Build your dream hm, guard gated comm. 20,500 sf lot on the wide waterway, waterfront pool/dock. Safe haven for lrg boat.**



**Beautiful 1930's Miami Bch hm. 3,900 sf per appraisal, 4/3.5 on prestigious N. Bay Rd. Large pool & patio area perfect for entertaining.**



**Hamptons South, Aventura. 3000sf, designer finished, upgraded 2+bd, media rm, ocean, Intracoastal & golf course views.**



**2 story California style waterfront in 24hr gated Sans Souci Estates. Great flr plan, 3,650sf/appr., 4/3.5. Gas heated pool & spa, outdoor bbq, new wood deck & dock.**



**Exclusive Bay Harbor Isl. New 2011 Construction! 2 story Mediterranean style hm on corner lot. Enormous kitchen w/ adjacent family rm. Marble & porcelain flrs thru-out, wood flrs in bdrms. 6/5.5. Pool & patio area w/ Summer kitchen.**



**Keystone Point Isl #5. Builder's custom home, 4/3.5, 3,236sf as per owner, pool, Jacuzzi, sauna, 2 car garage, new dock+davits, no bridges to bay.**



**Bay Harbor Islands. Magnificent views of open bay & Indian Creek Isl from this spectacular penthse, 2700+ sf, 300 sf terrace, 2 deeded boat docks included.**



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## The Open Door Miami Team

1021 Kane Concourse, Bay Harbor Island, FL

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**Ilene Tessler (305) 458.1200**

**Joanna Tessler (305) 968.6558**

**Michele Tessler Berlowitz (305) 632.1588**



# OCTOBER

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

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY



## The Addams Family

**BROADWAY IN MIAMI** 2011  
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BROADWAY  
FAMILY STYLE

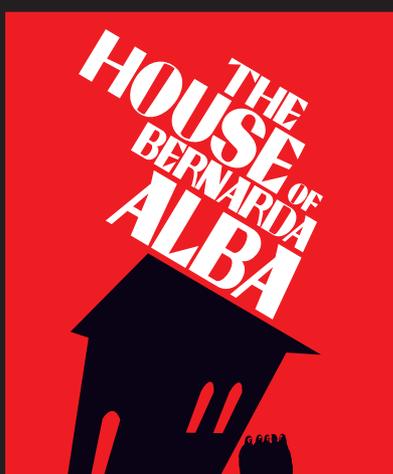
A NEW MUSICAL  
COMEDY

OCTOBER 25-30

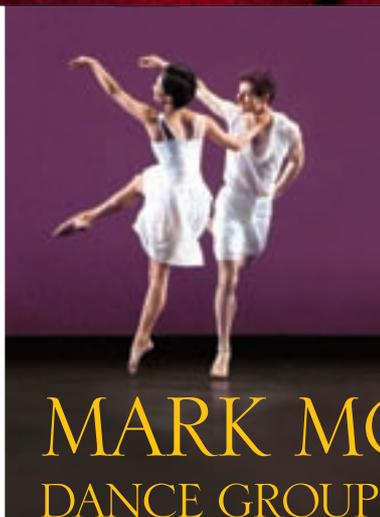
**1** Free Adrienne Arsht Center Tour  
12 PM   
  
Free Family Fest  
11:30 AM   
  
Rock Odyssey  
2 PM

**8** Free Adrienne Arsht Center Tour  
12 PM   
  
Daniela Mercury  
8 PM   
"Her shows are full of dance and energy, and Afro-Brazilian culture!"  
*The New York Times*

**9** Stuffed & Unstrung  
7:30 PM   
60 puppets,  
8 comedians,  
100% uncensored!  
Featuring the world-renowned Jim Henson Company.



OCTOBER 13-30



MARK MORRIS  
DANCE GROUP

**13** The House of Bernarda Alba  
8 PM   
Experience a riveting masterpiece of 20th century drama.

**14** The House of Bernarda Alba  
8 PM   
Mark Morris Dance Group  
8 PM   
"Arguably the most successful and influential choreographer alive."  
*The New York Times*

**15** Free Adrienne Arsht Center Tour  
12 PM   
  
The House of Bernarda Alba  
2 & 8 PM   
  
Mark Morris Dance Group  
8 PM

**16** The House of Bernarda Alba  
2 & 7 PM   
One of Spanish dramatist Federico García Lorca's most influential works.

KNIGHT MASTERSWORKS SEASON   ZIFF DANCE 2011-2012

OCTOBER 14 & 15

**21** The House of Bernarda Alba  
8 PM   
A riveting and timeless piece of theater.  
  
Miami City Ballet Program 1  
8 PM

**22** Free Adrienne Arsht Center Tour  
12 PM   
  
The House of Bernarda Alba  
2 & 8 PM   
  
Miami City Ballet Program 1  
8 PM

**23** The House of Bernarda Alba  
2 & 7 PM   
  
Miami City Ballet Program 1  
2 PM   
  
MISO Grand Season Opening  
7 PM

**FREE TOURS**  
**MONDAYS AND SATURDAYS AT NOON!**  
**Your Backstage Pass to the Adrienne Arsht Center!**

**25** The Addams Family  
8 PM   
"A wonderful new musical for the entire family!"  
*The View*

**26** The Addams Family  
8 PM   
"Classic, full-tilt, fast paced, old-fashioned musical comedy!"  
*Chicago Tribune*

**27** The Addams Family  
8 PM   
"Clever songs, sly jokes and swoony visuals! Delights in decrepitude and surliness."  
*New York Observer*  
  
Diego El Cigala  
8 PM

**28** The Addams Family  
8 PM   
"Two snaps up!"  
*Fox News*  
  
The House of Bernarda Alba  
8 PM

**29** Free Adrienne Arsht Center Tour  
12 PM   
  
The House of Bernarda Alba  
2 & 8 PM   
  
The Addams Family  
2 & 8 PM   
  
"NWS presents Tricks and Treats"  
8 PM

**30** The House of Bernarda Alba  
2 & 7 PM   
  
The Addams Family  
2 & 7:30 PM

# TICKETS!

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## GOLDEN ISLES



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Come Often**

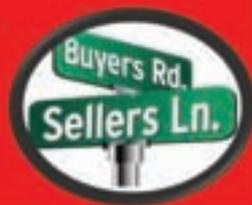
2 lots side-by-side. No bridges to ICW.  
Vacant Point lot 20,000sq.ft. w/334'  
on water \$1.4m.

Adjacent Property with 1960's  
home, 4BED, 4 BATH, 3500sq.ft. 2 Car  
Garage, Pool on 100'X150' lot, \$1.4m.  
Lot and house can be purchased



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and Sellers  
intersect  
every day**



## KEYSTONE POINT-NEW 2011



### 2011 Brand New Construction

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2sty waterfront - SE views of Beautiful Biscayne  
Bay. Soaring ceilings, Hurricane-impact windows  
& doors, marble flrs & baths, upstrs master suite-  
french drs open to 600sf sundeck overlooking  
Biscayne Bay! 2 walk-in closets, spa tub,  
sep. shower, bidet & dual sinks. Solid wd flrs  
throughout 2nd flr includ loft-office-possible 5th  
bdm. Dwnstrs bdrm has private bath. kitchen  
equipped w/natural gas.



**2350 BAYVIEW LANE**

## REMODELED TO PERFECTION



**WATERFRONT HOME -OCEAN  
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Keystone Point waterfront pool home. Total  
renovation in 2011, over 4000 sq.ft. under A/C,  
5 beds, + office and 4 baths. Outside/Summer  
kitchen is perfect for entertaining and family  
gatherings. New 20k lb. boat lift, dock and  
seawall. Too many upgrades to list. A Must  
SEE! 24 Hour guard gated community.



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**Hidden Bay 3500**  
**\$4,999,999**  
 Aventura - Spectacular 8br/8ba, 6000 sf Penthouse with an impeccable attention to detail. Plus a 2br/1ba staff or guest apartment.



**Continuum TH**  
**JUST LISTED \$2,999,999**  
 Gorgeous oceanfront Townhouse w/direct ocean views at SoBe's best "Continuum" S. Tower w/3 bed, 3 stories and floor to ceiling glass. 5 star amenities in building



**Bella Mare 2301**  
**JUST LISTED \$2,875,000**  
 Aventura - Enter from private elevator & enjoy pure elegance in this gorgeous 5bed 5.5 bath corner unit. Located at William Island's finest Bella Mare. Breathtaking views!



**Oceania TH**  
**\$1,999,999**  
 Sunny Isles - Enter this private turnkey waterfront gem with beach club and immediately witness a masterpiece. \$1m in designer upgrades. Like living in a home with all of the benefits of a condo!



**Porto Vita TH**  
**SOLD** Listed w/other realtors for 4 yrs... Denise got it under contract in 3 MONTHS!!!



**Bella Mare 2407**  
**SOLD** in 60 days for \$1,250,000! **CASH!**



**Hidden Bay 1401**  
**PENDING!!**  
 Offered at \$555,000



**Golden Beach**  
**PENDING!!**  
 Offered at \$879,000



**Peninsula 1604**  
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**Eastside 602**  
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**Saturday, October 15 at 7:30 PM**

**Friday, October 28 at 7:30 PM**

**Saturday, November 5 at 7:30 and 8:30 PM**

**Saturday, November 12 at 7:30 PM**

**Saturday, December 10 at 7:30 PM**

For tours, WALLCAST™ concerts or ticket information, visit [www.nws.edu](http://www.nws.edu).

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Photo by Emilio Collavino

**BISCAYNE** *Times*

**FOR ALL CONCERT EVENT AND NEW WORLD CENTER TOUR INFORMATION VISIT [WWW.NWS.EDU](http://WWW.NWS.EDU) OR CALL 305.673.3331.**

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#### "CONTEMPORARY" BISCAYNE BAY GEM NEWER CONSTRUCTION ANGLE BAYVIEWS

##### OWNER WILL FINANCE

4bdr/3.5bth, pool 5 car garage, detached guesthouse. Completely remodeled, new 2011, roof, granite floors, kitchen w/SS appliances. 15' high ceilings. 1/3 acre w/102' of full power dockage. 1.69M



#### NEW CONSTRUCTION BEAUTIFUL BAYVIEWS 174' ON WATER

##### OWNER WILL FINANCE

30' High ceilings 6bdr/5bth, pool, 2 car garage, 7052 sq ft. Oversized 1/3 acre pie-shaped point lot. Gourmet gas thermador kitchen, giant master suite, home theatre + additional media rooms, boat lift plus protected dockage for mega yacht!!! 3.1M



#### MIAMI BEACH!!! WIDE BAYFRONT 80' OF DOCKAGE

4bdr/3bth, pool, new seawall with 80' of dockage, boatlift. Exotic, custom, freeform, resort-style pool with in-water bar seating & chickee hut WOW!! 1.89M



#### KEYSTONE POINT ISLAND #5 CORNER LOT 175' ON WATER

5bdr/3.5 bth, pool, 2 car garage, 4125 sq ft. Completely remodeled, brand new huge cherrywood/granite eat-in kitchen w/subzero and thermadore appliances. Cul-de-sac lot, huge master suite, jacuzzi, waterfall, pool. \$950K mortgage, \$925K cash



##### OWNER WILL FINANCE W/200K DN



Keystone Point ocean access 4br/3ba, pool, 3153 sq ft. Custom built-in wet-bar, new sea wall, and brand new custom dockage for 75' vessel. Owner will finance with 200K down. \$200K down \$700K or \$675K cash

##### KEYSTONE POINT "CUL DE SAC LOT" 1/2 ACRE - 156' ON WATER



Island #5 with angle views to the bay! Build your dream home in this 24 hr gaurd gated community surrounded by multimillion dollar homes! 156' on the water with new seawall, owner financing, 1.49M

##### KEYSTONE POINT WATERFRONT 24 HOUR GUARDGATED SECURE



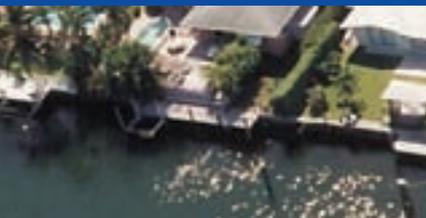
3brd/2bth, pool, 2800 sq ft. Porcelan tile thruout, Granite Kitchen, Private Cul De Sac Street. 75' of Dockage No Fixed Bridges to Bay. Motivated Seller.a A Steal At \$548K

##### HARBOR ISLAND WATERFRONT - OCEAN ACCESS NEWER CONSTRUCTION - 30' HI CEILINGS



3bdr/2.5bth, pool, 2 car garage, 65' of dockage. Gougeous Appointments thruout, huge master suite, bidet, jacuzzi, the works! Fabulous granite open island kitchen owner will finance, good terms. 1.49M

##### WATERFRONT RENTAL SANS SOUCI ESTATES FOR SALE OR RENT - \$4900. MTH or OPTION



4bdr/3.5bth, pool, boatlift. All remodeled and brandnew. 24" marble & bamboo floors, granite kitchen & baths. Rent or lease option \$4900 mth. For Sale \$949K

##### SANS SOUCI NON WATER "DIVORCE SHORT SALE"



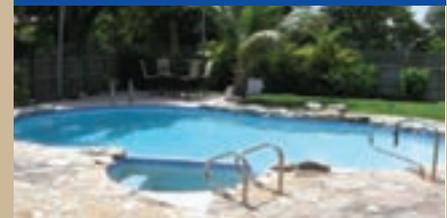
4 bdr/3bth with 1 car garage. Non-water, 2900 sq. ft. with new barrel tile roof. 24 hour Guard Gated Community. This is a "Divorce Short Sale" \$399K

##### SANS SOUCI ESTATES WIDE BAY VIEWS AT A CANAL PRICE 1.1MIL



4bdr/3bth, pool, aprx. 3000 sq. ft. Brand new rebuilt home. Marble floors, granite kitchen w/ss appliances, granite baths, also new seawall, dock & boatlift. 1.1M

##### SANS SOUCI ESTATES NONWATERFRONT 24 HR GATED COMMUNITY



4bdr/2.5bth, 2 car garage, pool w/jacuzzi, 24 hour gated community, large family home. Great location "across the street from multi-million \$\$ bayfront homes"!! 499K

# CONTENTS

- 28 COVER STORY**  
A City of Two Tales
- 16 COMMENTARY**  
Feedback: Letters
- 20 NEW!** Christian Cipriani: Urbania
- 22** Picture Story: Ogden's "Tee House"
- OUR SPONSORS**
- 24** BizBuzz
- COMMUNITY NEWS**
- 46** First Cargo, Then Commuters (Maybe)
- 47** Volatile Voters in Miami's Money Hub
- NEIGHBORHOOD CORRESPONDENTS**
- 56 NEW!** Mark Sell: Signs of the Times
- 58** Gaspar González: Mr. Jacobs Has a Problem
- 60** Jen Karetnick: Garage Sales 101
- 62** Shari Lynn Rothstein-Kramer: The Truck Stops Here
- 64** Frank Rollason: Permit Me to Explain
- 66** Wendy Doscher-Smith: After the Flood, a Fight
- ART & CULTURE**
- 68** Anne Tschida: Wynwood Art Fair
- 70** Melissa Wallen: Galleries + Museums
- 73** Events Calendar
- POLICE REPORTS**
- 74** Biscayne Crime Beat
- PARK PATROL**
- 76** Heaven Is a Playground
- COLUMNISTS**
- 78** Pawsitively Pets: Dog Days of Summer
- 80** Going Green: 'Tis the Season to Be Green
- 81** Kids and the City: All Fun, All Night
- 82** Vino: These Rhones Make Everything Right
- 83** Your Garden: A Fungi Feast
- DINING GUIDE**
- 86** Restaurant Listings: 286 Biscayne Corridor Restaurants



# BISCAYNE *Times*

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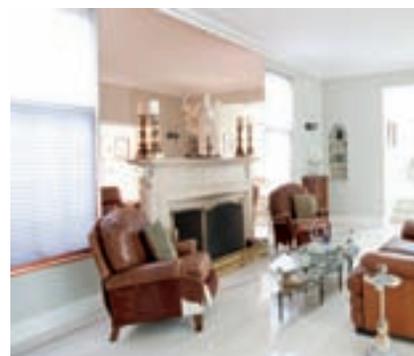


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## Commentary: LETTERS

### From Gospel to Broadway, the Arsht Center Glitters Like a Gem

Bravo for the wonderful and much-deserved story about the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts by Anne Tschida ("Arts Ascending," September 2011).

As a resident of downtown Miami, I have enjoyed many evenings of entertainment at the wonderful facility, everything from such community fare as Free Gospel Sundays to a performance of *Crowns* to the heights of Broadway spectacle such as *Cats* and *Wicked*.

Even more important, I got to see first hand how the Arsht engages the community when I sat on a committee with CEO John Richards and his staff to help preserve one of Haiti's most acclaimed dance companies, through staging a fundraising event at the center. People from all walks of life were involved on the committee and in the successful effort.

The Arsht Center deserves all of our support. It is a true community and regional gem.

*Roy H. Campbell  
Miami*

### Would I Love My Chickens Too Much to Eat Them?

I understand how useful chickens can be to have as pets, as pointed out by Jim W. Harper in "Our Fowl Friends" (September 2011). Most of my diet consists of chicken, and I think it would definitely help to own some myself.

There are many reasons behind this conclusion. If I could better understand the things that go into raising and farming chickens, I would probably learn to love my chickens and would want the chicken that I do eat to be properly farmed and treated well.

And maybe I could even turn vegetarian at some point, because I couldn't ever imagine having one of my pet chickens hurt.

Also chickens seem like they would be a great addition to a low-maintenance lawn.

This is a great article on chickens and how they are so important to society today. Who doesn't love Pollo Tropical? Chickens! Great Job!

*Nikki Rios  
Miami*

### Chickens vs. Raccoons? Not a Fair Fight

In reference to "Our Fowl Friends," I totally agree that a small backyard flock of hens is a great idea. It's about time

that local governments begin to come of age and pass sensible codes to allow it.

But I am disturbed by the last paragraph of Jim Harper's article. He could have protected his birds, but did not. Hens are domestic birds, not of the wild, and they need to be protected from the wild animals in our area.

Once he was aware that a raccoon was after his birds, he should have built them a coop to sleep in at night. Not doing so was irresponsible.

I hope he now has protected his birds from the dangers of our wild suburbia.

*Allan Hunter  
Miami*

### Mom, Can I Please Have a Chicken? A Live One? Please!

I thought "Our Fowl Friends" was quite unique and interesting. Who knew chickens could be so important? I think it's great that you guys are teaching clueless people about subjects such as this, subjects we would have never otherwise known about. People need to learn more about what is helpful to the environment and what is helpful to mankind as well.

I'm actually thinking about getting a chicken for myself! I still live with my mother, so I have to ask her first.

*Michelle Christine  
Miami*

### More Clucks, More Bucks?

I greatly enjoyed Jim W. Harper's article "Our Fowl Friends." I like the importance *Biscayne Times* is giving to promoting a green way of life. Articles like this, which come from an unexpected point yet grant the reader useful information, are the best way to attract followers to the magazine.

I look forward to reading more articles of this type.

*Danna Muñoz  
Miami*

### Biscayne and 96th: An Accident Too Serious for Jest

I would like to thank Jen Karetnick for calling attention to the dangerous intersection at Biscayne Boulevard and 96th Street, and the problems with the turning arrows ("Adrenaline Rush," September 2011). I, too, have witnessed several accidents at that intersection.

While I do agree with the main intent of her article, I find her remarks regarding persons involved in the

Continued on page 18

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## Commentary: LETTERS

### Letters

Continued from page 16

accident on August 1 insensitive and callous. Furthermore, her annoyance regarding herself and her children being late for an appointment due to this very serious accident was shocking and sad.

Most car accidents *are* the result of poor decisions that all drivers are guilty of making at some time. Unfortunately, someone's mother, father, child, brother, sister, or friend can be seriously injured regardless of who is at fault.

In the accident on August 1, my friend's son was seriously injured and is still in the neuro rehab unit at Jackson hospital. I am sure that he would apologize for making her late if he could speak at this time. Perhaps she should write a follow-up article advocating a change in the turn-light signal and refrain from expressing her personal frustrations.

It is my hope that she will not be in an accident at Biscayne Boulevard and 96th Street, even if she is wearing a seat belt, helmet and pads. These might not be enough to protect her, and therefore, she may not ever get a chance to enjoy that Audi convertible.

*Martha Stobs*  
*Miami Shores*

### Biscayne and 96th: Bad Accident, No Tact

Jen Karetnick is absolutely right in sounding like she had little sympathy for the victims of the August 1 car accident in "Adrenaline Rush." As a mother, I am quite surprised at her lack of sympathy. She could have reported the accident in this article with a little more tact.

The young man in this accident is a boy whose mother is a teacher at Miami Country Day School. He lies in a coma with no chance of recovery. I hope the parents of this child did not read her article, as Jen's comments were as cold as ice.

Karetnick is correct about the intersection, but her point will be lost because she lost respect from myself and others I spoke with as we could not get past the fourth paragraph

Too bad, because the problem needed to be addressed.

*Dale Ostro*  
*Miami Shores*

**Editor's note:** It appears a number of readers misconstrued Jen Karetnick's comments regarding the people involved in the August 1 accident. She

wrote: "I only feel bad for the innocent driver injured by another's error." We regret any misunderstanding.

### Afoot and Afield in Aventura

When I read Shari Lynn Rothstein-Kramer's column "Walk This Way" (September 2011), I felt like it was an article I could have written.

I have been a resident of Aventura for more than ten years and I walk everywhere. It is the main reason I live in Aventura.

I always tell everyone the virtues of living in Aventura and how convenient everything is. I brag about how close I live to Publix and can walk there, buy ice cream and bring it home and it hasn't even melted.

At one point, I even had a job in Aventura and was able to walk to work. Unfortunately I no longer have that job, but I am always hopeful about working again in Aventura and walking to work.

You can actually not have a car and get everywhere walking, and if it is too far, there is always the very convenient Aventura free bus system.

*R. Lees*  
*Aventura*

### Dump Red-Light Cameras, Increase Work at Funeral Parlors

Regarding Erik Bojnansky's article about red-light cameras ("Traffic Cameras: Money Pit for Some, Gold Mine for Others," September 2011), I would like to make some comments in favor of them.

Many years ago, traffic lights were installed. I am certain that many people opposed them then, complaining that they hindered the movement of traffic and so on. We have traffic lights at the expense of the public. If we did not have traffic lights we would need many more police.

Would those people against cameras at intersections be willing to pay about \$200 per year to maintain police at intersections 24-7? Cameras at intersections are needed to protect us. It is proven that they save lives.

We also need cameras to stop people from stopping on the railroad tracks.

Are opponents against cameras also in favor of eliminating them at banks and stores?

Without cameras we would, however, increase employment: extra police 24-hours-a-day, more work at body shops and car sales lots, more hospital staff, and more help at funeral parlors and cemeteries.

Is this the way to increase the job market?

*Joseph Platnick*  
*Aventura*

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# Living Large on Other People's Misfortunes

Miami's shiny new condos are filled with young, educated squatters

By **Christian Cipriani**  
BT Contributor

Slip under the I-195 overpass and hit a newly refinished stretch of Biscayne Boulevard. Gliding along the smooth blacktop, I pass fast-food outlets, vacant lots, old apartment buildings, new condos. This is Edgewater, a neighborhood I've called home since 2007.

I kicked off a media career here in 2005, my timing both a blessing and a curse. That the world was watching our high-speed transformation wasn't lost on me, even as a starry-eyed newcomer. Today I look out at our overbuilt condo skyline and joke to visitors that Miami's primary industry is *living*. We don't create or produce a great deal, but we're experts at lavish subsistence.

As a reporter I covered the booming Biscayne Corridor, as a copywriter I sold it, and now as a property owner and columnist, I look forward to commenting on Miami's brand-new urban lifestyle, which sprang into being as if by magic, from Brickell to downtown to Edgewater.

Edgewater is one of the most exciting places in this condo cosmos. Along with Wynwood, our neighbor to the west, it's home to a slew of new restaurants, bars, nightclubs, galleries, cultural events, and — most important — condos. Thousands of shiny, empty, struggling condo units.

Of course the brash gamble on mainland high-rise living included Brickell

and downtown Miami, but these two areas fared better following the collapse of the real estate market. Today Edgewater is awash in debt-laden, depreciating, and foreclosed residences, as well as numerous vacant lots where apartment buildings were demolished to make way for condos that never materialized.

Developers tried to time-warp gentrification's natural life cycle, but before they could swap out the neighborhood's working-class residents for yuppies and raise its perceived value, the bubble blew up to absurd proportions and then burst. At one point, Edgewater was home to some of the most insanely overvalued properties in the region. A two-bedroom unit in a dreary 1960s building on NE 26th Street was going for nearly \$400,000. Silly money.

But all that is over, and today a nice young couple with a baby rents the same place for about \$1500 a month. They're part of a new trend: artists, people working in the creative industries, and young professionals living on top of each other, with poorer, long-time immigrant residents squeezed into the cracks. Over the past few years, countless 20- and 30-somethings moved to this strip of Biscayne Boulevard just north of downtown.

Edgewater is a neighborhood unlike any other in the city: thousands of young renters living large on other's people's misfortunes — like 1200-square-foot, marble-floored palaces with floor-to-ceiling



BT photo by Silvia Ros

windows, Italian kitchens, and water views, all for less than \$2000 a month. Everyone is living for a pittance in units with plummeting values, creating a world of educated squatters who have their pick of places they could never have purchased.

The strange demographics and high percentage of renters has created an odd lack of cohesion. I still don't feel a sense of community. Young people here are on a layover, with no real intention of making this 'hood their home. Maybe that's why everyone calls it the Brooklyn of Miami: It's a place to be cool, blow 50 percent of your income socializing, and then grow up somewhere else.

Economically, the area is an anomaly along the Biscayne Corridor. It is, by most measurements, still a poor neighborhood. Flashy cars may line up in front of places like Joey's in Wynwood and Sugarcane in Midtown, but their owners don't live here. In true smoke-and-mirrors Miami style, the price of hanging out is disproportionately higher than the cost of living.

As you drive south along the Boulevard, into higher-income, white-collar, skyscraper neighborhoods, the changes can be tracked by condo sales. In the second quarter of 2011, Brickell saw 517 condo units sold, for an average price of

\$391,000. That amounted to some \$200 million in sales.

Here in Edgewater we're suffering from proportionally lower sales figures, with only 71 units sold in the same period at an average of just \$199,000. The take? A paltry \$14 million.

So the coolest, most perfectly located neighborhood in Nuevo Miami has a low demand for ownership and low property values, yet rents are up ten percent from last year because people are clamoring to call it home — temporarily.

Like many others, I'm waiting to see when the Great Transformation materializes, or if something else will take its place. This being Miami, you might be wise to bet on the latter.

The Arsht Center didn't generate the growth of small businesses and foot traffic as was hoped, and next in line are Resorts World Miami and Museum Park. Whether they'll positively affect neighboring Edgewater remains to be seen.

For now we can watch the young live like royalty while moneyed adults stop by to play, making due with a vision of the future that seems unable to break out of the half-baked present.

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

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# Ogden's "Tee House" Still Stands

A view of our past from the archives of HistoryMiami

By Paul George  
Special to the BT

Lemon City was a community of homesteading farmers, small merchants, black and white Bahamians, and even a rapsallion or two. The settlement was centered at today's NE 61st Street, known then as Lemon Avenue, near Biscayne Bay.

As the area developed in the late 1800s, beautiful properties arose north of Lemon Avenue on the bayfront, none more picturesque than William B. Ogden's Tee House Plantation.

S.K. Brown built the home at the end of the Nineteenth Century. A widower from Washington, D.C., Brown and his son and daughter-in-law lived several years at this bayfront property near today's NE 65th Street.

William B. Ogden, a high-living entrepreneur from Baltimore with a weakness

for alcohol, later purchased the property, and made significant additions that gave the house the appearance of the letter T, thereby providing the enduring name.

The interior contained a large rare-book collection, an original Rembrandt, tapestries, and Oriental rugs. According to one visitor, "every room had a bar." Indeed the affable Ogden, who owned a saloon in downtown Miami, frequently entertained guests, often in raucous fashion.

The building, which has been modified significantly, now serves as the recreation center for Miami's Legion Park.

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

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## BizBuzz

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

By Pamela Robin Brandt  
BT Contributor

Inflatable turkeys are already joining the trick-or-treat bags on local dollar store shelves, and last week we happened upon not just one but two Santa Claus movies on late-night TV. As unbelievable as it may seem (didn't summer just start a little while ago?), it's apparently time to start gearing up ourselves and our homes for all those major winter holidays that come but once a year, and all the out-of-town visitors and parties that come with them.

Fortunately this is the month for another event that only comes once a year — the annual fall sale at **Farrey's Lighting & Bath** (1850 NE 146th St., 305-947-5451). This year the event — where hundreds of fabulous lighting, bath, and hardware fixtures are deep-discounted — runs from October 28-November 5, except for October 30; Farrey's is always closed on Sundays. Better yet, Farrey's has a special deal for *BT* readers: Bring in this issue's ad for an extra 20% off on already-reduced, sale-tagged items. Deal!

During October, **360 Furniture Consignments** (18340 W. Dixie Hwy., 305-627-3148) will be featuring very

high-end furniture and accessories from the DCOTA, says store director David Widdas. As for deals, the shop is offering "exceptional discounts on lighting, mirrors, and other great items," and is honoring previously discounted items left over from its end-of-season sale. And if a non-discounted treasure has caught your eye, mention the *BT* and get 10% off that.

**Specialty Lighting & Bulbs** (13611 Biscayne Blvd., 305-423-0017) is celebrating the new season with the arrival of new fixtures and, says the shop's Bradley Chalmers, is giving *BT* readers cause for celebration with a whopping 25% discount. Just mention *Biscayne Times*.

For readers who'd like to welcome the new season in a new home (or place of business), two new advertisers can help make the hunt a fun, easy, and rewarding experience.

At **Terra Realty** (305-379-5000, [www.terra Realty.com](http://www.terra Realty.com)), full transaction-related services include seller and buyer representation for both multi-unit and individual owners, plus in-house mortgage financing. And affiliations with other companies such as *luxe* Quarters and *Greenbid* provide expertise



in additional areas, from interior design to marketing for distressed properties, to make moves effortless.

Welcome also to broker/Realtor **Jeff Koebel** (305-606-2252, [www.jeffkoebel.com](http://www.jeffkoebel.com)), a one-stop source for real estate services covering South Florida but specializing in Keystone Point, Biscayne Park, Sans Souci Estates, and Miami Shores. Whether you're looking to buy or sell a home, commercial property, or investment property, he'll provide everything you need.

Home owners need insurance, naturally, to protect their homes, but **Paramount Public Adjusters** (1-877-5GET-CLAIM or 954-457-0117, [www.paramountpublicadjusters.com](http://www.paramountpublicadjusters.com)) warn that filing a claim for payment following

property damage can be a nightmare without proper preparation. That's why Paramount provides a "pre-sign" program — full documentation services (on-site inspection, photos, measuring, policy review, and more) before losses occur, so the company can get clients full payment, fast, in case of a claim. Pre-sign your home with Paramount this month and mention the *BT* to receive 5% off your fee — which, in any case, comes in the future. Clients pay nothing until the company settles a claim for them.

Speaking of planning ahead, please take note of this issue's ad for the **Scleroderma Foundation**. The foundation's two-mile "Stepping Out for the

Continued on page 26

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**5600 N. BAYSHORE DRIVE**

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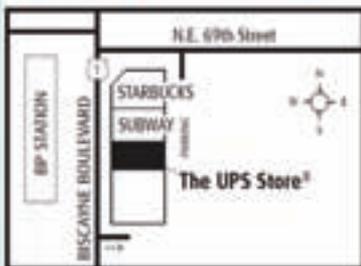
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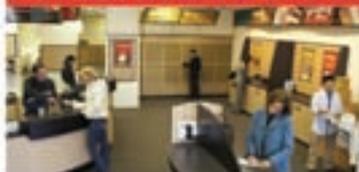
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## Our Sponsors: OCTOBER 2011

### Biz Buzz

Continued from page 24

Cure” walk on November 5 aims to raise money for, and consciousness about, this little-known but very serious disease, whose name translates from the Greek as “hard skin.” For some afflicted it’s a nuisance, but for others it’s life-threatening. Either way, it deserves a few moments of your time to learn a bit, and perhaps to become a sponsor. Call 954-798-1854 for further info on the walk.

Since the weather is starting to cool to the point where we can enjoy the outdoor areas of our homes as well as the interior, we’re happy to welcome returning advertiser **Kelly Crawford** ([www.canyoudigitgardening.com](http://www.canyoudigitgardening.com)), a noted landscape designer. As well as planning and planting unique backyard and container gardens, this local South Florida expert specializes in products designed to give owners maximum enjoyment of their gardens. If mosquitoes get more enjoyment out of your yard than you do, for instance, see Kelly’s ad in this issue for “the cure for what bugs you”: the Mr. Mosquito Mister, which will rid you of the pests without spending fortunes on ineffective oils, foggers, incense coils, etc.

If your backyard has a pool, the folks at **DownRite Pool and Spa** (whose new showroom is at 385 Westward Drive, Miami Springs; 305-668-9778) want to insure that the coming cool weather doesn’t prevent you from using it. So this month the company is offering specials on two pool heaters: a 100,000 BTU Jandy pump for or a 1,300,000 BTU Aqua Pro for \$3214 plus tax. Mention the *BT* and installation is *free*.

Like to display your bod at that pool without embarrassment? Enroll this month at **Slender Fit U**, where, on the medically monitored hCG (a naturally occurring human hormone) weight loss program, and a very low-cal diet, you can lose from one-half to two pounds per day. For the month of October only, founder/program director Geri Kelleher is offering *BT* readers \$75 off the 46-day program. Contact her at 786-477-6194. And if you need further info beyond the magic words “15 to 60 pounds per month,” go to [www.slenderfitu.com](http://www.slenderfitu.com).

Is most of your excess weight particularly hard-to-lose belly fat? If so, consider attending a free-weight loss seminar by **Dr. Marc K. Weinberg** (305-949-5999 or [www.burnfatmiami.com](http://www.burnfatmiami.com)), who has been practicing in Miami for many years but is

a new *BT* advertiser. Personally guided by the doc, this healthy, natural, weight-loss program trains your body to trigger your fat-burning hormones into losing weight and inches (including that belly fat), and keep it off. Seminar seating is limited, so register now.

For self-improvement with no effort whatsoever on your part, hair artist Hannah Lasky of **Hannah & Her Scissors** (611 NE 86th St., 305-772-8426) is making it easy this month for you to indulge in a full day of beautification at her now full-service salon: Book a manicure, pedicure, facial, and blow-dry, and get \$20 off the combined services with mention of the *BT*.

Treat your beautified self to a unique new outfit from **Lorie Lester** (6301 Biscayne Blvd. #103, 305-756-8070). That’s the address of her studio and boutique. But this month the local designer, who’s known for her stylish yet laid-back and remarkably comfortable clothing, perfect for our city, will be participating in the Sassy City Chicks Fashion Bash at the Moore Building (4040 NE 2nd Ave.), on October 6. Drop by this grand sample sale from 5:00-10:00 p.m. to score Lester pieces for up to 70% off.

Fashion mavens will also want to drop by **Pink Panther Boutique** (11091 Biscayne Blvd., 305-316-4116) to welcome new *BT* advertiser Garvi McGee. Check out her affordable specialties (women’s clothing, jewelry, handbags, and shoes), enjoy a free cocktail, and if you bring in the coupon in this issue’s ad, receive a free accessory.

All dressed up and nowhere to go? Not so!

The **New World Symphony**, a new advertiser and *BT* sponsorship partner, has a packed performance schedule this month, including Petite Musique, a chamber music matinee on October 9, and Michael Tilson Thomas conducting “Tricks and Treats” on October 28 & 29. Only problem: Some shows are already sold out, so call the box office (305-673-3331) immediately. And don’t forget October’s two free outdoor WALLCAST concerts (“Opening Fanfare,” 10/15 and “Tricks and Treats” 10/28). No tix necessary. Just bring a picnic and enjoy the show on a 7000-square-foot projection wall at the eastern front of Frank Gehry’s marvelous New World Center building (500 17th St., Miami Beach).

October brings three special events to the Latin restolounge **Club Tipico Dominicano** (1344 NW 36th St.,

# The UPS Store



305-634-7819): live merengue music from Edward "El Big Papi" on October 15, live *perico ripiao* (traditional Dominican music) from the group Aquakate on October 29, and for ladies 18 and older only, the Beef Factor male review on October 21. Call for more show info and advance ticket purchases.

At the **Aventura Arts & Cultural Center** (3385 NE 188th St., 305-466-8002), this month's entertainment options start on October 4 with Orchestra Miami's fifth-anniversary celebration, and climax on October 29 with *The 21st Century Rat Pack* (the memories and music of Frank, Dean, and Sammy). In between, the offerings range from a "Family Fun" series performance of *Jigsaw Jones* (including pre-performance face-painting and post-performance healthy snacks) to *Cups*, a rollicking one-woman play by Joni Sheram tracing her life's milestones through...her bras. Really. But don't take our word for it. Visit [www.aventuracenter.org](http://www.aventuracenter.org) for more info.

For music lovers, Sunny Isles Beach is the place to be October 13-16, when the city presents its fourth annual **Sunny Isles Beach Jazz Festival**. The main concert, at Heritage Park (19200 Collins Ave., tix \$25) on Saturday night, features Spyro Gyra, but there's something going on every day at various sites. For details see their ad in this issue, call 305-792-1752, or visit [www.sunnyislesbeachjazz.com](http://www.sunnyislesbeachjazz.com).

To thank *BT* readers who are fans of authentic Chinese food (and exotic cocktails), the Aventura restolounge **Mr. Chef's Fine Chinese Cuisine & Bar** (18800 NE 29th Ave. #10, 786-787-9030) is celebrating its first year in business with a 10% discount for dine-in customers. Just bring in this issue's ad.

October means Oktoberfest in Germany, and also at the **Royal Bavarian Schnitzel Haus** (1085 NE 79th St., 305-754-8002). Actually, chef/owner Alex Richter's Miami version of the festival has been going strong since mid-October, but the revelry — including special grill pans for two or more, four Oktoberfest beers, live DJs, and colorful decorations — will continue throughout this month.

Pioneering Miami cutting-edge arts organization **Tigertail Productions** (842 NW 9th Ct., 305-324-4337), kicks off its 32nd season on October 4 with a *free* outdoor opening party at Wynwood Walls (2550 NW 2nd Ave.). Drop in for performance art by the acclaimed Pat Oleszko, plus a chance to win prizes and season

tickets. Other October events include Tigertail's annual poetry publication on October 17. Check out the group's ad for their full schedule, or visit [www.tigertail.org](http://www.tigertail.org). BTW: On October 22, the 2011 Miami Beach Arts Gala will honor Tigertail's executive director Mary Luft with a Lifetime Achievement Award. Huzzah!

You'll find a varied schedule of educational and arts/cultural, as well as spiritual, activities for all ages every week at the **Miami Shores Presbyterian Church** (602 NE 96th St., 305-754-9541) and its two schools for kids 18 months to fifth grade. But additionally there are special events like the Fall Festival, the last Saturday in October, featuring arts and crafts, games for kids, food, live music, and a seasonal treat: a pumpkin patch.

The City of North Miami invites you to dress up and celebrate Halloween at Enchanted Forest / Elaine Gordon Park (1725 NE 135th St.) on October 28, where, from 7:00-11:00 p.m., nature trails will become very spooky **Halloween Haunted Trails**. Live music and other entertainment are also on the bill, and for small fry, hay rides and a kiddie fun zone. Biscayne Triangle Truck Roundup mobile vendors will provide food for purchase. Tix are \$5 (or \$20 per five-ticket family pack). Call 305-895-9840, ext. 12227, for more info.

If you can convince your dog or cat to don a costume, Tom and Bonnie of Biscayne Pet House (10789 Biscayne Blvd., 305-895-6164) have a spooktacular special planned. Bring in any costume-clad pet from October 28-31 and receive a free bag of **by Nature** dog or cat food. They also remind readers to sign up online for by Nature's frequent-purchaser program ([www.bynaturepetfoods.com](http://www.bynaturepetfoods.com)), for savings all year.

To finish up this month with sweet perfection on Halloween, supply yourself at **Pastry Is Art** (12591 Biscayne Blvd., 954-263-8978). Really, forget the preservative-packed packaged candy corn from the drugstore (expiration date: next century). Renowned pastry chef Jenny Risonne, formerly of the Eden Roc Resort & Spa, will be featuring fresh, homemade versions of all the Halloween goodies you crave: candies, cookies, cupcakes — even a skull cake, if you're having a theme party. Treats minus tricks — like all this month's advertiser deals.

*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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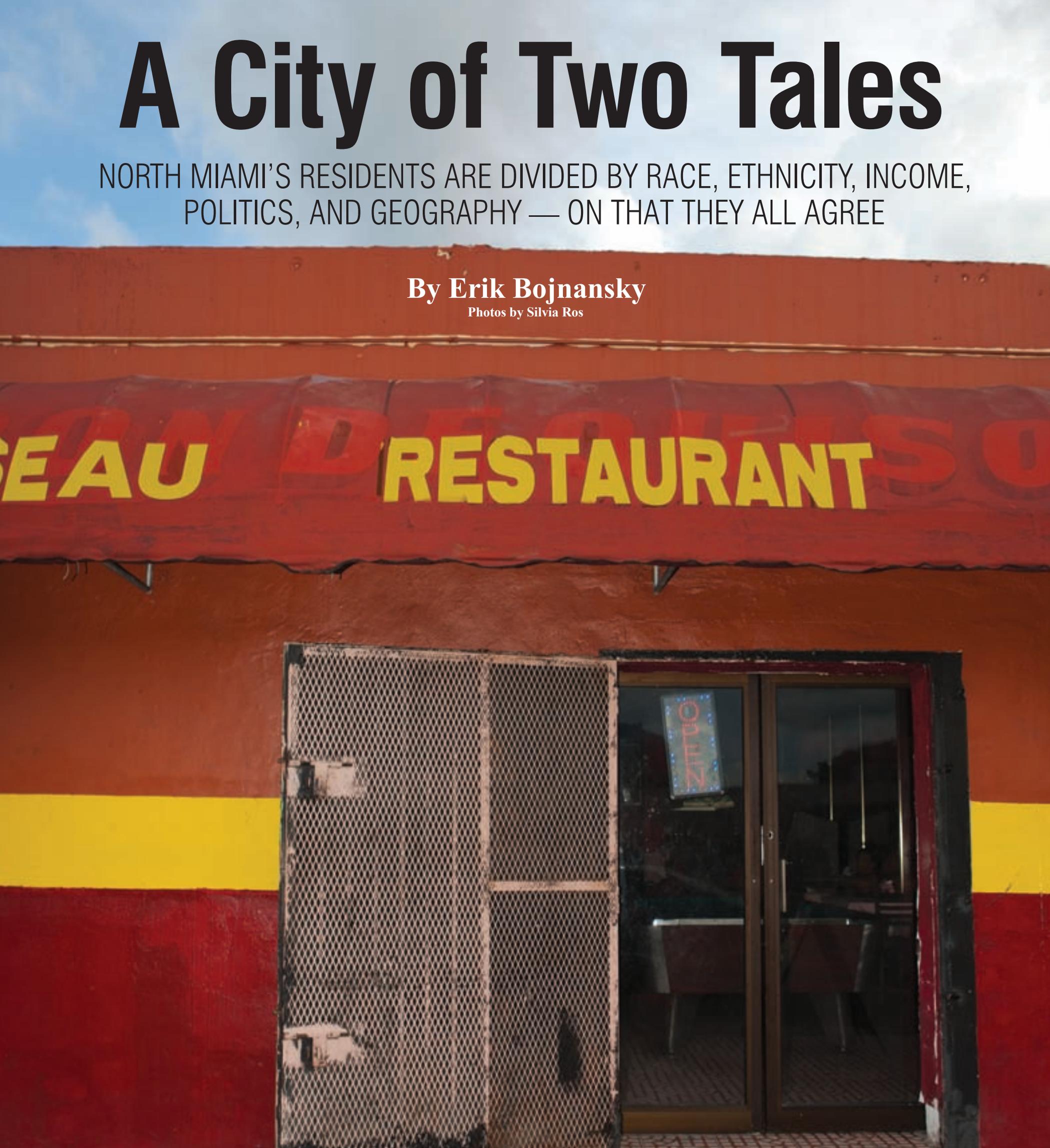
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# A City of Two Tales

NORTH MIAMI'S RESIDENTS ARE DIVIDED BY RACE, ETHNICITY, INCOME, POLITICS, AND GEOGRAPHY — ON THAT THEY ALL AGREE

By Erik Bojnansky

Photos by Silvia Ros



SEAU RESTAURANT

Self-described Southern WASP Judith Feldman has lived in North Miami since 1964. The widow of a North Miami city councilman, she can tell you stories about the questionable activities of elected officials dating back to the 1960s and 1970s. “It was as bad as a small town could get,” she says.

But today the 73-year-old Feldman is more pessimistic than ever about her city’s prospects. “I’m quite disheartened,” she says, “because it’s apparent that no one is minding the store here. Nobody is operating in the best interests of the citizens of North Miami. They’re operating in their *own* interests.”

North Miami Mayor Andre Pierre, the second Haitian-American to hold that position, chalks up any negative perceptions about his city or his administration to rough politics. “The city will continue to be a strong city and, under my leadership, it has had its best years,” says the mayor, an immigration attorney with an engineering degree. “Yes, there has been a decline in property value, but services are better than ever.”

The “City of Progress” was once among the fastest-growing municipalities in the nation. As of the 2010 census, 58,786 people reside within its ten square miles, making it the fifth-largest population in Miami-Dade County. It is home to the acclaimed Museum of Contemporary Art; Florida’s sole Johnson & Wales University of Culinary Arts; Florida International University’s Biscayne Bay Campus; and Greenwich Studios, the biggest film and sound production facility in South Florida.

Countering the promise of progress, however, is the current reality of dismal property values, high unemployment, vicious political infighting, a complex real estate deal, a looming \$6 million budget shortfall, and rising tensions among residents of a city whose ethnic makeup has undergone dramatic change.

On top of all of that, the city is also facing an investigation by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement.

This past March, FDLE arrested Ricardo Brutus, nephew of Andre Pierre. Brutus, who also served as the mayor’s campaign manager, was charged with “unlawful compensation” after he was videotaped accepting \$4000 in cash from North Miami businessman Shlomo Chelminsky, whom FDLE describes as a “cooperating witness.”

The alleged bribe was made with the expectation that Brutus would be able to



**North Miami Mayor Andre Pierre with a select audience: councilmembers Scott Galvin, Michael Blynn, Marie Steril.**



**Councilman Scott Galvin played a role in the investigation that led to the arrest of Ricardo Brutus.**



**Councilman Jean Marcellus is part of the Haitian majority on the city council and in the city overall.**



**Councilwoman Marie Steril was implicated by Ricardo Brutus, but no charges have been filed against her.**



**Lucie Tondreau denies that Haitians vote only for Haitians: She supported Frank Wolland against Andre Pierre in 2009.**



**Michael Blynn is one of two Anglos on the city council.**

manipulate a specific item on the agenda of an upcoming city council meeting.

Although he didn’t implicate his uncle, Brutus, who served on several city boards, claimed on tape that council members were “money hungry” and the cash would be used to “take care of the people I called.”

Since the arrest, more scandalous incidents have surfaced. For example, the city paid \$8000 to install hidden cameras in Pierre’s office, and \$5000 to Brutus’s fiancée to produce a radio program that allegedly never aired. According to the *Miami Herald*, Brutus told investigators after his arrest that North Miami Councilwoman Marie Steril rigged a community center construction bid to benefit a contractor who had hired her friend. Both Steril and the contracting company deny the charge. Also Pierre reportedly voted to give at least \$145,000 in redevelopment funds to clients of his law firm so they could expand their restaurant.

Pierre dismisses the media stories and insists neither he nor Steril has done anything improper. “There is no corruption on the city council,” he says flatly. “Listen, listen — it is politics, that is what this is. The party that is in power gets attacked.”

Even before the FDLE investigation came to light, Pierre, first elected in 2009 and re-elected this year, was a polarizing figure in North Miami politics. Among his publicized missteps was ordering 43 police-style badges that read “Mayor’s Aide” at a cost of \$4000; driving around in a very expensive, borrowed Porsche without disclosing it as a gift; and not delivering \$116,000 in donations collected for Red Cross earthquake efforts in Haiti. During a visit to Haiti, Pierre also promised that North Miami could take in 55,000 U.S.-visa-holding refugees displaced by the January 2010



**North Miami City Commission in session.**

BT photo by Cathi Marro

Continued on page 30

## Two Tales

Continued from page 29

earthquake, which would have doubled North Miami's population. Later he admitted to the media that his city could only absorb 10,000.

"It's crazy that the mayor is still in power," says Richard Annese, a North Miami resident since 1975. "It's crazy that he even got elected."

Kreyol-language radio personality Lucie Tondreau, a Haitian-American activist who also lives in North Miami, points out that neither Pierre nor anyone else at city hall has been charged with wrongdoing. "Pierre is a young professional who really cares for the community," she says. "He understands the struggle of the community, he tries to work for the people, and he respects the people."

Pierre's convincing re-election this past May, just one month after Brutus's arrest, can be attributed to the support of North Miami's powerful Haitian-American voting bloc. The mayor's backers also note that his vocal critics happen to be white residents living along the Biscayne Corridor's affluent neighborhoods of East



Arch Creek School (photo circa 1911) was the first in the North Miami area, having opened in 1905.

Arch Creek, Keystone Point, and Sans Souci Estates.

"Andre Pierre is presiding over a city that is in transition, and when you have transition, you have change," says Jonas Georges, Haitian-American pastor of All

Nations Presbyterian Church in North Miami Beach. "You have the old Anglo Caucasian inhabitants who are scared."

During most of its 85-year existence, North Miami was predominately white. Then, between 1990 and 2000, the city's

HistoryMiami photo 1989-011-11862

black population (which includes African-Americans and Haitian blacks) jumped from 32 percent to 53 percent, according to the U.S. Census. By 2010 blacks made up 59 percent of the city's population, while only 12.4 percent were Anglos (non-Hispanic whites).

Official figures on North Miami's Haitian community do not exist, but a U.S. Census survey conducted between 2005 and 2009 estimated that 44 percent of North Miami's population is of West Indian descent. Also significant: Three Haitian-Americans — the mayor, Steril, and Jean Marcellus — occupy seats on the city council. Anglos Scott Galvin and Michael Blynn hold the remaining seats.

"The Haitians, they are the majority here in North Miami, and just like everything else, whenever a group is a majority, they are going to rule," says J.L. McCoy, president of the Sunkist Grove Neighborhood Association in western North Miami and an African American. "That's the way things work. That's life."

Seth Gordon, an Anglo political consultant who has lived in Miami-Dade County

Continued on page 32



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## Two Tales

Continued from page 30

since 1970, says “racial ethnic politics” is a fact of life in South Florida. “Any community that recently arrives here shares the same fate, and has to stick together because they are vulnerable,” he observes. “When the Cubans arrived here, they were treated like dirt. Miami was a tremendously hostile environment in the late 1960s, and it took a long time to overcome it.”

Gordon says what really helped Hispanic immigrants politically was the departure of Anglos. “To really overcome it, a lot of hostile Anglos had to leave,” he maintains. “Several hundred thousand Anglos were so unhappy that at various times in the late 1970s and early 1980s, they just left.”

During the past decade, North Miami’s Anglo population has shrunk by a striking 33 percent. During the same period, the city’s overall population declined by 1094 residents. There also are 21 percent fewer families with children living in North Miami today than in 2000. City spokeswoman Pam Solomon blames the population decrease on home foreclosures.



Post-war North Miami street scene: Photo dated April 7, 1959.

Kenneth Each, a former North Miami police chief, believes white flight and population decline are the result of past city policies and actions, not to mention a declining tax base. “Our brand is one of despair,” says Each, a property owner who has lived in North Miami off and on since 1970. “Our brand is political infighting and giving the developers a hard time.”

Indeed, North Miami’s 85-year history is a complex mix of controversy, missed opportunities, segregation, ethnic migration, and, of course, politics.

North Miami’s creation can be traced to a rock formation in the middle of a military trail. During the Third Seminole War, in 1855,

HistoryMiami photo 1989-011-11862

Gen. Abner Doubleday ordered that a military trail be cut between Fort Dallas (the future City of Miami) and Fort Lauderdale.

About half-way along that trail was a natural limestone bridge that provided a crossing over a stream that would be known as Arch Creek, now a public park at Biscayne Boulevard and 135th Street. (The original limestone bridge collapsed in 1974. A replica of the landmark was completed in 1988.)

By 1891, a former U.S. Marine, C.G. Ihle, was farming some 40 acres of land a couple of miles south of the bridge, growing crops such as coontie, squash, bananas, pineapples, sugar cane, guavas, apples, and tomatoes. Five years later, Henry Flagler’s railroad reached Arch Creek, bringing with it northern settlers eager to follow Ihle’s example and cultivate the land. “There was a lot of grapefruit growing,” says Glenn O’Hearn, a member of the Greater North Miami Historical Society. “Part-timers came down from New York in the wintertime and farmed the area around Arch Creek.”

Continued on page 34

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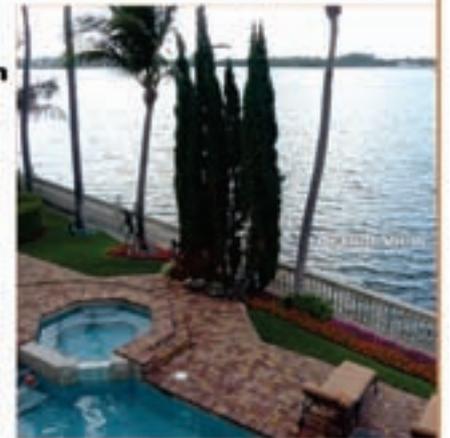
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## Two Tales

Continued from page 32

By 1920 the Arch Creek settlement had a school, a post office, a blacksmith shop, a general store, at least one church, and a population of 300 seasonal and full-time residents.

A canal was dug in 1923 to drain the area, which was prone to flooding. That had the unexpected consequence of diminishing Arch Creek's fertile soil, and resulted in Arch Creek's former farms being divided into lots and sold for residential development.

In February 1926, developers Earl Irons and Arthur Griffing persuaded 38 of Arch Creek's 47 registered voters to incorporate as a municipality with boundaries stretching across Biscayne Bay and all the way to the Atlantic Ocean, according to *Boulevard of Dreams*, written by local historian Seth Bramson. The original name of this sprawling community of 500: The Town of Miami Shores.

But in their rush to create a city that could sell \$275,000 in bonds needed for a town hall, streets, and other capital



**Acclaimed architect Minoru Yamasaki created a futuristic design for Interama, which was never built.**

improvements, the founders made an error that would later haunt them. Recalls history buff O'Hearn: "They did not think to go to the state legislature and seal the name."

Seven months later the infamous 1926 hurricane devastated South Florida,

transforming a frenzied land boom into a regional depression. By 1931 the beachfront areas north of Miami Beach essentially seceded from Miami Shores. That same year, owners of the New Shoreland Company persuaded the state legislature to grant the name "Village of

Miami Shores" to a community just south of the *Town* of Miami Shores. "Shoreland wanted a name that tourists could recognize, even though it didn't connect to the Atlantic Ocean," O'Hearn explains. Shoreland executives also had the state outlaw the name "Town of Miami Shores." Forced to come up with a new identity, residents settled on North Miami.

Thanks to the Second World War, North Miami's population swelled from less than 2000 people in 1940 to more than 23,000 in 1960, O'Hearn says. Most of the new arrivals were war veterans who had received their basic training in South Florida. "They came back with their sweethearts, free education, and VA housing mortgages," O'Hearn adds. "Home builders were constructing 50 houses at a time."

Most of North Miami's new arrivals came from the northeast United States, although war veterans from Iowa and Pennsylvania founded Sunkist Grove in 1947, a neighborhood west of I-95 between NW 7th and 17th avenues and 119th and 135th streets.

Continued on page 36

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## Two Tales

Continued from page 34

“There were large Polish, Italian, and Greek populations from New York,” remembers 40-year North Miami resident Michael McDearmaid, president of the Central City Homeowners Association. Italians tended to dominate the Westside neighborhood, located just west of I-95. Blacks, though, were not allowed to live in most parts of North Miami.

Historian Paul George says once an area became a municipality, “by law the races were segregated.” O’Hearn, a retired school teacher who lived in North Miami from 1940 to 2005, notes that blacks in northeast Miami-Dade were limited to living in North Miami Beach’s Washington Park neighborhood, or a small area in North Miami south of 120th Street, near the border with the Village of Biscayne Park.

Even as Dade County’s segregation laws were dismantled in the mid-1960s, North Miami’s white neighborhoods were slow to integrate. For a time, a loose-knit group of real estate agents would buy homes from anyone attempting to sell to a black family, O’Hearn recounts. “Eventually they



**A waterfront mansion on North Miami’s east side.**

ran out of money,” he says. It wasn’t until 1968 that the first black family, headed by a drugstore owner, moved to O’Hearn’s old Sunkist Grove neighborhood.

**U**ntouched during North Miami’s boom years was 1700 acres of bayfront land near Biscayne

Boulevard and 151st Street. Since 1918 the land had been owned by Harvey Graves, a clothing manufacturer from Rochester, New York. In 1945 the City of Miami bought the Graves tract from his estate for \$495,000, with the idea of building an airport there. Then in 1958, Miami officials deeded the Graves property

to a state-run corporation that planned to create the so-called Inter-American Cultural and Trade Center, or Interama, a long-anticipated permanent fair that would celebrate the cultures and accomplishments of the Western Hemisphere.

For more than ten years, architects and consultants tinkered with concepts that included a 1000-foot-tall Freedom Tower designed by famed architect Minoru Yamasaki, bridges, canals, plazas, exhibition halls, and an underwater tunnel. Says historian Paul George: “It was a boondoggle.”

About 680 acres of land was dredged and a single structure was built, but Interama never materialized. In 1969, just a year after North Miami Mayor Elton Gissendanner became chair of the Inter-American Center Authority, the group was \$12 million in debt. The Graves tract was divided up, with 300 acres given to FIU and 200 acres to form Oleta River State Park. Before departing for a job as director of Florida’s Department of Natural Resources, Gissendanner persuaded North Miami’s voters to take over

Continued on page 36

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## Two Tales

Continued from page 36

the remaining 290 acres for recreational purposes by passing a bond issue that, when it was finally paid off in 2000, cost taxpayers \$30 million.

Although Interama was a bust, elsewhere in the city apartments, office buildings, hotels, and condos continued to be built, sometimes without any apparent planning. Overseeing the city during the 1960s and early 1970s was Edward Connell, the city manager. Kenneth Each, who joined North Miami's police force in 1970, remembers that Connell had the city buy him a Chrysler Imperial. "That was like, today, getting a Lincoln Town Car," he says.

Allegations of corruption within the building department soon surfaced. Desperate to be rid of Connell, Mayor Robert Hough defied Florida's Sunshine Law and held a secret council meeting at his home in 1971 to discuss firing the city manager. A year later — thanks to testimony from Mayor Hough and councilmembers Anthony DeLucca and Anthony Valentine — Connell was arrested for soliciting a \$20,000 bribe from a contractor eager for

the \$85,000 job of paving tennis courts at Claude Pepper Park.

By 1973 Connell had pled guilty to a conspiracy charge, made a deal with the State Attorney's Office, and testified that Hough, Valentine, and DeLucca also solicited bribes from contractors building the San Souci Tennis Center, Claude Pepper Park's tennis courts, and (in the case of Hough and DeLucca) water and sewer work for Interama. As a result, the three elected officials were indicted and removed from office.

Former police chief Each contends that Hough, DeLucca, and Valentine were "honest men" implicated by a crooked official. "It was all bullshit and the charges were eventually thrown out," he says.

"Connell was really the puppet master," agrees longtime resident Judith Feldman, while acknowledging that city government improved after the politicians were indicted. "We got rid



North Miami's west side absorbed an influx of Haitian immigrants.

of those guys," she says, "and they were replaced by straight arrows who put the city back on track."

The scandal encouraged Feldman and her physician husband, Dr. Hobart Feldman, to circulate a petition demanding a citywide height limit of four stories. The charter amendment was passed by voters in 1973. That same year Dr. Feldman was elected to the city council with a vow to clean up city hall.

Today Judith Feldman insists the height limit prevented massive projects the city's infrastructure could not handle, but Each claims it was a mistake. "We did not want any development," he says, "so they kept everything at four stories and chased away the developers."

But city officials still liked golf. In 1974, a company called Munisport offered to turn the city's share of the Graves tract into a golf course — for free. To create rolling hills for the course (and earn profits in the process) Munisport would operate the site as a landfill.

For the next five years, Munisport collected garbage from 400 businesses

Continued on page 40

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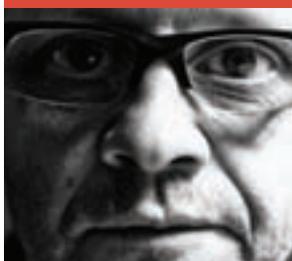
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FEB 10 / SPOKEN WORD



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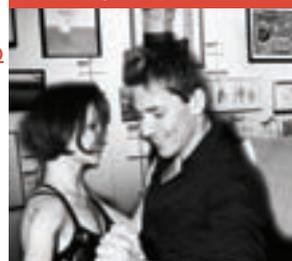
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## Two Tales

Continued from page 38

and cities. Aside from the expected yard clippings and household waste, the 24/7 dump accepted just about anything, from medical waste to drums filled with chemicals. The federal Environmental Protection Agency added the Munisport dump on its notorious Superfund site list in 1983 after finding cyanide, ammonia, and arsenic in the ground water. Whatever lay beneath the surface also enabled an underground fire to burn for several months in 1990.

By the time the feds took it off the Superfund list in 1999, the city had spent \$6 million trying to clean up the contamination. Unsafe levels of ammonia and methane are still detected in the site's groundwater, which continues to be monitored by the county's Department of Environmental Resources Management.

Even before Munisport was removed from the list, the city was entertaining new projects. An open-air amphitheater, a baseball training park, and a dinosaur theme park were among them. Respected



**As white flight continues, Hispanics have been moving in.**

real estate consultant Michael Y. Cannon opined that, given the environmental conditions and the nearby sewage-treatment plant, an industrial park would be the best use for the site.

Then along came developer Michael Swerdlow. In 2002 Swerdlow convinced city officials that "Biscayne Landing," a proposed community of 6000 condos, 100,000 square feet of commercial space,

and a luxury hotel, was the way to go for Munisport. In exchange for a 200-year lease on 190 acres of land, Swerdlow offered to give the city \$1.5 million per year and fund \$20 million in projects elsewhere in North Miami, such as an Olympic training center, a new library, and affordable housing. An amended deal later included another \$5 million for expansion of the city's Museum of Contemporary Art. Two years after an agreement was made, the county issued \$31 million in bonds dedicated to Munisport's ultimate cleanup.

Enthusiastic for future development, North Miami voters in 2002 allowed an exception to the four-story restriction so Biscayne Landing could proceed. Elected officials even created a redevelopment district covering four-fifths of the city, which would allow North Miami to keep most of the \$5 billion in property taxes expected from Biscayne Landing.

By 2006 voters decided to raise the height limit along other commercial corridors within the city, hoping to attract more developers. That same year, Swerdlow sold

Continued on page 42

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### **The Last Circus** Directed by Alex de la Iglesia

Set between the Spanish Civil War and the End of the Franco regime, The Last Circus follows a circus clown whose witness too much tragedy to be anything but the sad harlequin. When he meets and falls for seductive acrobat he must fight for her against her sadistic husband, the seemingly happy clown star of the circus. What ensues is a ferocious battle, escalating to unbelievable heights.

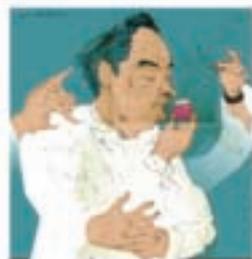
## October 13th to 16th



### **Limelight** Directed by Billy Corben

As the owner of legendary hotspots like Limelight, Tunnel, Palladium and Club USA, Peter Gafien was the undisputed king of the New York club scene who built and oversaw a Manhattan empire that counted tens of thousands of patrons per night in its peak years, acting as a conduit for a culture that defined the image of an era in New York until years of legal battles led to his eventual deportation to Canada. This exuberant documentary charts Gafien's rise and fall against the transformation of New York City, offering a wild ride through a now-closed chapter in the history of NYC nightlife. From the director of "Cocaine Cowboys", come this fascinating true story of crime & corruption. Filmmakers Billy Corben & Alfred Spellman will be in attendance.

## October 20th to 23rd



### **El Bulli** Directed by Gereon Wetzel

Spain's renowned El Bulli restaurant is considered to be the greatest restaurant in the world, having recently closed its doors food lovers can now only salivate via celluloid. This is a meticulous exploration of how this famously avant-garde eatery comes up with its insanely inventive creations...for those passionate about the artistry and indeed the science of cooking, it's dangerously close to porn.



### **Jane's Journey** Directed by Lorenz Knauer

An inspiring portrait of the private person behind iconic conservationist Jane Goodall. We travel across several continents, from her childhood home in England to Tanzania where she began her ground breaking research and where she still returns every year to enjoy the company of the chimpanzees that made her famous. Featuring a wide range of interviews and spectacular footage from her private collection.

## October 27th to 30th



### **The Woman** Directed by Lucky McKee

A disturbing tale of torture and dirty little secrets that can haunt any seemingly harmless neighborhood. The story follows a successful country lawyer, a devil with a handsome face, who captures and attempts to "civilize" a feral woman who lives in the wild. Soon the life of his family is in extreme jeopardy in this film that rocked and shocked the 2011 Sundance Film Festival.



### **Tucker & Dale VS. Evil** Directed by Eli Craig

A hilariously gory, good-spirited horror comedy. Tucker and Dale are two best friends on vacation at their dilapidated mountain house, who are mistaken for murderous backwoods hillbillies by a group of obnoxious, preppy college kids. When one of the students gets separated from her friends, the boys try to lend a hand, but as the misunderstanding grows, so does the body count.

## October 29th ONLY!!!



### **The Rocky Horror Picture Show** Directed by Jim Sharman

This low-budget, freak show, cult classic is about the misadventures of Brad and Janet, an upright yuppie couple who stumble across a strange mansion on a rainy night where they meet a mad transvestite doctor who creates a hunky guy in this very different take on the Frankenstein story.

Join us for a fantastically fun night as we time warp our way back to the Fabulous Flying Fendelman Brother's Grove Cinema. A longtime host of the Rocky Horror Picture Show, this is an ode to the amazing nights they created in the 1970's and 80's. Come in costume or come as you are and definitely "come up to the lab and see what's on the slab. I see you shiver with..."

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## Two Tales

Continued from page 40

his share of the Biscayne Landing to his project partners, Boca Developers.

Then the real estate market tanked. Boca Developers had managed to build two 25-story condo towers on the old dump before defaulting on \$196 million worth of mortgages in 2009.

Two years of complex legal wrangling and hair-brained development schemes followed. (One of the proposals, presented by two friends of Mayor Andre Pierre, called for a solar-powered, indoor snow-ski resort.) Finally the city regained control of the property and solicited serious new ideas for developing Biscayne Landing.

Only two experienced developers submitted proposals, and one of them backed out just last month. The last man standing: Michael Swerdlow, one of whose company executives explained why the developer was lured back to the property: "If you look around Florida you will never find another 200-acre site in such a beautiful area. Had it not been a dump, it would have been developed 40 years ago."

In exchange for a 99-year lease granting his development team, Oleta Partners, the right to build a shopping center, 28 residential buildings, a film and video studio, and two hotels, Swerdlow promised to give the city an upfront payment of \$17.5 million, plus annual payments of \$1.5 million per year and a small portion of rent proceeds.

Swerdlow's proposal also claims the city will garner \$287 million in rent revenues during the century-long lease, plus another \$767 million in property-tax collections. More than 10,000 people reportedly will be employed to construct the new Biscayne Landing, while another 2500 are expected to earn paychecks after the project is completed.

There is a catch. Although the city has not yet begun negotiating with Swerdlow, its current budget anticipates receiving millions from Biscayne Landing to fill an anticipated \$6 million budget gap. If the deal falls through, the city could be forced to renegotiate union contracts or lay off as many as 100 employees.

Even without the budget dilemma, Judith Feldman says Swerdlow will eat the city's lunch during negotiations: "No one has the smarts to deal with Swerdlow, who will sell you a bill of goods, shake your hand, and walk away with four of your fingers."

Although city officials strived to keep out high-rise developers in the 1970s, they couldn't keep out the slumlords. Many hotels and apartments built during North Miami's post-war boom period were bought by unscrupulous property owners during the 1980s and 1990s, according to former police chief Kenneth Each. "The landlords, they go and rent a dump with a Frigidaire to low-income people," he says. "You wouldn't want to live in such places."

When affordable housing projects were demolished in Overtown and Liberty City, many of their residents were relocated to these apartments in North Miami. Feldman says by the late 1980s, white families were fleeing North Miami in droves: "Some of them moved to Broward County and some moved farther out of state."

Only five percent of North Miami's residents were black in 1980. By the 1990 U.S. Census, 32 percent of North Miami's residents were black, many of whom were living in the Sunkist and Westside neighborhoods. Today few Anglos live in those communities. "We have, living on my block, one Caucasian," says J.L. McCoy, who has lived in the Sunkist neighborhood since 1979.

The exodus of white households, along with low property values, created an opening for Haitian families desiring a suburban life. A house and a yard was "a sign of affluence," explains Roseline Philippe, a Haitian-American activist who has lived in North Miami since 1993. "As you move up the ladder, you might leave an area that is more urban for something more residential."

Despite a plunge in numbers, Anglos maintained absolute power thanks to a high voter turnout and the fact that all five city council seats were elected at-large. That changed after single-member districts were established in 1992. By 1995 the Westside neighborhood elected the city's first African-American councilman, Arthur "Duke" Sorey.

Yet Sorey would only serve one term in office. (North Miami mayors serve two-year terms while councilmembers serve four-year terms.) He was defeated in 1999 by the first-elected Haitian-American councilman, Ossman Desir, a defeat that reportedly led to friction between the African-American and Haitian-American

Continued on page 44

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**Saturday, April 28, 2012 at 7:30 PM**

**SVET STOYANOV** – A unique and exciting program of marimbas, percussion, and two pianos as this Bulgarian born winner of The Concert Artists Guild International Competition – who has performed at Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, and the Kennedy Center - plays with his quartet, HAMMER/KLAVIER.

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### Two Tales

Continued from page 42

communities.

Two years later Josaphat "Joe" Celestin was elected North Miami's first Haitian-American mayor. Another first: three out of the five seats were held by Haitian Americans, a ratio maintained after Celestin was elected to a second term.

Then Anglos regained the council majority for the next four years. Kevin Burns was elected mayor in 2005 and again in 2007, twice defeating ex-Councilman Jean Monestime (now a county commissioner).

Lucie Tondreau, a North Miami resident since 1985, denies that the city's Haitians vote only for Haitians, a widely held view among Anglos and African Americans. When Celestin ran against Sorey in 2001 for the mayor's seat, Tondreau points out, each candidate had both Haitian-Americans and African-American supporters.

Tondreau herself supported Pierre's opponent, former mayor Frank Wolland, when he ran for the mayor's seat in 2009. Indeed, some of Pierre's Anglo critics are quick to note that they supported his first mayoral bid, believing the attorney, then 41 years old, could unify the city.

Tondreau says the ethnic divide is being perpetuated by a small group from the east side of the Boulevard, whom she refuses to name. "I think for the most part that the residents of North Miami are like a big family," she says. "There are just a few of them, just a handful of them, who want to control everything."

But the mayor's detractors claim Pierre's supporters are the ones provoking racial and ethnic tensions. They cite an August 16 *Miami Herald* article about an emergency meeting the mayor called to hire police chief Stephen Johnson to replace Russell Benford as city manager. Haitian residents told *Herald* reporter Nadege Green that 1320 AM radio personality Piman Bouk urged his audience to support the mayor "because white residents were going to oppose a plan to lower the water bill."

Tondreau, who was in the studio with Bouk, claims the DJ really told his audience that they should go to meetings to stay informed and not just to complain about the water bill. "I don't know who is translating the Haitian Kreyol, but I think everything said on the radio is being taken out of context," she asserts.

As for Pierre's popularity, Tondreau claims it is based on his work in the Haitian community since the 1990s, and his efforts to assist low-income homeowners. Pierre has also been at the forefront of earthquake relief efforts in Haiti, collecting \$200,000 in public and private donations, visiting the stricken nation of his birth, and meeting with Haitian government officials.

Haitians also admire Pierre's educational and professional background, as well as his election as mayor of a significant city. "There is an overwhelming amount of elation for him," gushes Pastor Jonas Georges. "He is quite young and he has been mayor for only two years, but I do believe he is presenting to us hope for the future of the community."

Pierre's popularity is not lost on Jacques Despinosse, a former councilman who opposed Pierre in the election this past May. Despinosse believes the discontent on the city's east side stems from a desire among Anglos to regain a three-seat majority on the council, but that more pressing issues must be addressed. "It is time for a cease fire," he says, "to put down our weapons and start working with the mayor because we need peace. Black on one side, white on one side it is not good for the city. Leave the man alone and give him a chance to operate."

Anglos may soon lose even more of their political clout as age is taking its toll on longtime residents, some of whom tell the *BT* that it is only a matter of time before they move from North Miami to be closer to their families living outside the county, or even the state.

"The house is too big at this point," says Richard Annese, an Anglo living near the city's downtown area. Many of his friends have died or left town. His son moved to Orlando. However, Annese adds, "I wouldn't be as quick to be getting out if the city were in better shape."

As Anglos ponder their commitment to living in North Miami, another group is moving in. Hispanics, currently 27 percent of the city's population, are buying homes on both sides of Biscayne Boulevard. In fact, between 2000 and 2010, the city's Hispanic population surged by 15 percent.

J.L. McCoy, president of the Sunkist Grove Neighborhood Association, takes it all in stride: "The changes come all the time. What can I say? North Miami changes. Everything changes."

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

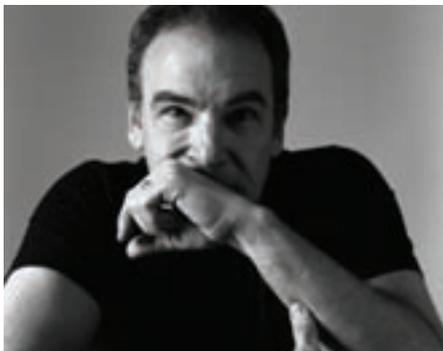
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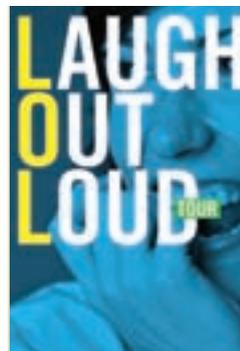
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# First Cargo, Then Commuters (Maybe)

Money for freight trains? No problem. Money for passenger trains?

By Terence Cantarella  
BT Contributor

South Florida has a dream. A dream that one day every tri-county resident will be able to ride a commuter train along the coast from downtown Miami up to West Palm Beach, hopping on and off in neighborhoods along the way. A dream that Amtrak will travel that same route, stopping in major cities from Miami to Jacksonville before continuing on to northern states. A dream that freight trains, loaded with containers from new, super-size ships, will rumble out of the Port of Miami for the first time in years.

One of those dreams will soon come true. The other two will need time and lots of money.

The key to a new rail reality lies with the Florida East Coast Railway (FEC). Roughly paralleling U.S. 1 (Biscayne Boulevard) from downtown Miami to Palm Beach County, the FEC passes through the centers of 28 South Florida cities before heading north along the coast to Jacksonville.

Built by oil and hotel magnate Henry Flagler in the late 19th Century, the FEC played a major role in Florida's development, bringing goods and people to the once inaccessible southern end of the peninsula. But competition from automobiles, affordable air travel, and problems posed by a workers' strike brought passenger service to an abrupt end in 1968. Ever since then, the railroad has carried nothing but freight

The southernmost five-mile stretch, from 71st Street to the Port of Miami, was rarely used after that, and fell into

complete disuse after 2005, when Hurricane Wilma damaged the drawbridge that carried trains to the port.

Now, thanks to nearly \$50 million in federal, state, and private funds, that ribbon of steel is making a comeback. Work has begun to repair the bridge, upgrade the rails, and construct an on-dock rail terminal to restore freight service to and from the port. The upgrades are being made in anticipation of the widening of the Panama Canal, which will allow super-sized ships from Asia to unload East Coast-bound containers in Miami. A \$77 million state grant will help fund the dredging of the Port of Miami to accommodate those larger ships.

Questions remain as to how effective those improvements will be in attracting mega-ships to Miami. Yet of greater interest, perhaps, is the fact that the freight revival comes in advance of Florida

Department of Transportation plans to place both tri-county commuter and inter-city

Amtrak trains on the FEC track, too.

The Port of Miami design calls for rail cars stacked with off-loaded cargo containers to use the existing single track that runs across Biscayne Boulevard, past the Freedom Tower, then turns northward, roughly paralleling NE 2nd Avenue.

At NE 71st Street the line branches westward and continues on to the FEC's Hialeah Railyard, northeast of Miami International Airport. That is where cargo bound for South Florida distribution would be loaded onto trucks for delivery.

But much of the cargo, if not most, would be heading farther north, passing through Jacksonville and on up the East Coast. That will mean a lot of trains using the same single track envisioned to carry passengers from Miami to West Palm Beach, and beyond. Can commuters and containers coexist?

In 2009 Sue Gibbons of Gannett Fleming, the consulting firm working on the passenger rail study for FDOT, explained at a public meeting that "within the 100-foot-wide FEC corridor, there's room for up to five tracks, so a combination of local, express, and even inter-city Amtrak trains is possible."

Current plans, however, call for just one additional track.

"We are analyzing, hopefully, just double-tracking," says Amie Goddeau, a Mobility Development Manager at FDOT. "We have to do an awful lot of train simulation modeling with the FEC to make sure both freight and passenger service can be accommodated and determine what type of infrastructure is needed."

Although portions of the FEC corridor are already double-tracked, vast

**Work has begun to repair the drawbridge, upgrade the rails, and construct an on-dock rail terminal to restore freight service to and from the port.**



**The latest proposed locations for commuter stations.**

stretches currently contain just a single line for freight. FDOT's plan would run two tracks from downtown Miami to West Palm Beach.

Continued on page 10

South Florida East Coast Corridor Study

# Volatile Voters in Miami's Money Hub

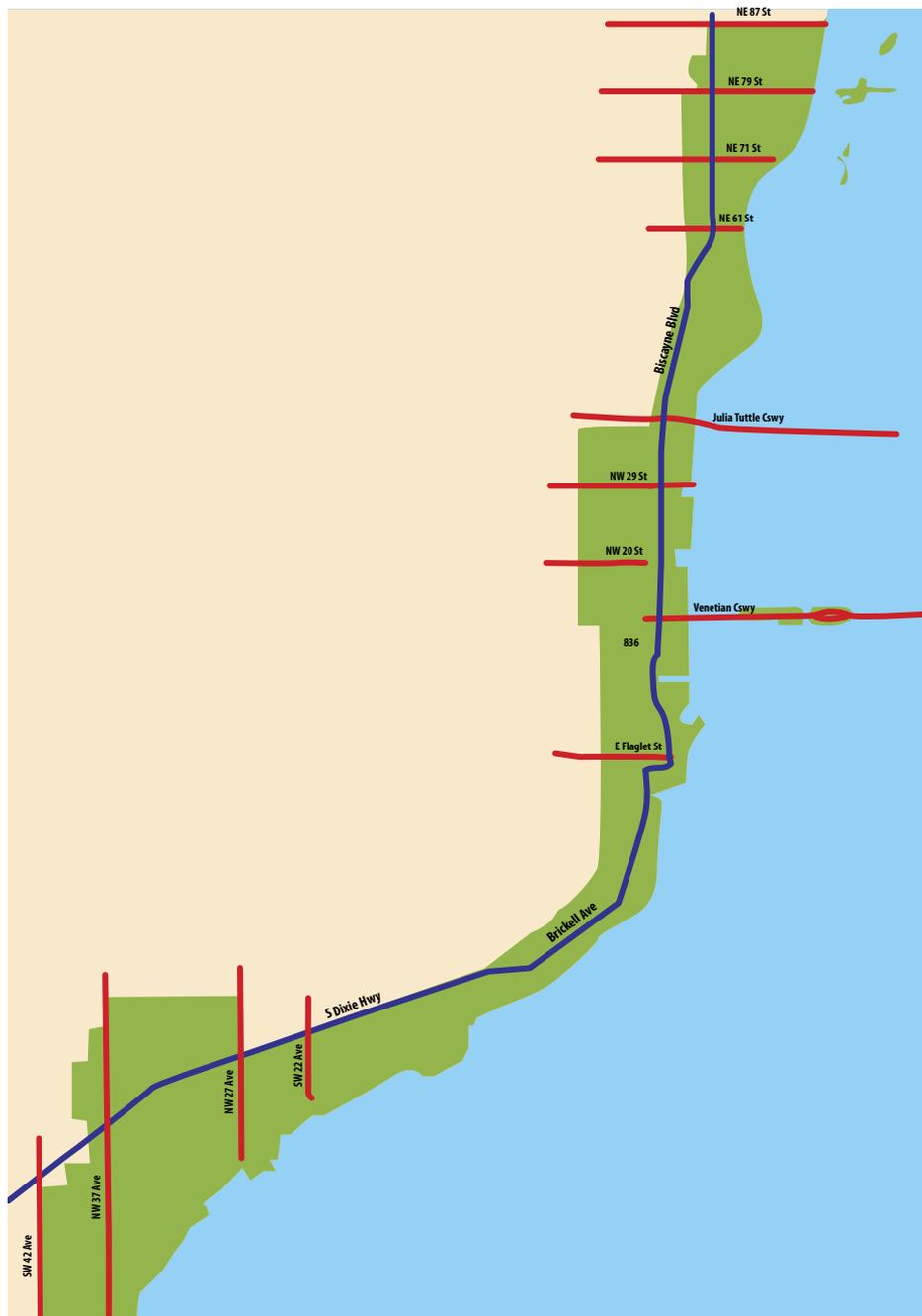
District 2 generates 78% of the city's tax revenue and 100% of its election buzz on November 1

By Erik Bojnansky  
BT Senior Writer

Miami's City Commission District 2 is not a single place, but it is singular. It is a salad of places, mixed with tens of millions

in tax dollars, originally crafted for Anglos, and coveted by developers and billboard companies.

On November 1, the voters of Coconut Grove, the Brickell-downtown area, some of the Venetian islands, Omni, Edgewater, the Upper Eastside, and



Kate Callahan



Donna Milo

BT photos by Jacqueline Doullis



Michelle Niemeyer



Marc Sarnoff

portions of Wynwood, Midtown Miami, and Buena Vista, will decide if incumbent Commissioner Marc Sarnoff is worthy of another four-year term, or if one of four challengers should take his place.

"It is the democratic process. People will judge for themselves in November," Sarnoff says.

As for the slew of contenders trying to take his job, Sarnoff shrugs: "They're just trying to cash in on anti-incumbent feelings."

But it isn't just Sarnoff's seat that is up for grabs. Commissioner Francis Suarez, son of former mayor and current Miami-Dade County Commissioner Xavier Suarez, is unopposed for a second term representing the Flagami, Coral Way, and Shenandoah neighborhoods of District 4. Commission Chairman Willy Gort, a veteran of Miami politics, is being challenged by political neophyte Shawn Selleck for his District 1 seat covering industrial Allapattah.

Where are the anti-incumbency feelings in those areas?

"They've always been apolitical in District 1. They're just trying to make a living of sorts," Sarnoff answers. "In Suarez's district, it's retired old people who just want their streets paved and garbage picked up."

But in District 2, residents expect results, Sarnoff says. After all, 78 percent of Miami's tax money is collected there. "In District 2, there are higher expectations," he says. "It's the money part of the City of Miami."

Frank Rollason, vice president of the Upper Eastside's Belle Meade Homeowners Association, can't help but mock Sarnoff's sentiment. "We are the richest people, the smartest people, the elegant people," he says sarcastically. "The guy is an elitist without a doubt." (Rollason, a BT columnist, ran unsuccessfully against Sarnoff in 2006.)

Elitism can work in District 2, if deployed properly. During a recent debate at the Miami Science Museum, Sarnoff was applauded when he bragged about how he used nearly \$3 million in impact fees (collected in District 2) to buy a 35,000-square-foot vacant lot on Brickell Avenue worth \$2 million, and then used another \$1 million to add landscaping, a concrete hardscape, benches, and other enhancements to create a park.

Brickell, he said, deserved to have "the most elegant park," where women

Continued on page 48



# Sunny Isles Beach Jazz Fest

## October 13-16, 2011



### Master of Ceremonies

# Stu Grant

and Performances by

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- >> Frost School of Music's Henry Mancini Institute Jazz Septet
- >> Maria Rivas
- >> Frank Axtell Quartet

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### Friday, October 14 • 7:30 PM

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## Community News: BISCAYNE CORRIDOR

### WHO WANTS TO BE A COMMISSIONER?

**Name:** Williams Armbrister

**Occupation:** Retired Florida Power and Light foreman.

**Civic History:** Activist from the West Grove neighborhood.

**Platform:** Promises he won't become a "polish-tician" or have any personal business interests that will "wreak havoc in the city." Armbrister says the city should do more to encourage the creation of good-paying jobs and not seasonal or part-time employment touted in projects such as the Miami Marlins stadium. He is also passionate about preserving the integrity of residential neighborhoods, particularly West Grove, where he has lived for decades.

**Campaign Contributions (prior to 9/30):** \$350

**Name:** Kate Callahan

**Occupation:** Registered nurse and co-owner of a healthcare consulting business.

**Civic History:** Coconut Grove Village Council member; chair of the board for Camillus Health Concern; past board member of the Public Health Trust governing Jackson Memorial Health System; former chair of the Alliance for Aging.

**Platform:** Vows to be a full-time commissioner and will push for a charter amendment prohibiting sitting city commissioners from earning outside employment. Wants to merge the city's fire department into Miami-Dade Fire Rescue, reform the pension system at a savings of \$40 million a year, prevent the Community Redevelopment Agency's practice of giving subsidies to developers, and to stop "backroom deals."

**Campaign Contributions (prior to 9/30):** \$51,420

**Name:** Donna Milo

**Occupation:** Owner of a marine fabrication business.

**Civic History:** Affiliated with the Metropolitan Miami Action Plan nominating committee; past chair of Miami's Planning Advisory Board; former member of the Miami-Dade County Domestic Violence Oversight Board.

**Platform:** A transgender Republican, Milo is also the only candidate running in the District 2 seat who does not live in Coconut Grove. (She resides in the Upper Eastside neighborhood of Belle Meade.) Wants to streamline city regulations in order to allow businesses and job creation to foster. Promises to find ways to reduce the "burden of taxpayers" by making the city government more cost-effective. Endorsed by the IAFF Local 587, which represents Miami's firefighters.

**Campaign Contributions (prior to 9/30):** \$32,570

**Name:** Michelle Niemeyer

**Occupation:** Attorney.

**Civic History:** Chair of the Coconut Grove Village Council, past member of the Coconut Grove Chamber of Commerce, served on Coconut Grove Waterfront Plan Implementation Committee.

**Platform:** Wants to enhance transparency and efficiency in government and foster economic development. Although touting her volunteer work in Coconut Grove, Niemeyer vows she will represent all of District 2 equally. Also wants to improve the city's environment and infrastructure and ensure the public's access to parks and public facilities.

**Campaign Contributions (prior to 9/30):** \$60,350

**Name:** Marc Sarnoff

**Occupation:** Attorney, incumbent city commissioner.

**Civic History:** Co-founder of Grove First, former Coconut Grove Village Council member, former president of the Center Grove Neighborhood Association.

**Platform:** During a recent debate, Sarnoff said he's been "the glue that held the city together" in tumultuous times. Also asserts he has been able to ensure that services are not cut and that he has delivered parks and improvements to neighborhoods all over District 2. If re-elected, Sarnoff says he intends to improve the city's park system, improve access to the bayfront, prevent overdevelopment, and create more bike paths.

**Campaign Contributions (prior to 9/30):** \$377,628

— Erik Bojnansky

### Volatile Voters

Continued from page 47

could walk around in high heels and residents could enjoy in wine and cheese al fresco. When one of his opponents, Michelle Niemeyer, tried to add that she would consult residents on what kind of parks they want, Brickell Homeowner Association president Ernesto Cuesta

loudly interjected: "We deserve that park! We subsidize the City of Miami!"

Sarnoff is hailed by neighborhood activists all over District 2 for coming through on special neighborhood projects. At the same time, the commissioner has been portrayed by his critics as a pompous, pathological liar eager to cater

Continued on page 52

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## Community News: BISCAYNE CORRIDOR



South Florida East Coast Corridor Study

Existing routes for the FEC and Tri-Rail / Amtrak rail lines.

### First Cargo

Continued from page 46

The goal of introducing a local commuter service on those tracks is estimated to cost about \$3 billion. “So what we need to do now,” Goddeau explains, “is break it down into cost-effective, buildable segments. We’re looking at a few, but if you live in South Florida, the one that makes the most sense is the one between Miami and Fort Lauderdale.”

In other words, a new tri-county commuter line will be pieced together slowly, as funding emerges.

As for Amtrak, which currently travels to Miami along the

CSX Railway tracks (several miles west of South Florida’s city centers), she says, “If we’re successful putting in commuter rail, then Amtrak would like to run down the FEC, too. As we look to [future] usage of the tracks, we would put in a slot for them.” Additional tracks would likely be unnecessary, she says, since Amtrak would only run one or two trains a day in each direction.

Financing those dreams could be tough. FDOT applied for federal grants twice in the past three years to fund

Amtrak’s move to the FEC. They were denied both times owing to concerns about the project’s readiness. They will try again as soon as the Federal Railroad Administration announces a new round of grant opportunities, this time bolstered by a recently approved state pledge of \$118 million. It is not known, however, when the Federal Railroad Administration will make new grants available.

A tri-county commuter service on the FEC will face funding challenges, too. Local budget deficits, state cut-

backs, and an anti-spending sentiment in Washington could limit government contributions. The ideological debate

**Local budget deficits, state cutbacks, and an anti-spending sentiment in Washington could limit government contributions for commuter service.**

over the wisdom of rail subsidies will likely factor in also: Supporters believe passenger rail curbs traffic congestion, creates jobs, lowers emissions, and reduces fuel dependence. Therefore it deserves government subsidies. Critics fear a tax-funded boondoggle which is better left to the private sector.

The solution may lie with Tri-Rail — South Florida’s existing tri-county commuter service, which

Continued on page 54

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## Community News: BISCAYNE CORRIDOR

### Volatile Voters

Continued from page 48

to the very special interests that Sarnoff once vowed to fight.

“He is what I would describe as a volatile personality,” says one local political operative. “People feel strongly about him one way or the other.”

District 2’s origins are volatile as well.

For most of Miami’s history, all five Miami City Commission seats were filled in citywide, at-large elections, although one seat was traditionally allotted to the African-American community. When a young Cuban-American lawyer named Humberto Hernandez took that seat away in 1997, the People United to Lead the Struggle for Equality (PULSE) sued under the Voting Rights Act for single-member districts. (Hernandez would be later implicated in absentee ballot fraud and convicted of mortgage fraud, spending four years in prison.)

To settle the case, Miami officials tried to figure out how to guarantee that at least one district had an African-American majority. That’s when longtime Commissioner J.L. Plummer demanded a district for Anglos. A

hodgepodge of white neighborhoods, most of them upscale and waterfront (as well as the African-American/Bahamian enclave of the West Grove), was stitched together to form District 2.

Plummer, seen by many as a power-brokering member of the city’s antiquated (and embarrassing) establishment, an old pol who’d been at Dinner Key since 1970, was defeated by fellow Coconut Grove resident Johnny Winton in 1999.

Winton, a real estate investor, promised to reform city hall. It wasn’t long, however, before Winton aligned himself with Miami Mayor Manny Diaz and his pro-development agenda that seemed to target District 2’s up-and-coming areas. When Winton opted to compromise, rather than oppose, a proposed Home Depot in Coconut Grove, he lost the support of voters in that politically active community.

Sarnoff, a Coconut Grove lawyer, gained recognition for challenging Home Depot — and the very idea of big-box stores in the Grove. Sarnoff had already opened a campaign account to challenge Winton when, in June 2006, Winton got drunk while waiting for a flight at Miami

Continued on page 84



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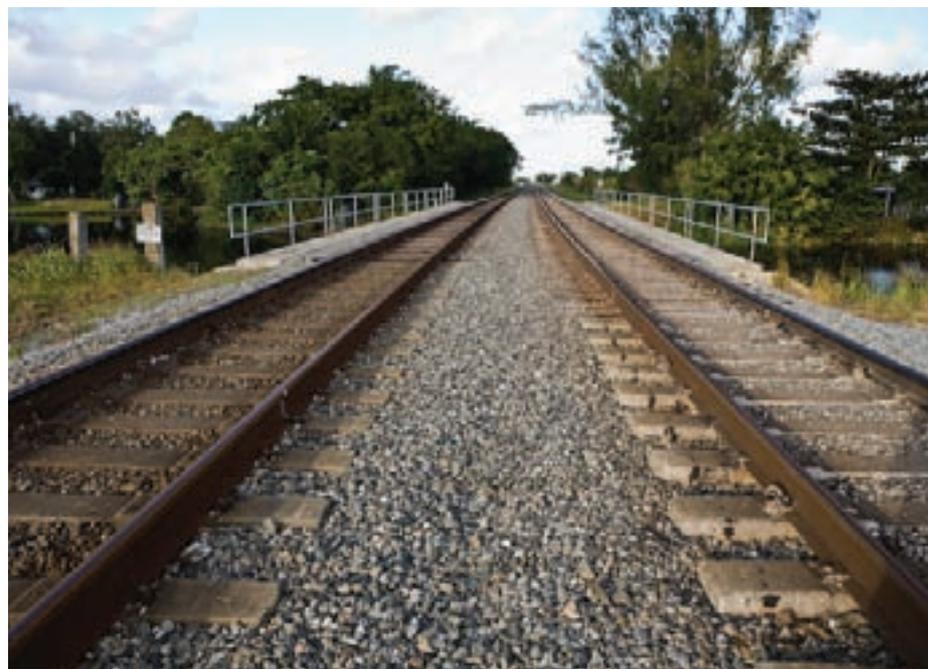
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## Community News: BISCAYNE CORRIDOR



BT photo by Silvia Ros

There are stretches of twin tracks, like this near El Portal, but mainly it's single track.

### First Cargo

Continued from page 50

operates several miles west of the FEC, on tracks formerly owned by CSX Railway.

The *Palm Beach Post* reported in August that "legislation is likely to be proposed for the [state legislative] session beginning in January that would

Continued on page 85



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| 6:30 AM  |                               | MORNING<br>VINYASA<br>(SUSAN)              |                               | MORNING<br>VINYASA<br>(SUSAN)              |  |                          |                               |
| 9:00 AM  | POWER<br>YOGA<br>(HOLLY)      |  | POWER<br>YOGA<br>(HOLLY)      |  |  |                          |                               |
| 10:30 AM |                               |  |                               |  |  | GENTLE<br>YOGA<br>(ANDY) |                               |
| 12:00 PM |                               |  |                               |  | WARRIOR<br>POWER FLOW<br>LEVEL 2<br>(MARA) |                          | VINYASA<br>YOGA<br>(MARGARET) |
| 4:00 PM  | WARM<br>VINYASA<br>(MARA)     |  | WARM<br>VINYASA<br>(MARA)     |  |  |                          |                               |
| 5:15 PM  | VINYASA<br>YOGA<br>(VICTORIA) |  | VINYASA<br>YOGA<br>(VICTORIA) |  | VINYASA<br>YOGA<br>(HOLLY)                 |                          |                               |
| 6:30 PM  |                               | WARRIOR<br>POWER FLOW<br>LEVEL 2<br>(MARA) |                               | WARRIOR<br>POWER FLOW<br>LEVEL 2<br>(MARA) |  |                          |                               |
| 8:00 PM  |                               | YOGA FLOW<br>(MARCELLA)                    |                               | YOGA<br>FLOW                               |  |                          |                               |

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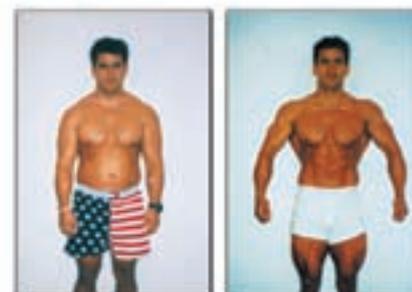
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# Signs of the Times

The economic downturn has produced a new generation of old-style street hawkers

By **Mark Sell**  
BT Contributor

It is 93 degrees at 2:30 p.m., the fifth hour on the job for the man in the lime-green, polyester Gumby suit with the fixed yellow smile, positioned just north of 130th Street on Biscayne Boulevard.

His task: waving at cars while holding a sign pointing to the day-old "Halloween Megastore" in the old Blockbuster space.

"It's hot and this is my first day," says the man behind the Gumby mask, Jeanmarie Esnard, 24 years old, who moved here from Haiti two-and-a-half years ago. "It's not so bad if you drink water and keep it on your face." He had

sold ice cream at the American Airlines Arena for \$8.50 an hour, but as events dried up, he traded air conditioning for heat at \$8 an hour, the going rate for a sign carrier along the Boulevard.

Inside the Halloween store, the paymaster, manager Julio Castrejon, considers Esnard's labor the surest form of advertising for a business designed to close once Halloween is over. "It's also a good way to put money back into the community and keep it local," Castrejon says. (Esnard lives with his parents and sister in North Miami.)

Esnard is among the newest of a small army of sign holders and sign spinners up and down Biscayne Boulevard. Call it guerilla marketing, or call it old-style spin. The sign holders are grateful and their



employers swear by them.

Up the street, at the bus stop by the North Miami Post Office at 143rd Street, Phil Russell, age 45, jumps, flips, tosses, and spins his arrow advertising "Cash for Gold," keeping it pointed at the precious metals and jewelry dealer across the street. (Phil Russell is a pseudonym. He asked that his real name not be used.)

Russell, who is king of the Boulevard at \$12 an hour, is glad to share his

philosophy and work ethic. He comes prepared with a cap, a two-gallon cooler, bananas for potassium, extra bottled water for quick gulps, and sunscreen. He's six-foot, one-inch, and weighs 142 pounds. He figures he'll gain 20 pounds back in the winter.

"Sign-spinning is a big business. AArrow Spinners charges businesses \$55 an hour and pays employees \$20 an hour," Russell says, keeping his eyes on

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the road and his arrow pointing across the street between spins. "Some of these businesses are really advertising their [spinners], rather than the business. See, if you go spin this [sign] nonstop, they'll never see what you're advertising. My thing is to try to attract the customer so they know where the business is.

"People are nice," he continues. "They know me. They get me food. They get me soda. They know I'm working my ass off and they know it's hot. If I'm making money for [the owner] across the street, I'm making a little money for myself."

Russell has held a grab bag of jobs, studying culinary arts and working in landscaping, swimming pool maintenance, and as a valet, parking cars. He came upon this job three years ago, when the recession worsened, and has kept at it since. "Obama called for jobs the other night," he says. "People are hungry. If anything, we're trying to help people get the money [by selling gold jewelry] to pay the rent. I put in nine-and-a-half hours. I'd rather do this than knock on doors looking for money. In the future, maybe they'll have a robot or computer do this. But until then..."

Twenty paces north, just south of Tires Plus, 26-year-old Paul Centeno holds a sign pointing to the Tempur-Pedic store across the street. He started in April and makes eight bucks an hour, 39 hours a week. He had been a certified GMC mechanic until business almost stopped altogether, and then went through bartending school, but found positions scarce "unless you've either got five years' experience or you're a hot chick." He found the sign job on Craigslist.

In his more stationary position, he passes the time talking with his sign partner Jason and observing the passing parade. "It's interesting watching people come by," Centeno says. "You notice things. I'm seeing more people taking the bus, walking, or bicycling. And I'm seeing cut hours. One girl who worked [at] TGIF five days a week has been cut to maybe four hours, three days a week. At least I have a job."

Across the street at the Tempur-Pedic, Eddie, the salesman, calls the sign carriers the quickest fix to pull in traffic. "I've seen this a lot more in the last year and it's gone up and up," he says. "They're all over the place in Kendall, around 125th

Avenue and 88th Street. There are some who bounce on springs. They use these spring-shaped prosthetics."

Back at the Halloween Megastore, it's just past 3:00 p.m. A thirsty Jeanmarie Esnard has shed the Gumby mask and is walking inside for his break. Beneath the costume, the stocky, bespectacled Esnard is sweating through his light-blue golf shirt and walking with a pronounced limp.

"You must be dying in that thing," says customer Lily Osorio of Bal Harbour, whose four-and-a-half-year-old son, Cullen, is trying on a Superman outfit for Halloween.

Esnard gets a five-buck payday advance from the manager so he can eat, perhaps at the air-conditioned McDonald's around the corner. "Have a cool lunch," the manager says.

Osorio makes her purchase: two witch costumes and the Superman outfit Cullen is wearing. The bill comes to \$42.50.

"He won't take off that outfit until after Halloween," she says. "If it weren't for the Gumby on the corner, I wouldn't have come in here. Let's go,

baby... I mean *Superman*."

It's striking that the sign carriers and spinners, descendants of sandwich-board men of old, are making a comeback. In this age of digital media, Facebook, company web pages, tweets, and other marketing phenomena unknown ten, or even five, years ago, they appear to be a growth business in rough times.

Yet zoning constables have their eyes on them, especially along the north Biscayne Corridor, where the serrated municipal boundaries of North Miami, North Miami Beach, and Unincorporated Miami-Dade trade sides like teeth on a busted saw. Some publicity-shy business owners are wary of talking for fear of pushback from the zoning police.

Given the economic circumstances, that seems a little extreme. Let the sign spinners and carriers be. Yes, keep them away from medians and well back from busy corners. That's just common sense. But if they are in a spot that does not disrupt traffic, let it go. Lord knows, the stores need the business, and the sign spinners could use the money.

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# Mr. Jacobs Has a Problem

He wanted to know how FPL was able to erect concrete poles on his street, so he asked the commission — big mistake

By **Gaspar González**  
BT Contributor

During the September meeting of the Biscayne Park Commission, resident Noah Jacobs walked to the podium with a problem. “A pole was put in my yard this Saturday morning,” Mr. Jacobs told the commission. Mr. Jacobs lives on NE 119th Street, and the pole to which he was referring is a power pole, one of many that Florida Power and Light (FPL) is installing as part of its “hardening” project in the village.

The poles are significantly bigger than the ones they’re replacing — nearly twice the circumference, and in some cases, as much as ten feet taller. They’re also made

of concrete, as opposed to wood, like the old poles. In short, they stick out like a rusty nail on a white wedding cake.

Mr. Jacobs was upset because he believed the new addition to his yard (pictured here) would adversely affect the value of his home. He had three questions for the commission: 1) How had the village come to the conclusion that these poles would *not* drive down property values? 2) What was the date of the zoning board meeting at which the installation of these poles was authorized? 3) Were there fees collected from FPL as part of the permitting process?

All reasonable questions, and, one would assume, easily answerable by anyone on the commission. Instead of addressing



BT photo by Wendy Doscher-Smith

Mr. Jacobs’s questions, however, Mayor Roxanna Ross referred him to the village manager, who was sitting a few feet away.

Mr. Jacobs, rightly sensing he was getting the brush-off, repeated his main question: “Was there a zoning meeting for this?” Mayor Ross once again directed him to the village manager, this time promising to “put FPL in the loop and get your answers.” Mr. Jacobs again asked about the zoning meeting.

Mayor Ross again told him to contact the village manager who “will try to help you as best we can.” When Mr. Jacobs insisted one last time on an answer regarding the zoning meeting, Mayor Ross told him his time was up.

At this point Commissioner Steve Bernard, who had previously tried to answer Mr. Jacobs’s question from the dais (“There were no zoning meetings”), objected to the mayor calling time on Mr. Jacobs.

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Commissioner Bob Anderson then turned to Commissioner Bernard and told him to “behave” himself. (The entire exchange can be seen nightly at 7:00 p.m., as part of the commission meeting rebroadcast on Comcast Channel 77, or by going to YouTube and typing in “2011-09-13 FPL Hardening Resident Question.”)

It was a ridiculous display. A resident comes to a commission meeting with concerns about a major project in the village. The mayor refuses to answer his questions and tells him his time is up. But why? The answer may well lie in the way the FPL hardening project was allowed to go forward by the commission.

I wrote about the FPL project — which eventually is supposed to cover not only NE 119th Street, but most of NE 8th Avenue and a section of NE 10th Avenue — this past May. In that column, I recounted how Commissioner Bernard had raised a red flag regarding the lack of specificity in the FPL proposal and wanted clarification on things like the number of new poles that would be installed, their height and width, and whether they would be wood or concrete. (Wood poles, Commissioner Bernard

noted, might blend in more with our tree-lined community.) He also wanted FPL to submit to the same permitting process required of other companies undertaking projects in the village.

When he brought up these concerns at the March commission meeting, however, he was met with resistance from the commission’s three-member majority: Mayor Ross, Commissioner Anderson, and Commissioner Al Childress. At that meeting, Commissioner Childress went so far as to claim that, under state law, FPL was exempt from the permitting process. That wasn’t the case.

At the next commission meeting in April, Commissioner Bernard made a motion that would have required FPL to submit additional documents related to the project, including wind-load calculations for both concrete and wood poles, principally to determine if wood poles could be used. Commissioner Bryan Cooper seconded the motion. Mayor Ross, disputing Commissioner Bernard’s claims that wood poles were even an option, voted against it. So did commissioners Anderson and Childress.

In the end, FPL was required to pull a permit for the project, but was exempted

from going through the Planning and Zoning Board. As a result, residents lost any final opportunity they might have had to examine, in detail, FPL’s plans for the size and placement of the poles or insist on, say, wood poles over concrete ones.

So the best answer to Mr. Jacobs’s query as to how and why those concrete poles made it onto his street might be: Because a majority of the commission didn’t do anything to ensure that they *wouldn’t* end up there. Commissioner Anderson, in fact, had argued *for* the concrete poles.

Perhaps Mayor Ross and commissioners Anderson and Childress believed the poles wouldn’t be so bad. (They’re horrendous.) Or maybe they thought there wasn’t anything they could do about them. (There was.) Or it might not have been a priority. (It should have been.)

Regardless, we now have street fixtures more suitable to a commercial district in unincorporated Miami-Dade than “The Village of Homes.” And Mr. Jacobs has a lot of questions that don’t have answers, or at least not answers the mayor is willing to share with a roomful of people, with the camera rolling. Better to pretend that it’s too complicated to get into at the moment,

or that, conversely, there’s no real explanation for how those poles got there, other than that’s where FPL wanted to put them.

So Mr. Jacobs will just have to learn to live with his problem. Actually, he has two: The concrete poles on his street, which are likely to have an adverse impact on his property value, and a local government that doesn’t feel the least bit accountable to him.

In that sense, Mr. Jacobs’s problem is also our problem.

Which reminds me... Biscayne Park elections will be held in December. The three seats to be contested are those belonging to commissioners Anderson, Bernard, and Childress. The filing deadline is this month. The only requirement for running is to have been a resident of Biscayne Park for a minimum of one year prior to filing. Contact Village Hall for more information.

All interested parties should seriously consider running. The way things are going, this election may be the only chance some residents get to have a say in — or ask questions about — the issues that matter to our community.

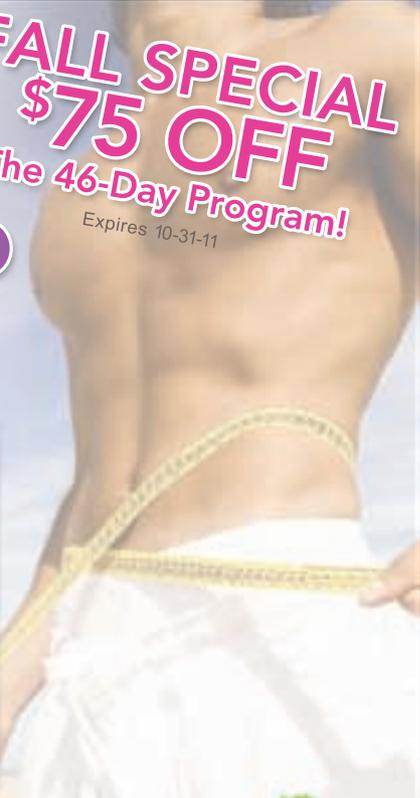
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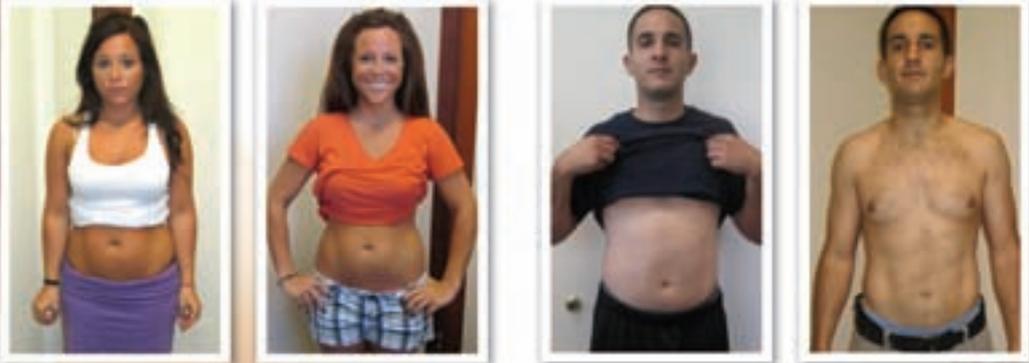
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# Garage Sales 101

Ten traps to avoid when trying to sell your junk, from someone who learned the hard way

By Jen Karetnick  
BT Contributor

So it should have been clear to me that my husband and daughter, who were masterminding a garage sale to raise money for her mitzvah project, Operation Smile, would wait until the last possible moment to make it happen: the weekend before her bat mitzvah.

To accomplish anything on your property in Miami Shores — even moving your mailbox from the interior to the exterior — you are required to obtain a permit. Still, I was taken aback when Jon came home with the permission, granted for five dollars, for that particular Saturday and Sunday. It happened

to be Labor Day weekend. We had the kind of conversation that, in our 25 years together (this month), is either typical or atypical, depending on whom you ask.

“I don’t think this is a good idea,” I said.

“I don’t care what you think,” he said. “Besides, we’re out of time.”

Of course, no one would really know if Zoe had the garage sale before or after her actual big day. In addition, she’s been raising money for Operation Smile for a couple of years now. She’s already met her obligations.

But the pair of them insisted, so we went ahead with it — in the worst manner possible. If you, too, are considering holding a garage sale in Miami Shores, follow



this guide of “Do Nots.” Use it and you’ll have a much more successful sale than we did. At the very least I’m betting it will save you a lot of pain.

1. Do not live in a house on a street in a neighborhood that is truly difficult

to find. Or that some people believe doesn’t exist. For garage or rummage sales to really work, it actually helps to be seen from the road. Barring that, huge posters are a good idea — especially ones with letters that can be read.

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## What is Scleroderma?

Scleroderma is a chronic, progressive autoimmune disease like rheumatoid arthritis, lupus and multiple sclerosis, in which the body’s immune system attacks its own tissues. There are over 300,000 men, women and children in the

United States who are suffering from scleroderma. The disease, which literally means ‘hardskin’, can cause thickening and tightening of skin as well as serious damage to a number of internal organs including the lungs, heart, kidneys, esophagus, and gastrointestinal tract. Scleroderma occurs three to four times more often in women than in men.

For some individuals, scleroderma is a nuisance. For others, it is a life-threatening disease. For most people with scleroderma, the disease has serious impact on daily life. Although medications can sometimes help, there is no cure yet.

Leaflets don't work, a fact to which we can now attest. We compensated by sending the kids to wave down cars. That brought us two customers.

**2.** Do not collect clothing and other items for more than a year before you have your sale. As stacks of random objects amass around the door, visitors start to wonder if you might be a candidate for *Hoarders*. This is especially not a good idea if you have dogs. Male dogs. If you have male dogs, you probably get the picture without me going into specifics. If you don't have male dogs, you don't want to know. But just as a precaution: If you bought something from us, you may want to wash it before wearing. Just kidding. Sort of.

**3.** Do not have a garage sale on a holiday weekend when half the town has left for vacation and the other half has guests over for a holiday barbecue. Not only will you be sitting in your lawn chair all alone, sans business, you will be driven into a mad, hungry, male-dog kind of frenzy by the smell of burgers wafting into your yard all afternoon long.

**4.** Do not have your sale in the summertime. Even if the calendar says

September, even if the kids have gone back to school, it's still summer. It's hot. It's humid. And every afternoon — yes — it rains. The mango-tree canopy that we were counting on as an umbrella was only effective when the precipitation was a drizzle, not a deluge.

**5.** Do not start a garage sale at noon. Flea-market merchants and vintage-shop owners arrive before dawn in order to gobble up the best junk for their shelves and stalls. Thus experienced garage-sale pickers, another reliable group of buyers, expect the good stuff to be gone by the afternoon. Get the picture? Real customers tend to dwindle as the afternoon goes on.

**6.** Do not sell the good stuff, like the almost-new bicycles your kids outgrew in six months, for ten dollars each. This rule is also known as, "Don't leave your husband in charge." It's perhaps needless to say, but we didn't do anything as organized or helpful as put prices on the goods, or even little color-coded stickers. On the plus side, the nonworking refrigerator that we'd had in the garage for nearly seven years

was hauled away — and we got 20 bucks, to boot. Sure, it originally cost a couple of grand, and probably only needed a part, but now I can afford my Diet Coke addiction for the week.

**7.** Do not post on Craigslist. If you do, do not mention name brands. While I thought listing the cosmetics and other products we had available would drive traffic, all it did was allow people to

**We made the exact same amount of money we could have deducted from our taxes had we just hauled all of our stuff to Goodwill in the first place.**

continue e-mailing me three weeks later to ask if the stuff had been sold. I happen to find this recent custom, apparently adopted by some specialized buyers, truly annoying. If you're in the business of collecting, buying, and selling, and you're relying on garage and estate sales for product, come out and look. If I wanted to sell over the Internet, I'd post on eBay.

**8.** Do not bring any remaining items back into the house. On the other hand, don't leave it in the yard for a week like we did, either. If you have an industrious housekeeper who's worried about how that looks — or fears robbery — you might find it back in the house anyway. Which we did. Okay, some of it is now in the garage. Yes, it all defeats the purpose.

**9.** Do not expect a garage sale to make logical sense. We made the exact same amount of money we could have deducted from our taxes had we just hauled all of our stuff to Goodwill in the first place. And we're donating the money to a charity, anyway.

**10.** Finally, do not expect a reward for all your hard work. Or even relief. A reservoir of new stuff accumulates immediately. The housekeeper is bewildered by your dedication to junk. Friends are already making well-meaning comments about hoarding again. But one good thing does come out of this debacle: You realize you don't need therapy. You just need some more time to get organized. And perhaps an open-ended permit.

*Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com*

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# The Truck Stops Here

A plea for hip foodie gatherings in Aventura

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

**A**fter living in Aventura for almost seven years — which for me is a very long time to stay anywhere — I've realized there are some really wonderful things about this town, as well as things I wish would improve.

Now don't get me wrong. Things could always be better everywhere, but as a whole, my city is a pretty darn good one. It's safe (for the most part), it's well-kept (for the most part), the people who live here (especially year-round) are educated, and it's filled with creature comforts — malls, restaurants, specialty and gourmet grocers, little clothing

and shoe shops, numerous hair and nail salons, Starbucks, and thank God, a choice of self-serve yogurt shops. Who could ask for anything more? (By the way, that last bit about the yogurt shops? A little sarcasm. Just in case you thought I was serious.)

But honestly, I do poke fun at Aventura, because it can take it. (And if a wealthy city, a city of privilege, can't take some ribbing once in a while, who can?) But there is one serious issue I think should be discussed: our sense of community, or rather, our lack of one.

Having lived here long enough to trust my observations, the only sense of community I feel is among people who have kids. There's a charter school on



Photo courtesy of mscheezious.com

my block, and I see the parents walking and driving to get their kids to and from school. By the grace of God and choice of profession, I don't have to be awake at the hour they all go to school, but I know that there are after-school play dates and weekend sleepovers, and then the parents go to dinner, and it goes on and on. They form a mini-community within Aventura.

All good. I love it. I think it's wonderful. However, my plight is that I don't have kids. And, let's be clear, I am not complaining about that. My lack of rug rats was my choice. But I simply am not sure where to go to find my sense of community. I guess before I continue, I must confess that I am not religious, so heading to temple or church probably won't be the places I'll find salvation, either.

Artist Bruce Grayson's

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Who am I? I like art, Broadway (let's call it "theater" here), painting, movies, and food. I love cooking, gardening, and restaurants. I love the beach, boating, fishing, and naturally, writing. Looking at my list, one might think I may be completely out of luck when it comes to finding other folks whose interests are as varied as mine.

Maybe, or maybe not. My love for foodie experiences takes me far and wide. For a great pho, I'd head to Vietnam, and to sample original pizza, Napoli here I come. So you get the gist. But what about a fix of "awesome" that doesn't require overseas travel? I wasn't seeing it.

Then, a little more than a year ago, the food trucks appeared. It was slow to happen. No one locally was embracing these lovely dining experiences on wheels until, one day, people did. The phenomenon caught on, and the trucks grew in number and someone said, "Hey, let's get them together so we can create crowds, and numbers of people can taste our products, and we can make money, and they don't have to cook. It's a win-win situation."

And so it happened — food truck gatherings all around South Florida. The trucks congregate at the Hard Rock (sooo far west), Esplanade Park in Fort Lauderdale, FIU's North Campus, up and down Biscayne Boulevard, and, most recently, the parking lot of the Intracoastal Mall in North Miami Beach. That's the one I have been frequenting lately.

As a matter of fact, I've gone three times in the last two months (give or take). The first time, it was unbelievable. There were so many trucks, I didn't know where to look first: Ms. Cheezious, Gastropod, Latin Burger and Taco, Sakaya Kitchen's Dim Ssäm à go-go, Clarabelle's Cupcakes, Big Kahuna Ice Cream Truck. There were a total of 21 trucks in all, which I think is pretty amazing.

But even better, there were hundreds and hundreds of people there eating and drinking, sitting, chatting, and generally having a good time. The support from the community was astounding. I was thrilled. I vowed that I would continue to go whenever the trucks convened there or places nearby. It seemed to be the

beginning of the end of the "gathering void" that had plagued me.

The third "Food Truck Frenzy" went down at the Intracoastal Mall on September 21, and, staying true to my word, I was there. Looking to share the love, I enlisted my office, including two members of my team, Sheera and Dominique, their significant others, Charley and Kevin, my hubby, Ian, and my dog Tika (who is always up for fun, especially where food is concerned).

When we got there, the event was noticeably smaller. Gaping holes in the truck selection left me wondering, "Is this the end of the food truck reign here? Do they have other gigs tonight? Will new ones replace them?"

Either way, it was still good. We ate tacos, ceviche, gyros, fried mac 'n' cheese balls, fried green tomatoes, snow cones, and red velvet cupcakes for dessert. It was all pretty tasty. As far as price goes, I think some of the trucks overcharge. For example, a loaded double-meat gyro cost \$10 and, while it was good enough, someone needs to define (and perhaps, redefine) "loaded" and "double." But this column isn't about

value; it's about the sense of community the trucks inspire.

Locals did come out, but not like they had in weeks past. Maybe it's just a cycle. Maybe people lose interest in the same old thing. I don't know, but those who were there mixed and mingled and really seemed to enjoy themselves. I chatted with people I didn't know. That is how relationships begin. They weren't deep, meaningful dialogues, but simple, light-hearted conversation.

Although North Miami Beach is just seconds from Aventura, I'd love to see something like this happen in the heart of our town. We have Founders Day (which rocks), but otherwise not much else going on. And we have such great spaces — the Arts and Cultural Center at the end of 188th Street, Loehmann's Plaza, the many strip malls — where we can host great community gatherings. Not only would they bring people together, but they'll also drive business.

If other places can do it, why can't we?

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



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# Permit Me to Explain

A trip to San Francisco yields some thoughts on how the City of Miami's Building Department could improve its operation

By Frank Rollason  
BT Contributor

A few weeks ago, my wife and I were having dinner with a good friend who was in town from San Francisco for a short visit. He had recently acquired the Victorian home pictured here in a neighborhood known as Noe Valley and was in the process of renovation. Aside from being a very old structure, the home has historic designation, resulting in additional hurdles.

As he began the process, our friend was pleasantly surprised with the assistance afforded him by the powers that be in the City by the Bay. Then he lamented, "Why couldn't the City of Miami

Building Department be as helpful as the San Francisco Building Department?" This comment really hit home with me. I was once the director of that City of Miami department.

During my short tenure as director, I strived to make the department more user-friendly and bring it into the computer age. Even back then, the city was having cash-flow problems — always robbing Peter to pay Paul, while the Piper waited in the wings for his cut!

Anyway, during the course of our conversation, our friend suggested that Fran and I go to San Francisco to visit the building department and see for ourselves. We thought about it. Why not? We could take in the sights and help him

with his renovation. We went.

Early on, it was necessary to make a trip to the building department and I was really looking forward to eyeballing the operation. Upon arriving, the first thing I noticed was that, unlike in Miami, there were no crowds. Building and Zoning occupied multiple floors in the same building with very spacious office and client spaces. We were greeted just inside the front door by a lady who asked, "How may we help you today?" Sort of like a Walmart greeter without the daily specials handout.

My friend explained that he had visitors from Miami and they would like



BT photo by Frank Rollason

to walk around and speak with various people about the process of obtaining a permit. Right away, she gave us several options — we could go to the technical services station and obtain assistance on particular questions or we could visit the



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upper floor, walk around, and approach any employee with general questions. We took the latter approach and ventured up to the floor where plans are reviewed and the nuts and bolts of the process takes place.

Here again we were greeted with friendly faces always asking if we needed assistance or how they could help. As we walked the floor, I could not get over how open the area was and, even though there were quite a few people present processing plans for permitting, there was more than an adequate number of stations available to assist the applicants. For instance, there were ten payment stations. In Miami, we have one — and it took me the greater part of a year to get that one installed on the same floor as the building department.

We approached an individual who was not dealing with a client and asked if he could offer us assistance on some general issues. His response was: “Of course. How can I help you?” The young man — Michael Gunnell, a building inspector — was open and cordial. After introducing myself as a former building director, I proceeded to

question him on various procedures in the permitting process.

Like the department in Miami, the one in San Francisco is responsible for ensuring that plans comply with the local codes and, above all, that a structure is safe for occupation. Mr. Gunnell even offered to get me up to the director’s office to spend a few moments with her, but I declined, knowing that she had to have a busy schedule and did not need to entertain my mundane questions.

Overall, I was extremely impressed with my impromptu visit. Mr. Gunnell summed it up quite succinctly when he stated that his primary mission was to “get the applicant out of his office with a permit on the same day,” plain and simple.

So this brings us back to Miami’s building department and why the permitting process here is nothing short of brutal. One can only sum it up with the old adage: “A fish rots from the head down.”

There should be no confusion as to why so much construction goes on in our city without permits. It goes on because it is the most expedient way

to get something built or modified or renovated — and politicians and developers both benefit from that in the short run. (The rest of us pay for it in the long run.) If caught doing work without the proper permits, the feeling is: “We will deal with that later, but right now, I need to get this job going or completed so I can get my business open or my family housed.”

Much-needed improvements will only occur when the elected officials demand that the process be streamlined and made user-friendly. I attended a District 2 Commissioner candidate forum on September 14 in which incumbent Commissioner Marc Sarnoff extolled the virtues of the “one-stop shopping” process that he recently installed within the building department to expedite the issuance of permits.

However, one-stop shopping does *not* exist in the building department. What does exist is a one-stop shopping service in the Neighborhood Enhancement Team division for permits, but that doesn’t include building permitting of any kind. Just another little oopsie for Commissioner Sarnoff as he stretches

the truth once again!

Candidate Kate Callahan’s platform, on the other hand, does propose a one-stop shopping option for building permits. It would be a good start in making the process more user-friendly and needs to be expanded for all building permit applications, both large and small.

Of course it all boils down to available funds to staff such initiatives. A good strategy may be to keep the money generated from the permitting process wholly within the building department, instead of spreading it around to other city departments (under the guise of paying internal charges for services provided to the building department by those departments).

Cycling funds generated by the permitting process back into the system, to expedite and streamline permitting and inspection, would mean higher revenues, as it would result in a more user-friendly system and additional permits being issued.

You don’t have to go to San Francisco to figure that one out.

*Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com*



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# After the Flood, a Fight

When a pet store left its animals to die in a flood, our correspondent took matters into her own hands

By Wendy Doscher-Smith  
BT Contributor

Chances are, you never heard of the MUFT (the Merciless Un-Frozen Tundra), a.k.a. Binghamton, New York, unless you read my column, have a kid enrolled at Binghamton University, or are a serious *Twilight Zone* or *B.C.* comic fan. (*Twilight Zone* creator Rod Serling lived there, and *B.C.* creator Johnny Hart and humorist David Sedaris were born there.)

I lived in the MUFT for three years (excluding the last two years' "hard winter" months) and I hated nearly every minute of it. Being a Miami native, I suffered from seasonal affective disorder

while living in that vampire lair excuse of a region.

I lost count of the number of times I wished horrible events to befall that unfortunate piece of geography — a gray-skied, economically depressed, cultural void, littered with car-parts stores and roadkill squirrels. The closest escape is granola-cruncher-infested Ithaca, 45 minutes north.

Gazing out the window of my Victorian home (pockets of old architecture were a plus), or while running on the treadmill at the dumpy gym, willing myself to go faster, faster — fueled by the ridiculous hope I might sprout wings or, at least, winged shoes, so that I could flee — I welcomed any disaster, anything powerful enough, to wipe those



Triple Cities of Misery (Johnson City, Binghamton, and Endicott) off the map.

Plagues, old and new, a rain of frogs, natural disasters, whatever. If something could put an end to the MUFT, if it could serve as a shotgun blast to the last remaining kneecap of the limping Little Cities That Couldn't, my vote was cast.

Last month it seemed I got my wish. Sort of. In the wake of Tropical Storm Lee, the Susquehanna River flooded the MUFT, leaving behind uninhabitable homes and businesses — some received four feet of flooding or were almost completely submerged — and displacing

residents. Destroyed roads, fallen bridges, and a compromised sewage plant remained.

Now a layer of tangible scum lay atop the MUFT's general one. While watching the footage (the Weather Channel reported from downtown Binghamton for days), I thought some areas seemed no different from before.

However, this disaster scenario differed from my imagined versions. In my End of MUFT Times, that sad little valley was eradicated completely, with one exception: All the animals and the people I cared about escaped unharmed.



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But reality is stranger than fiction, and sometimes it is also less kind. The MUFT is still there. But now people are traumatized. And then there is this: While the geese seemed to enjoy swimming through the downtown area, many animals were killed. The twist: Their deaths were preventable.

The MUFT may be an assault on sore eyes, but MUFTers know bad weather all too well. With freezing temperatures, snow, and ice the majority of the year, and a history of flooding, they ought to. No humans died in this flood, none of the animals at the local Humane Society died, and pet shops evacuated their animals.

Except for the Petco in Johnson City.

Why approximately 200 animals, including birds, ferrets, rodents, guinea pigs, turtles, fish, lizards, and arachnids were left to drown remains a mystery. The question of who is to blame has been the focus of international media attention.

Petco unwisely changed its story several times, deleting original statements made on their own website, in addition to any negative public commentary on their Facebook page.

Then in a series of PR bumbles, Petco also managed to, laughably, blame a

backed-up sewer system for their four-foot flood. The corporation didn't stop there. They blamed the city and the employees for the deaths of 100 animals. (According to Petco, the other 100 were saved.)

This series of stupid moves did not fly with anyone, least of all the MUFTers, who pride themselves on seeing consequences for actions. Thousands of accusatory statements popped up on Petco's home page from MUFTers and nonMUFTers. According to People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), "Executives have admitted that, despite a mandatory evacuation order, the decision was made to not evacuate the animals."

PETA's call for Broome County District Attorney Gerald F. Mollen to investigate and file criminal charges has been heeded, with the support of Johnson City Mayor Dennis Hannon.

Now at issue: Whether Petco personnel's conduct violates New York's cruelty-to-animals statute. Anyone who deprives an animal of necessary food or drink or causes or allows any animal to be unjustifiably injured or killed is guilty of a Class A misdemeanor, punishable by imprisonment for up to one year, as well

as a fine of up to \$1000.

I was particularly outraged by the actions of Petco, especially since I worked as a groomer at that very store. I immediately called PETA and started a Facebook group called "PetCo=DeathCo," with the sole intent of informing people of the tragedy and providing updates.

What happened next morphed into an unintentional social experiment, with results perhaps as disgusting as the actions of Petco. At its largest, PetCo=DeathCo had about 1500 members. At publication time, the group contained fewer than 1000. Many of the well-intentioned members were driven away by inflammatory bullies and infighting between angry MUFTers and nonMUFTers, who asserted that it was a waste of time to hold a corporation accountable when humans needed help.

I was called a "stupid bitch" by one member who, oddly (like many of the other dissenters), refused to leave the group while simultaneously saying it was a waste of time. Even during a state of emergency, some MUFTers and non-MUFTers kept their priorities straight: To provoke a fight.

When I interviewed the PETA vice president of cruelty investigations, Daphna Nachminovitch, she was surprised to hear of any locals who supported Petco. Nachminovitch also said for a business to not evacuate animals when it has ample time is highly uncommon. What makes this incident even more outrageous is that, according to Nachminovitch, many of the animals that drowned were wild catch.

I left the group up on Facebook and, in the name of free speech, chose to not delete anyone. When comments became harassment, blocked the mission, and drove away the genuinely interested, I axed offenders.

Not all the MUFTers in my group were heartless, easily duped, and counterproductive. Many attended one or both of the protests held on the street in front of the Johnson City Petco. They helped out within the community, as well, and provided valuable information to the group.

I guess what I learned was that, at their core, MUFTer or nonMUFTer, people are the same in any climate. Which is exactly why, if and when the big flood comes, my ark will not contain many of them.

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



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# Under the Big Tent

The Wynwood Art Fair will shake up the seasonal parade with an experimental, streetwise approach

By Anne Tschida  
BT Arts Editor

While the visual arts have become a powerful force in South Florida over the past decade, the last thing most people thought we'd need is another art fair.

Art Basel Miami Beach and the tons of satellite fairs that accompany it — all touching down in early December — seem to suck most of the oxygen out of the fair world. Some older fairs, such as Art Miami, have decided to join in rather than compete, while others, like Art Palm Beach (in January) and the Latin-oriented Arte Americas (in March) continue to cling to their traditional spot on the calendar.

But adding a contemporary fair in October? It seemed like a stretch — until the Wynwood Art Fair took the plunge this year.

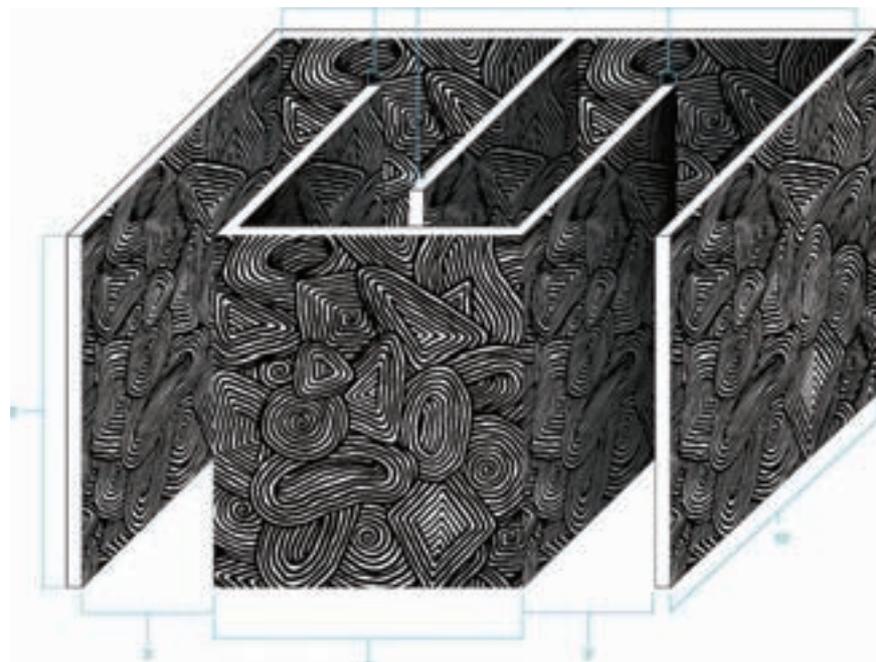
The inaugural fair will take place over three days, from Friday, October 21, through Sunday, October 23. But it isn't only its scheduling that makes Wynwood Art different.

First off, it's actually a fundraiser for the Sundari Foundation, which operates the Lotus House Women's Shelter. (The fair's \$10 entrance fee goes to help homeless women and children.) In the past, a one-day version of this art auction/fundraiser took place at the exhibition home of one of Miami's biggest

collectors, Martin Margulies, appropriately so, since it was the brainchild of his wife, Constance Collins Margulies. But the event outgrew the Margulies' home, so now it has taken to the streets.

Unlike other fairs, this one will emphasize performance art and that street-fair feel. In fact, "the street" will play a prominent role. Taking place over six blocks of NW 6th Avenue, between 23rd and 29th streets, the fair is book-ended on the south side by the former RC Cola factory, a huge, abandoned structure completely covered with graffiti, and on the north side by the Margulies Warehouse, with its prominent and original outdoor murals.

In between there will be performance stages, ethnic food vendors, painters, strolling performers, and, straddling Sixth Avenue, tents stuffed with art. All the major local museums will be represented, joined by exhibition centers such as the Art and Cultural Center of Hollywood and ArtCenter/South Florida; art schools from the University of Miami, Miami-Dade College, and Florida International University; and at least 20 commercial art galleries, plus Books & Books and the Arsht Center.



Artist Alvaro Ilizarbe's rendering of his plans for Carol Jazzar's booth at the fair.



Santa's Forest: Comida Latina, by ArtCenter/South Florida artist Alexander Heria.

to break from the norm, experiment, and create an interactive experience. Many have taken the direction to heart.

Gallery Diet, an anchor gallery in the heart of the Wynwood Arts District, will give over its booth to "live painting," according to gallery director Nina Johnson-Milewski. "I've decided to commission two students from New World to create an interactive installation that deals with the audience and the neighborhood," she explains.

Sebastian Duncan-Portuondo and Chad Cunha have spent months collecting debris from the streets of Wynwood, then organizing the stuff by color. They are constructing a wall for their exhibition space, and fairgoers "will be able to stick the various materials onto the wall and create a 'painting' that will be created, re-created, and dictated by the audience."

Also present will be a dozen artist studios, and more than 30 performers and performance groups.

These institutions, galleries, and individuals have been encouraged by the fair

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Ellen Fisher will create a “story salon” in which fairgoers will have an immersive experience.

Carol Jazzar, who runs an eponymous gallery on the north side of Miami, also thinks this inaugural edition of the Wynwood Art Fair called for something out of the ordinary: “The way I see it, it is a creative way to help raise money for a great organization. The booths are not expensive, so it allows participants to be equally creative in their artist choice and display.” She chose to let one artist, who has not shown often in Miami, literally make a maze out of her booth. Alvaro Iliarbe’s installation will be “playful and optical, bringing a visual and special experience to the viewers as they walk through.”

Lincoln Road’s ArtCenter/South Florida wanted to create a little fair within a fair, one literally exhibiting little art. For several years, artist and curator Alette Simmons-Jimenez has organized “Small Wonderz,” a nomadic art project. She presented the format as a way to showcase works from residents and alumni of the ArtCenter at the new fair, and it was accepted.

“We have 51 artists participating,” says Simmons-Jimenez. “Each exhibit

ends up with a unique look, since it is designed according to the individual venue’s specifications. Our goal is to bring the best art from Miami in small format, very affordably priced, with an easy access for people who love art.” Some of the “Small Wonderz” at the ArtCenter booth will be crafted by Natasha Duwin, Alexander Heria, Venessa Monokian, and Kerry Phillips.

Then there will be the performances. Under the guidance of Antonia Wright, a co-curator of the fair known for her videos and performance art, the street and tents will fill up with graf masters, dancers, interactive performers, filmmakers, and things that might go boom in the night. It’s this aspect that will make the Wynwood Art Fair stand out from others, mixing an *intentional* circus atmosphere with serious contemporary art.

“Performance art is a living art that continues to evolve and expand like the shelter itself,” says Wright. “The ephemeral nature of this medium, almost spiritually, causes one to be immersed in



Ruben Millares and Antonia Wright will re-create a performance from MOCA’s Optic Nerve festival.

the moment. Because performance art is extremely experimental and allows for infinite outcomes, the Wynwood Art Fair should be a highly dynamic environment.”

Ellen Fisher, for example, will create a “story-salon environment,” where fairgoers are invited to immerse themselves in the reading, dancing, and visualization of stories. Visiting artists Ben Fain and Frank Van Duerm will erect a pop-up tent of pop-up art — “smiley-face, original objects d’art,” as they describe it. Co-curator Wright and Ruben Millares will re-create a performance they previously filmed (and screened at the most recent Optic Nerve film festival at the Museum of Contemporary Art), called “Job Creation in a Bad Economy.”

Elsewhere, visitors will be encouraged to donate books to build a library for the Lotus House shelter, but first the donations will be stacked and made into a wall, through which performers will leap and crash.

Other art happenings at the fair: Buda and his “Bubbles,” Clifton

Childree and his Backyard Band, Carlota Pradera and her *Dance on Water*, Agustina Woodgate and her “Hopscotch,” and FriendsWithYou and their “Magic, Luck and Friendship.”

Wynwood Art may be breaking with tradition in many ways, but never fear. This is still Miami. There will be a VIP champagne reception on opening night (to go with a Sotheby’s benefit auction), and VIP and patron passes for those who need a break from the street. Still, all the proceeds go to the Lotus House charity, so the indulgence can be justified.

*Wynwood Art Fair, Friday, October 21, through Sunday, October 23, from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. On Saturday, October 22, there will be a VIP reception at the Margulies Warehouse beginning at 6:30 p.m. Admission is \$10; children under 10 are free. NW 6th Avenue between 23rd and 29th streets. For more info, go to [www.wynwoodartfair.org](http://www.wynwoodartfair.org).*

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4949 NE 2nd Ave., Miami  
305-751-8367  
www.acnd.net  
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**ALEJANDRA VON HARTZ FINE ARTS**

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305-438-0220  
www.alejandravonhartz.net  
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**ART FUSION**

1 NE 40th St., Miami  
305-573-5730  
www.artfusiongallery.com  
October 1 through December 21:  
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**ARTSEEN GALLERY**

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www.blacksquaregallery.com  
Through October 5:  
"Personal Diary" by Volodymyr Kuznetsov

**BORINQUEN ART GALLERY**

100 NE 38th St., Miami  
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www.borinquenhealth.org  
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www.buttergallery.com  
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www.cjazzart.com  
By appointment: carol@cjazzart.com  
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"Small, Medium & Large" by David Rohn and "Forever Babies" by Colby Katz

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**CHAREST-WEINBERG GALLERY**

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www.charest-weinberg.com  
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**Bhakti Baxter, *Untitled (incidental shapes)*, paper collage, 2011, at Gallery Diet.**

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**CITY LOFT ART**

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**CS GALLERY**

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786-357-0568  
www.curatorsvoiceartprojects.com  
October 8 through November 12:  
"Titans" by Magaly Barnola-Otaola and "Hotel St. Michel" by Lamia Khorshid  
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www.davidcastillogallery.com

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 www.dotfiftyone.com  
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 www.etrafineart.com  
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**FREDRIC SNITZER GALLERY**  
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**KAVACHNINA CONTEMPORARY**  
 46 NW 36th St., Miami  
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 Through October 6:  
 "Tu, Yo y Tu Otro Yo" by Yuri Zatarain

**KELLEY ROY GALLERY**  
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**LELIA MORDOCH GALLERY**  
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 www.galerieleliamordoch.com  
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 Yukio Imamura  
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 "Plus Sign" by Andy Coolquitt



**Richard Haden, *The Republic of Misery* (production still), digital print, 2011, at Dorsch Gallery.**

**MAOR GALLERY**  
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 http://maormiami.org/  
 Through November 12:  
 "Avinu Malkeinu: Opening the Gates of Heaven" with Avner Zabari, Janet Slom, and Y. Bayles

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**MIAMI ART SPACE**  
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 600 Biscayne Blvd., Miami  
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 "100/10" by Oscar Niemeyer  
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**MIAMI-DADE COLLEGE, GALLERY NORTH**  
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 500 College Terr., Homestead  
 305-237-5000  
 www.mdc.edu/homestead  
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 "Old and New" with Peggy Nania and Lucas Blanco

**MIAMI-DADE COLLEGE, KENDALL GALLERY**  
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 "Pannaroma" with various artists

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 www.morefunnerprojects.blogspot.com  
 Through October 5:  
 "Milking the Void" with various artists

**MYRA GALLERIES**  
 177 NW 23rd St., Miami  
 631-704-3476  
 www.myragalleries.com  
 October 5 through October 29:  
 "Car Racing in Art" by Lee Ik-Ryeol  
**Reception October 5, 6 to 9 p.m.**

**NEW WORLD GALLERY**  
 New World School of the Arts  
 25 NE 2nd St., Miami  
 305-237-3597  
 October 9 through 28:  
 "Those Who Do" faculty exhibition with various artists  
**October 6, 6 to 9 p.m.**

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

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

**O. ASCANIO GALLERY**  
 2600 NW 2nd Ave., Miami  
 305-571-9036  
 www.oascaniogallery.com  
 Call gallery for exhibition information

**OHWOW**  
 3100 NW 7th Ave., Miami  
 305-633-9345  
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2450 NW 2nd Ave., Miami  
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www.panamericanart.com  
Through October 15:

"Leon Ferrari and Collective of Argentinean Artists" with Leon Ferrari, Oscar Bony, Tomas Espina, Ana Fabry, Santiago Porter, Gian Paolo Minnelli, and Yaya Firpo

#### PAREDES FINE ARTS STUDIO

2311 NW 2nd Ave., Miami  
305-534-2184

www.miguelparedes.com  
Ongoing: "Elements of an Artist" by Miguel Paredes  
Reception October 8, 5 to 10 p.m.

#### PRAXIS INTERNATIONAL ART

2219 NW 2nd Ave., Miami  
305-573-2900

www.praxis-art.com  
Through October 22: "Understory" by Nina Surel

#### PRIMARY PROJECTS

4141 NE 2nd St., Suite 104  
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info@primaryflight.com

October 8 through November 1:  
"It Takes All This to be Me" by Kenton Parker  
Reception October 8, 7 to 10 p.m.

#### SAMMER GALLERY

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305-284-2542  
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#### WOLFGANG ROTH & PARTNERS FINE ART

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305-576-6960  
www.wrpfineart.com  
Call gallery for exhibition information

#### YEELAN ART GALLERY

250 NW 23rd St., Unit 306, Miami  
954-235-4758  
www.yeelenart.com  
Call gallery for exhibition information

### MUSEUM & COLLECTION EXHIBITS

#### ARTCENTER/SOUTH FLORIDA

800 Lincoln Rd., Miami Beach  
305-674-8278  
www.artcentersf.org  
Through October 2:  
"Roman Bonfill + Westen Charles + Brian Reedy" with Roman Bonfill, Westen Charles, and Brian Reedy  
October 7 through November 13:  
"Newly Juried Artist Show" with various artists  
Reception October 8, 7 to 10 p.m.

#### BASS MUSEUM OF ART

2100 Collins Ave., Miami Beach  
305-673-7530  
www.bassmuseum.org  
Through October 16:  
"At the Same Time (Al Mismo Tiempo)" by Sandra Gamarra  
Through October 30:  
"Vanishing Points: Paint and Paintings from the Debra and Dennis Scholl Collection" with various artists

#### CIFO (Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation)

1018 N. Miami Ave., Miami  
305-455-3380  
www.cifo.org  
Through November 6:  
"Viewpoint: 2011 CIFO Grants & Commissions Program Exhibition" with Laura Belem, Tania Bruguera, Fitzia Irizar-Rojo, David Lamelas, Begona Morales, Amalia Pica, Antonio Vega, and Alicia Villarreal

#### DE LA CRUZ COLLECTION CONTEMPORARY ART SPACE

23 NE 41st St., Miami



#### Viking Funeral, *Untitled Leaner 01*, tiled C-print on foam, 2011, at Fredric Snitzer Gallery.

305-576-6112  
www.delacruzcollection.org  
Through October 8:  
"The Family of Man" by George Sanchez-Calderon and "Optic Nerve XIII Finalists: Screening at the Collection" with various artists

#### FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY FROST ART MUSEUM

10975 SW 17th St., Miami  
305-348-2890  
thefrost.fiu.edu  
October 12 through January 8, 2012:  
"Modern Meals: Remaking American Foods from Farm to Kitchen" with various artists; "2iPM009" by Magdalena Fernández; "The Florida Artist Series: Humberto Calzada: The Fire Next Time" by Humberto Calzada

#### LEGAL ART

1035 N. Miami Ave Suite 200, Miami  
www.legalartmiami.org  
Through October 8: "KIDSART" with Bhakti Baxter, Leda Almar, Doug Hoekzema, Pachi Giustinian, Sinisa Kukec, Lacreya Glass, Chloe Gonzalez, Leandra Michelle Hall, Daisy Hoover, Rose Hoover, Juliet Loyd, Taylor Lynott, Galt Mikesell, Trenard Newkirk, Torance Rodriguez, and Azziji Usery

#### LOWE ART MUSEUM, UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

1301 Stanford Dr., Coral Gables  
305-284-3535  
www.lowemuseum.org  
Through October 23:  
"Sacred Stories, Timeless Tales: Mythic Perspectives in World Art from the Permanent Collection" with various artists  
Through April 22, 2012:  
"Women, Windows, and the Word: Diverging Perspectives on Islamic Art" with various artists  
October 8 through September 23, 2012:  
"Sainly Blessings from Mexico: The Joseph D. and Janet M. Shein Collection of Retablos" with various artists

#### MIAMI ART MUSEUM

101 W. Flagler St., Miami  
305-375-3000  
www.miamiartmuseum.org  
Ongoing:  
"Between Here and There: Modern and Contemporary Art from the Permanent Collection"  
Through October 16:  
"A Day Like Any Other" by Rivane Neuenschwander  
Through November 6:  
"Aftermath" by Joel Meyerowitz

#### MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART

770 NE 125th St., North Miami  
305-893-6211  
www.mocanomi.org  
Through November 13:  
"Modify, As Needed" with Kathryn Andrews, Darren Bader, Nina Beier, Karl Holmqvist, Adriana Lara, Natalia Ibanez Lario, José Carlos Martinat, Amilcar Packer, Nick Relph, Anders Smebye, Nicolas Paris Velez  
Reception September 22, 7 to 9 p.m.

#### THE MARGULIES COLLECTION

591 NW 27th St., Miami  
305-576-1051  
www.margulieswarehouse.com  
Collection will be closed until November 10

#### THE RUBELL FAMILY COLLECTION

95 NW 29th St., Miami  
305-573-6090  
http://rfc.museum  
Call collection for exhibition information

#### WORLD CLASS BOXING

Debra and Dennis Scholl Collection  
170 NW 23rd St., Miami  
305-438-9908  
www.worldclassboxing.org  
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Compiled by Melissa Wallen

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### These Cups Are Always Full

Men may like to gawk at women in Victoria's Secret bras, but women know there is much more to that one piece of apparel than meets the eye. It defines life's progression more than anything else a woman will wear. The ins and outs and ups and downs of the training bra, strapless bra, nursing bra, push-up bra, and the 1960s no-bra look are the inspiration for the play *Cups* by Joni Sherman, debuting at the Aventura Arts and Cultural Center (3385 NE 188th St.) on **Wednesday, October 12** and running through **Saturday, October 22**. Show time is 8:00 p.m., with matinees at 2:00 p.m. on the weekends. Tickets cost \$36. Go to [www.aventuracenter.org](http://www.aventuracenter.org).

### Those Who Teach Also Do

Turning the old idiom "those who can't, teach" on its head — and rightfully so — the New World School of the Arts Gallery will be hosting an exhibit opening on **Thursday, October 6** showcasing work from its top faculty, who have been instrumental in turning out top graduates. Called "Those Who Do", the show features visual arts instructors versed in a wide variety of genres, from sculpture and painting to new media. Artists being shown this time include Maria Martinez-Cañas, Karen Rifas, and Michael Loveland. The exhibition will run through **Friday, October 28** at the New World Gallery, 25 NE 2nd St. It's free. Go to [nwsa.mdc.edu](http://nwsa.mdc.edu).



### Go Fly a Kite? Of Course!

Imagine thousands and thousands of colorful, undulating kites against a bright, blue South Florida sky — picture perfect. Which is why the 19th annual **Kittoberfest**, this year on **Sunday, October 23**, is such a popular outing for kite enthusiasts of all ages. As the best-selling book *The Kite Runner* suggested, kites are the ultimate expression of freedom and creativity. Some people come to Haulover Park (10800 Collins Ave., Miami Beach) already equipped with elaborate homemade kites. Others can buy them on site. One good thing: A breeze from the ocean is almost always present. From noon until 5:00 p.m. Check it out at [www.skywardkites.com](http://www.skywardkites.com).

### A Symphony for the Hip of Hearing

Although the fantastic new Light Box at Goldman Warehouse (404 NW 26th St.) has been unofficially open since the summer, the Miami Light Project will kick off its 2011-12 season and the official opening of the Wynwood space on **Friday, October 7, and Saturday, October 9** with *Symphony for the Dance Floor*. It's a great choice, combining aspects of classical music, theater, performance, and video art — perfect for this particular space, which promises to highlight all of those forms in the future. A creation of South Florida native Daniel Bernard Roumain, *Symphony* incorporates the contemporary violin compositions of Roumain with hip-hop, dance, photography, and a "conducting" DJ. Two shows per night at 8:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m. Tickets cost \$20. More info at [www.miamilightproject.com](http://www.miamilightproject.com).

### En Pointe in Aventura

Reminding us again what a dance hub South Florida has become, from ballet and modern to hip-hop, the Arts Ballet Theatre opens its season at the Aventura Arts and Cultural Center (3385 NE 188th St.) with *Harlequinade*. Under the direction of Russian Vladimir Issaev, the troupe concentrates on classical ballet, and this tale of young love first performed in St. Petersburg, Russia, in 1900 is no exception. As an added bonus, a new ballet celebrating the life of Viennese artist Gustav Klimt will also be part



### Miami City Ballet Takes a Leap

Fresh from its well-received Paris debut this summer, the **Miami City Ballet** returns to the Arsht Center to open its season on **Friday, October 21, through Sunday, October 23**. Program 1 this year includes: George Balanchine's *Square Dance* (set to a Vivaldi score), Jerome Robbins's *Afternoon of a Faun* (Debussy), and Twyla Tharp's masterwork, *In the Upper Room* (Glass). Performances start at 8:00 p.m.. Tickets are priced from \$19 to \$85, but they're going fast, so hurry to [www.arshtcenter.org](http://www.arshtcenter.org).

of the program. On **Sunday, October 9** at 5:00 p.m. Tickets cost \$25. For more info, go to [www.aventuracenter.org](http://www.aventuracenter.org).

### Garcia Lorca's Dark House

The Spanish dramatist and poet Federico Garcia Lorca has become an iconic figure whose works are still frequently produced on stages all over the globe. And perhaps none is more powerful than *The House of Bernarda Alba*, his final play, about a small-town, dictatorial mother who oppresses her five daughters. Only months after Lorca completed the play, the Spanish Civil War broke out and he, along with thousands of others who opposed the fascist government of Francisco Franco, was assassinated, giving the play an extra dark edge. On **Thursday, October 13** at 8:00 p.m. at the Adrienne Arsht Center (1444 Biscayne Blvd.), a version reworked by Miami's own Pulitzer Prize-winning Nilo Cruz and Karin Coonrod will be unveiled. Tickets cost \$40. Go to [www.arshtcenter.org](http://www.arshtcenter.org).

### Jazz on an Autumn Day

What's a person to do when, every night starting in October, a plethora of cultural riches seems to take place in Miami-Dade? For instance, from **Thursday, October 13, through Sunday, October 16**, the fourth **Sunny Isles Beach Jazz Fest** will be taking place, at times so close to the sand it'll burn your feet. Headliners Spyro Gyra will perform, along with Tony Madrugá and the Frost School of Music's jazz septet, at Heritage Park (19200 Collins Ave., Sunny Isles Beach) starting at 6:30 p.m.

on Saturday. Remember to bring a blanket. Tickets are \$25. There will be other concerts, including a jazz brunch on Sunday. For more info, go to [www.sunnyislesbeachjazz.com](http://www.sunnyislesbeachjazz.com).

### A Bed of Snow for Beethoven

In 2004 Cuban-born artist Enrique Martinez Celaya installed a work in the concert hall of the Berlin Philharmonic, consisting of a frozen, bronze bed, a painting made of tar and feathers, and a poem from Paul Celan. It was a meditation on Beethoven's final, dying days and, as one might imagine, became a much talked-about piece. Titled *Schneebett* (or "Snow Bed" in English), it has been donated to the Miami Art Museum (101 W. Flagler St.) and will make another appearance, refrigerated bed and all, beginning on **Friday, October 14**. It's a sobering but typically remarkable work from an artist who now makes Miami his creative home. The exhibition, in the Anchor Gallery, runs through January 8. Visit [www.miamiartmuseum.org](http://www.miamiartmuseum.org).

### Creepy Crawl

The woods are *scary*, dark, and deep. Okay, forgive the manipulation of Robert Frost's verse, but that is the essence of the **Arch Creek Park Ghost Tour** taking place on two separate weekends, **October 15 and 16 and October 28 and 29**, and of course on Halloween, **Monday, October 31**. Between 7:00 and 8:00 p.m., guides will walk you through a history decidedly populated by spirits and the secrets of the natural world (including early "ghost" sightings) in this still incredibly wild habitat in the middle of urban North Miami. Meet at the park's museum and nature center, 1855 NE 135th St.. The cost is \$6. Reservations are required, however, so call 305-944-6111.

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

# Biscayne Crime Beat

Compiled by Derek McCann

## A Drive to Succeed

*6700 Block of Biscayne Boulevard*  
It is nice to live the good life in Miami. However, sometimes your extravagance may lead you to live at the Biscayne Inn. Something is also wrong when you share the room with someone else. A man entered the unlocked door of the victim's motel residence and demanded money for services. He pushed aside victim's roommate and started to rummage through victim's purse. He did take some money, but *BT* is unsure if the money was sufficient to pay for the service he had provided. Supposedly he had driven victim around town for the last month. Victim claims she does not owe him anything. (Besides, why does a nice girl living in a motel need someone to drive her

around town?) There is video of the man leaving the room. Maybe victim should save some money, take the bus, and move on up the Biscayne motel corridor. At least Motel Blu has a nice restaurant!

## And They Left the Lights On

*7500 Block of NE 3rd Avenue*  
With the assistance of police, bail bondsmen pried open the door of a home looking for a subject who was missing. They were unsuccessful in locating him. However, they left the door wide open upon their departure and, as a result, the home was burglarized. The owners were informed of this via phone, as they are usually not in the area this time of year. This is what you call a lose-lose for all parties.

## Wannabe Sugar Daddy Sours on Miami

*1600 Block of Biscayne Boulevard*  
With the weather gradually cooling off, why not come to Miami and live the life? Three people stayed at the Hilton and ran up over \$1000 in charges. Two of the moochers left before paying, leaving the de facto sugar daddy to handle the bill himself. He tried to pay with a credit card, but it was declined. Since the defendant showed the inability to pay the high fees of this hotel, he was promptly arrested. There's a lesson to be learned from this predicament: Next time, try one of the Boulevard's cheaper establishments. See the aforementioned Biscayne Inn.

## Cigar Smoker Gets Burned

*900 Block of NE 2nd Avenue*  
Two Miami opportunists approached a man smoking a cigar and asked him



about it. The aficionado was only too happy to indulge their curiosity, telling them about the intricacies of a good cigar, as if he had just stumbled out of the pages of *Cigar Magazine*. Well... the wallet of the smoker mysteriously disappeared from his pants during his cigar soliloquy. To make matters more pathetic, an hour later the victim received a phone call asking him for \$500 if he ever wanted to see his wallet again. There are no leads, although police might want to

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start staking out tobacco shops in the area. Those guys are bound to put all that new cigar knowledge to work.

### **Robbed at the Gas Pump — Twice!**

*NE 79th Street and N. Miami Avenue*

Pumping gas can be a nuisance, especially with panhandlers asking you for money as you fill your tank with high-priced fuel. And it's only getting worse. A man was held at gunpoint at this gas station by a punk who demanded his wallet. The victim complied and the criminal made his getaway in a burgundy Ford Taurus. Please be aware of your surroundings when pumping gas. Also, don't assume all people who drive American cars are just patriotic citizens. You might be their next victim.

### **Yet Another Threat to the Environment**

*5300 Block of NE 2nd Avenue*

A man grabbed a person's bike in an attempt to steal it. The victim approached the man and tried to hold onto his bike, but was thrown to the ground. He got up and was greeted with a punch to the face. The thief then armed himself with a metal pole and swung it in the direction of the victim, who backed off. The

thief then made off with the bike. A curious detail: A plant apparently was damaged during this escapade when the criminal scum swung the metal pole. Is there no end to the depravity? Leave our plants alone!

### **Too Proud to Beg, But Not to Steal**

*NE 2nd Avenue and 11th Street*

Yes, there are some Miamians with a heart. They see people begging for money and they want to give them their change. In this instance, a driver had his windows down when a panhandler reached into his car. Two other males came out of nowhere and grabbed the driver by the neck. They took his wedding band off his finger, but the victim was able to get away from them by hitting the accelerator. He suffered lacerations to his face and was understandably shaken by this incident. Warning to Miamians: Please keep your windows rolled up at all times. Even if your AC doesn't work. If you don't, you'll have your face pummeled by punks. Don't be a victim!

### **All Crack Stories Are the Same**

*NE 3rd Avenue and 75th Street*

The victim told police that he was hanging out with two friends enjoying

a typical September night. He also told them they were smoking crack together. Hey, in Miami, it's just a lifestyle choice, right? Be open and proud. The three-some got into the victim's car and went for a drive. Perhaps to buy more crack for their entertainment? Victim got out of the car at one point and, when he returned, the car was gone. His crackhead friends had stolen it. Go figure.

### **You're Not in Kansas Anymore**

*401 Biscayne Blvd.*

Some people are just dying to get into our Crime Beat column. This person was eating at a restaurant and, for some unknown reason, decided to leave his wallet on the table. The wallet lay on the table for five minutes! (That might be a story in itself.) Eventually, of course, a Boulevard scoundrel stole the wallet and an obligatory police report was filed. One must understand: This is Miami. Unsecured valuables will be taken from you every single time.

### **The Fuzz Ruined His Buzz**

*6200 Block of NE 2nd Avenue*

Police spotted a man drinking a can of beer while riding his bike. They stopped

him and asked for identification. As he pulled out his wallet, a bag of marijuana fell to the ground. He was, of course, arrested. He really wanted those three free meals at the county jail, didn't he?

### **Friends Don't Let Friends Drive... Their Cars at All**

*6900 Block of Biscayne Boulevard*

You don't want your friends to drive drunk, right? Well, how about not letting them drive your car at all? A woman lent her car to a friend and this friend parked it at a gas station. The problem is that the friend left the car running. You're probably a veteran Crime Beat reader. Do we really have to tell you what happened next? Yep. Gone.

### **Good Tenants Are So Hard to Find**

*400 Block of NE 32nd Street*

A landlord noticed that the walls of one of his supposedly empty apartments were covered with graffiti. He also found a television and bedding inside one of the rooms. Police told him he had squatters. Crime Beat gathers that the graffiti was a poor man's way of signing a lease.

*Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com*



by Soma

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# Heaven Is a Playground

North Miami's Keystone Park honors one young man's memory, while giving others a place to call their own

By **Jim W. Harper**  
BT Contributor

**W**hen your only child dies young, there is nothing to say and nothing that can fix it. But one local couple in this situation has found a way to give their late son a field of dreams.

That field belongs to a community center in North Miami called Keystone Park. A donation by his parents led to the field being named for Robert "Bobby" Hamer, III. The resolution was approved unanimously by the city council of North Miami in February 2011, and the donation of \$20,000 will cover both field maintenance and a forthcoming plaque.

Bobby was active locally in park programs and finished the sixth grade at David Lawrence K-8 Center. At age 12, while on vacation with his family in Keene, New York, during the summer of 2010, Bobby drowned at a swimming hole.

The first lines of the city's resolution state that Bobby "was an active, young resident of the City of North Miami who loved the outdoors, and enjoyed bicycle rides, skateboarding, and scuba diving," so it makes sense to honor him with a park.

Kids using Bobby's field love playing soccer, and, fittingly, the field hosts the city's Pee-Wee League. Imagine three- and four-year-olds attacking the ball, and you can believe that Bobby is smiling, too.

Two other memorials pepper the park's compact grounds. Inside the playground area and under an oak tree is a unique stone bench in the form of twisted wood, with an inscription to someone who passed away in 2003 at the age of 105: Marie G. Schweizer. The other, larger plaque stands next to the community center and it names the playground as the Joseph "Joe" Weil Tot Lot at Keystone Park. The plaque's date indicates that it was dedicated four days before Weil, a "Resident and City Activist," died at age 73 on June 12, 2004.

Yet another bronzed plaque indicates that the Keystone Point Recreation Center was dedicated on February 9, 1986. Despite its many memorials, the park barely covers an acre, and the recreation building in its center looks like a humble, single-family home.

Yet somehow this little park managed to cram a village inside its fences. Check it out: You can also play basketball and handball here, take ballet lessons, and even pay for a phone call.



BT photos by Jim W. Harper

**Despite its small size, the park has big things to offer.**

Yup, just outside of the park's border stands the historical relic we used to call a pay phone.

Finding the park is a snap because of its location one block east of Biscayne Boulevard and behind the GPS marker of Flanagan's Restaurant (okay, and liquor store). Visit the place at noon and you may actually see working people walking into the park to have lunch. Shocking, I know.

The best spots for lunch are the shaded picnic tables at the playground. This tot lot has some of the standard primary-colored plastic slides and climbing thingies, although one yellow station caught my eye and my ears. The megaphone attached to it plays bell tones when you tap its silver keys. For the aspiring Schroeder, there is even "sheet" music to four lullabies, including "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star," although I imagine that today's toddlers prefer tapping out Justin Bieber's song about some "baby."

Another interesting feature of the main playground equipment, tightly arranged on green and blue rubber matting, is what I call the DNA Climber. This freestanding, plastic circle on stilts looks like a single helix, with a twist, or an M.C. Escher-esque symbol of infinity. Its four sections of red, blue, yellow, and green remind me of a textbook depiction of molecules. And conquering



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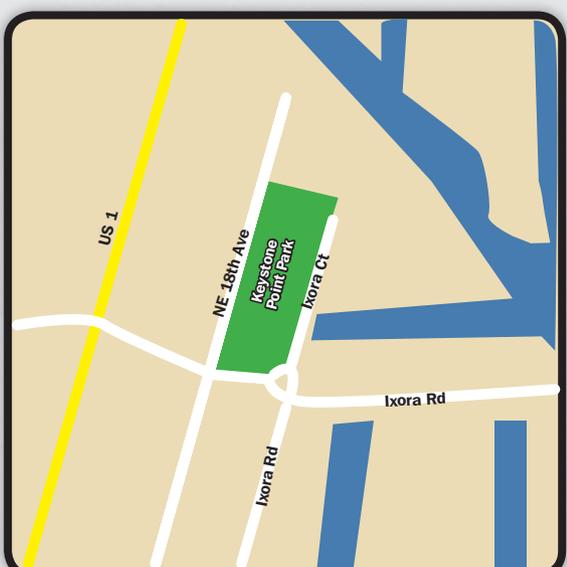
it looks intimidating.

Next door, the plain one-room community center hosts summer camps and even winter camps for ages 6 to 14. The weeklong winter camps start on either December 19 or 26 and cost \$80 for residents and \$120 for nonresidents.

Ballet classes start again soon, on October 24 or 27, and run until December. Three divisions serve ballerinas from ages 3 to 16, and the price is right at \$60 for residents and \$90 for nonresidents.

Pee-Wee soccer fans need wait no more, as the next session runs from October 4 to November 17 at the rate of \$50; \$75 for nonresidents. Practices are also held in Ben Franklin Park, located west of I-95.

Keystone Park may sound like all business, but it also has a sense of humor.



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**Hours:** One hour after sunrise to 10:30 p.m.  
**Barbecues:** No  
**Picnic pavilions:** No  
**Tennis courts:** No  
**Athletic fields:** Yes  
**Night lighting:** Yes  
**Swimming pool:** No  
**Playground:** Yes



A little hoops humor delivers a pertinent message.



The rec center could pass for a single-family home.



Tomorrow's Miami City Ballet dancers hard at work.

Photo courtesy City of North Miami

Part of the playground is labeled "Elementary Town." On the basketball court, a sign reads, "Profanity = Technical Foul. Please be respectful of others at play." Adjacent to the playground, the fenced-in court has two hoops and a green and maroon color scheme that gives it the appearance of a tennis court sans net.

This little park has everything (assuming the voice of *Saturday Night Live* character "Stefan"): a Dasani machine

in a cage, a blue man on a bicycle, a baroque trash can, a yellow merry-go-round, a hopscotch pattern on rubber, a wheelchair ramp, and (gasp!) parking spaces. Sometimes it even has little ones screaming, "Gooooooool!"

On the down side, the basketball court tends to collect litter in the form of plastic Gatorade bottles. The field has a sign that reads, "No team sports on play field. Family activities only."

But an exception must be made for the Pee-Wees. The field is too small for regulation soccer, but large enough to toss a Frisbee. While small trees dot the perimeter of the field, it is mostly a plain grass field in full exposure to the sun.

The park may not be much to look at in size, but the scope of its features is impressive. Somehow it even managed to squeeze in some native plants and interesting landscaping around the

building. Space is not wasted.

Keystone Park also covers time. Plaques memorialize people who have passed, kids on the court battle in the present, and the miniature ballerinas and soccer players represent our future. Soon there will be a new plaque. The parents of Bobby picked the right place for his energy to live on.

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# Dog Days of Summer

How my canines and I rode out Hurricane Irene on Long Island

By Lisa Hartman  
BT Contributor

I had decided a few years ago to leave South Florida in the icky sticky days of summer and head back to my roots in New York to wait out the hottest days of the year. Little did I know that terrible summer weather and other convulsions of nature would start hitting Long Island when I was there.

Last summer we had a tornado come through the Hamptons and, earlier this summer, we felt the earthquake that rocked Virginia. I was driving in my car with my dogs in the Springs section of East Hampton to meet a friend for lunch. The ride on that

stretch of Three Mile Harbor Road seemed extremely rough and bumpy. *Thugthumpthugthumpthugthump....*

I thought, "Wow, could the state of the roads here get any worse?" After sitting down at my table, I learned the truth: We had experienced a rather strong earthquake. That stretch of Three Mile Harbor Road heading home was smooth as always.

A day or so after this, we heard about Hurricane Irene churning in the Caribbean. There was no need to worry, though, as we were far from South Florida. But a few days later the story changed: She was heading straight for New York — Long Island, to be exact.



As the storm made its way up the Eastern Seaboard, the number-one threat appeared to be that Irene would hit us during high tide. The land was already

saturated and "they" (those powers that be) thought all the tunnels, New York City subways, and many parts of the region could be flooded. So the

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evacuation process started, and people in low-lying areas were told to leave first.

The funny part is that, since many New Yorkers had never been through a hurricane, they weren't worried in the least. "What's a little wind and rain?" my neighbor John told me. "I'm staying to protect my house!" This was the sentiment of many, including my friend Maggie, who said she would stay to pump out her basement!

So my summer neighbor and new friend Jodi and I walked over to our local fire department to ask the handsome firemen if they would let us in the building in an emergency. (I had put the fear of God and hurricanes in Jodi over cocktails.) They said they weren't supposed to, but wouldn't deny anyone shelter, either.

Of course, the next day, as the storm approached, the story changed a bit. I walked over to the firehouse again as gloom and doom took over the neighborhood. (I live half a block from the bay.)

"You're going to let me and the dogs in if we knock, right?" I asked.

Fireman Billy said that now that things looked more serious, the

firemen's families would all be there, and he would be placing the area under mandatory evacuation in one hour. The problem was that, by noon, they would also be shutting down all subways, tunnels, and bridges — no way out! But he said that the community college in Riverhead (the nearest full-service town to the Hamptons) was now a dog-friendly shelter. Thinking that I'd better start hitting the road before traffic or the weather became too much, I scrambled to load supplies in my truck — dog food, lots of water, phone, computer, charger, name tags on dogs — and headed for the community college.

Upon arrival, I was greeted by an ASPCA official, who said the dogs and I would have to be separated. It was two in the afternoon and the storm wasn't hitting us until eight the next morning. I inspected the pet room. And while the ASPCA is fully capable of handling animals, I saw tiny airline crates set up for a hundred animals. "Not gonna happen," I thought, and immediately called my friend Bryan for the number of the Hotel Indigo in Riverhead. I had tried several other hotels, but all were

booked, as it was wedding season and also the week heading into the Labor Day holiday. The hotel was getting calls from other dog-owning families who had been told to evacuate.

Being inland, I felt far more at ease at the Hotel Indigo, but of course was hosed by the "hurricane special" rate. We had a lobby-level room, which made getting the dogs in and out a snap. The Indigo is a South Beach-style motel, with piped-in lounge music and a slightly chic feel to it. I went to the gym. I went to the bar. I didn't like that they didn't give a discount to residents of the area and charged a pet fee, but I had no choice.

Since their Internet service worked, I Facebooked a friend in East Hampton to see what was happening on her end. (Being a reporter, she had gone to a beachfront location in Montauk to catch the storm.) The next day, as Irene approached, the Hotel Indigo created a one-time buffet breakfast for their customers; in case they lost power, they wanted to have food ready. They charged for this, and also charged two dollars a cup for coffee in the lobby, which again irked

me since we were all battenning down the hatches together.

Irene didn't really get going until about nine in the morning. Luckily the hotel had a covered walkway that made it pretty easy to walk the dogs before that. She also didn't hit Long Island as hard or with as much flooding as they thought she might. But the winds after the storm were bad. Trees and power lines were down everywhere, as if a Category 2 storm had come through. I didn't regain power for several days. Subsequently I crashed at a hotel in Montauk, which did have power, but no Internet, television, or working phone lines.

I paid a bit more to get out of Dodge and be on higher ground, but I had two dogs in tow and I would always rather be safe than sorry.

*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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# 'Tis the Season to Be Green

A few ideas for making your holidays more Earth-friendly

By **Jim W. Harper**  
BT Contributor

**G**randma got run over by a reindeer — a genetically modified, hormonally raging reindeer.

As the heaping-portion holidays approach, thoughts turn to saving Grandma and the planet while celebrating the births of baby pumpkins, organic turkeys, and saviors wrapped in non-processed linen. But going a little natural is not enough.

Halloween: You must dress up as planet Earth and sweat profusely to portray the effects of global warming. This costume must consist of 100-percent organic fibers. Be sure that no maps were injured in the making of this costume.

Thanksgiving: Toss out the turkey in favor of alligator, Florida's preferred white meat. Catch the beast yourself, and use the hide to create the ultimate gift for Christmas: a homemade alligator purse.

Christmas: Don't buy anything made in China. (Good luck with that.)

Maybe we need to rethink what we really enjoy about the holidays, then figure out how those elements can be celebrated in clean and green fashion. We should be enjoying the harvest, not fretting about trying to do everything and every celebration in excess.

Readers, please help by sending your tips and ideas for greening the holidays: How can we do plentiful without doing wasteful? Here are a few to get us started.

For Halloween, follow the trend of a costume exchange. Organize one at your school and see what people dig out of their closets. (Just keep it rated PG.) Besides being fun, this exchange allows costumes to be reused instead of being dumped after only one Halloween. And those with unique, homemade costumes will be especially appreciated. You can't get that "Recalled Mayor" costume at Target!

Treats may be the trickiest part to turn green, because children are taught not to take candy from strangers unless it is store-sealed. So purchase candy with limited and preferably paper packaging. To limit the use of processed sugar from sugar plantations — a major reason why \$20 billion is being spent to restore the Everglades — try honey. Local honey can be purchased at some stores and farmers' markets.

Decorations? Go with local fruits and vegetables raised by real people, instead of the petroleum-based and robot-created stuff found in stores. Go bobbing for guavas. Think corn and gourds for both Halloween and Thanksgiving. Scary decorations could also be natural, but I don't want to encourage more slain chickens, like the ones I recently saw tossed, voodoo-style, in front of a house on NE 127th Street. (Would you settle for goat skulls?)

Getting an organic pumpkin may be difficult, but there are some local patches. Try growing one for next year.



Pumpkins are very eco-friendly decorations because you can eat the seeds, or feed them to your chickens, and toss the rotten remains into a compost pile. Don't throw that dead pumpkin in the trash!

Thanksgiving means food, and for most people it won't be tofurkey. A turkey farm is hard to find, one where you could pick and pluck your own, so an intermediary becomes necessary. The cleanest marketplace option is also the most expensive: an organically fed and *pastured* turkey. A pastured fowl means that it has seen the great outdoors, instead of being confined to the unhygienic and cruel indoors. These can be ordered from places like Whole Foods and from community-run distributors. (See [localfoodsouthflorida.com](http://localfoodsouthflorida.com).)

For all the fixings, create flair with Florida fare. Get to a farmers' market to find out what is in season, and build your menu from there. You can still support our northern farmers by making homemade cranberry sauce and pumpkin pie, but don't limit yourself to supermarket ingredients. Plant some herbs and arugula now and they will be ready for a salad in November.

After turkey day comes the next example of seasonal overkill: Black Friday. Those who insist on rushing into that madness must enjoy credit-card debt. One way

to pay it off and pay it forward: drive less.

Christmas means toys and gifts and cookies and music. It used to mean church, or at least a tearful viewing of *A Charlie Brown Christmas*. Certainly the holidays don't need to be as gaudy and complicated as the advertisers and retailers would have us believe. A Miami Christmas should never be white — not even for Scarface.

But we can be joyous and responsible at the same time. For the Christmas tree or Hanukkah bush, a potted native palm or pine tree would be ideal. Even imported evergreens may not be evil, as many of these farms function sustainably. When choosing this option, ask the seller how to recycle the used tree.

Wrap up those gifts in used newspaper comics or paper grocery bags. Better yet, give the gift that needs no wrapping and that helps mother Earth, too. Last year I received adoption papers from the Save the Manatee Foundation, and my manatee Lucille continues to inspire me.

Green gifts give, without taking too much. Now e-mail me the green gift of your holiday ideas.

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

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# All Fun, All Night

Slumber parties haven't changed much since we were kids

By Crystal Brewé  
BT Contributor

A little math lesson: Seven seven-year-old girls plus 15 hours equals two exhausted parents. The last of those girls was just retrieved by her well-rested parents, and overnight I have developed a newfound respect for my own parents. How did they manage *my* countless slumber parties unscarred, with no gray hairs, and still end up liking most of my friends?

My house was drenched in first-grade girliness. There was giggling, junk food consumption, screaming, movies, more giggling, dancing, secrets, pillow fights, and more giggling.

I knew it would be tough to top the petting zoo we had in our front yard last year for Matilda's sixth birthday party, but I figured I'd try. "Are you crazy?" my dear readers are undoubtedly thinking. "You took on *seven* little girls?"

My simple answer is, yes, I am crazy. Like a fox.

Do you remember your first slumber party? My first memory of attending a slumber party is dark, creepy, and sad. I remember aching for my mom and crying on a staircase while the other little girls played in their sleeping bags. My mom swooped in for a rescue before I even realized anyone had called her.

My slumber party experiences evolved from the macabre to the marvelous as I grew older. Late-night interests progressed from playing house to playing light as a feather, stiff as a board. I remember the Ouija board spelling out boys' names, makeovers, and food fights. But for the life of me, I can't remember a single thing we talked about.

How do you forget what was so important that we drove my parents crazy each time they had to come in to tell us to be quiet? *It's time to go to sleep. Guys, it is very late. Seriously, if I hear another word out of you animals, parents will be called — I don't care if it's 2:00 a.m.!*

I honed my superpowered mom ears for Matilda's first slumber party in order to jog my own childhood memories. The results were rather disappointing, frankly. Subject matter for the late-night chatter ran the gamut from where parents worked to what little brothers ate. *I did* overhear one girl tell another that she ate poison regularly and another say that her mom likes "planking"; both interesting tidbits.

My husband says boys didn't have slumber parties when he was young. "Boys had *sleepovers*," he explains. "Usually with just one other kid. We wouldn't do anything crazy, either. Just play Atari and watch MTV." I'm sure there is some truth to this, as I can't see a group of seven boys staying up all night giggling with Barbie or dance-partying to



Beyonce's "Single Ladies" (although my husband and his friends have watched this YouTube video repeatedly well into the late hours).

My house was never a good slumber party location because my mom had ears like a bat, no secret would go unheard, and if she didn't get enough sleep, she turned into an ogre. My standout memory of a slumber party at my house involves my dad running into my room in his tighty-whities and yelling at us to "Shut it!" He was a big, hairy Italian, so this made quite an impression on my young friends.

All of that aside, well into my college years, my mom would make elaborate breakfasts after our raucous sleepovers. My friends would always wake up before me and join my mom in the kitchen as she whipped Hollandaise and flipped pancakes. She had a special way of making my friends think she was "cool," and they couldn't help but share our secrets. Little did they know my mom was formulating calculated decisions for my future based upon their still sleepy-eyed chatter. My friends would all have made horrible CIA agents.

Matilda and her posse of seven-year-olds partook in no talk of crushes or

cooties. (Thank the gods.) The conversations the girls had with me while I painted polka dots on their fingers and toes were hilarious, though. Here are some choice nuggets: Little brothers are a pain, Portuguese is hard, Beefaroni is the *best* school lunch, Beefaroni is the *worst* school lunch, and playing the violin can be boring.

I was convinced that if I let them self-entertain, things would get all *Lord of the Flies*, so I skillfully choreographed the evening chock-full of activities. By 9:00 p.m. we had completed everything on my extensive list. They sang karaoke (and by the ninth rendition of Katy Perry's "Firework," they actually sounded pretty good), decorated cupcakes, played Twister, dress-up, and makeover, and danced like disco queens.

My husband and I survived the slumber party and, while we are delirious from sleep deprivation, we are thankful that our daughter has such a well-behaved group of girlfriends.

Plus we got a good introduction to what is sure to be a future filled with ghost stories, fashion shows, frozen bras, sneaking out, and overall mayhem.

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# These Rhones Will Make Everything Right

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

By Bill Citara  
BT Contributor

There are few things in life you can count on. Death, taxes. The other line moves faster. Politicians lie. Network TV sucks. Caesar salad is eternal. Free beer tomorrow.

For the casual wine drinker with a moderately adventurous palate and a moderately strip-mined pocketbook, there are few wines you can count on. Sure, you can find a handful of reds and whites you like and drink them over and over and over. But that's about as much fun as eating Caesar salad at every meal while watching politicians lie about death and taxes on network TV. And still having to pay for your beer.

At all price points, but especially the ones those of us of more modest incomes inhabit, there's a wide range of styles and quality. Which means if you find one inexpensive Napa Valley Cabernet you like, the next one could be a vodka-strength, grape-jelly fruit bomb. Or as thin as Mary-Kate Olsen and as tightly wound as Dick Cheney. It's almost enough to make you long for the continuity and consistency of beer, free or not.

There are a few wines that show a certain consistency. New Zealand Sauvignon Blancs. Spanish Riojas. Italian Chiantis. Sonoma County Zinfandels. This isn't an argument for cookie-cutter wines. It's just that there are times we don't want to drink the same ol', same ol', but don't want to take a flying leap off the wine-buying cliff, either.

All of which brings me to the wines of the Rhône. Like all French wine-growing regions, the fine points are damnably complicated, so let's just say it's an area of almost 200,000 acres in the Rhône River Valley of southeastern France. The southern Rhône, where most of the region's best wines originate, has a Mediterranean climate — warm days, cool nights — which suits the predominant grapes of Grenache, Syrah, Mourvedre, Carignan, and Cinsault (red), and Ugni Blanc, Rous-sanne, and Clairette (white).

What all this means in your glass is full-flavored reds firmed up by mild tannins and acid, and crisp whites mellowed by sun-ripened fruit. And while varietal blends, ripeness, alcohol levels, tannins, and acidity all vary, if you find one Rhône wine that speaks to you, you can probably find a whole lot more.

And in fact, I did. Every wine in this tasting spoke to me, one of the few times that's happened. Two wines, though, spoke louder than others. Both bear the region's primary appellation, Côtes du Rhône, encompassing areas in both the north and south.

The 2009 M. Chapoutier Bel-leruche is simply luscious, delivering heady aromas of ripe blackberries and plums, with hints of toast and white pepper, then gradually opening up in the glass to reveal more rich, ripe fruit, a bit of cloves and allspice, a little oak, a lot of body. Hearty stews, red meat, and tomato-sauced pastas would be happy to share the table with this wine.

On the white side, the 2009 Cave de Rasteau "Les Rastellains" is not only a

terrific wine but, at \$10, a terrific value. Think crisp with a touch of richness — Meyer lemon and melon and peach. And throw in a mineral undercurrent, too. It's got the brightness to cut through rich sauces and the body to stand up to lighter meats like chicken and veal.

Two other Côtes du Rhône reds hit softer, earthier notes with the addition of Mourvedre, a grape said to have been brought to France from Spain. The Jean-Luc Colombo 2007 "Les Abeilles" kicks off with potent aromas of blackberries, cassis, and dried fruit, which segue into milder strawberry-raspberry fruit flavors characteristic of Grenache, which accounts for 50 percent of the blend.

The Perrin 2007 Reserve is pretty much the same, with strawberry-raspberry flavors in the foreground and earthy, dried fruit-fig flavors in the background adding substance and heft.

Within the Rhône region, but not the Côtes du Rhône appellation, are a pair of whites. The 2009 Chateau de Nages Reserve is a 60-40 blend of Grenache Blanc and Roussanne, which gives it a refreshing lemon-grapefruit character, with the tiniest hint of honey lurking underneath and a pronounced minerality.



Get the Perrin Reserve for \$10.99 and Cave de Rasteau for \$9.99 at the North Miami Beach ABC Fine Wine & Spirits (16355 Biscayne Blvd., 305-944-6525). The La Vieille Ferme and Chateau de Nages cost \$5.99 and \$9.99, respectively, and can be found at Total Wine & More (14750 Biscayne Blvd., 305-354-3270) in North Miami. The excellent M. Chapoutier is at the Aventura Whole Foods Market (21105 Biscayne Blvd., 305-933-1543) for \$11.99, while the Jean-Luc Colombo retails for \$11.95 at Wine & Spirits Cellar (21055 Biscayne Blvd., 305-936-9433) in Aventura.

La Vieille Ferme's 2010 "Recolte" is a classic oysters and shellfish wine, with a palate that balances tart lemon-lime-grapefruit flavors with orange and melon and an almost creamy texture. At \$5.99 it's not quite free tomorrow, but it's still better than beer.

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# A Fungi Feast

Wild mushrooms that grow locally can make for good eating — so long as they're not poisonous

By **Jeff Shimonski**  
BT Contributor

This past year I started a database of all the fungi I've been finding in our local area. With all the rain we have gotten lately, I've had the opportunity to photograph and attempt to identify dozens of species.

My original focus had been to find out if the fungi I was seeing were saprobic (living on already dead wood, including mulch), parasitic (destroying live wood in trees), or a combination of the two. I also wanted to find out if they were mycorrhizal — attached to the roots of trees and other plants in a symbiotic relationship where nutrients and water are exchanged between the two organisms.

Some species of fungi that attack trees are very insidious and can enter the tree's vascular system via fungal spores through wounds where branches have just been cut. Roots that have been cut or damaged can be penetrated by the mycelium (body) of the fungus as it literally grows into the root. A fungus can remain unnoticed for years while destroying the sound wood, eventually affecting a tree's stability and strength. It is these fungi that I was really interested in documenting.

While researching our local fungi, I soon began to realize that some of these species are edible — not just nonpoisonous, but choice or delicious edibles. The fruiting bodies of these fungi are the mushrooms that we see in our landscapes.

I've been extremely careful with the identification of mushrooms, especially when I am going to eat them. Some of the poisonous species I've found can look quite similar to edible ones. Some are very colorful and eye-catching.

Warn your children *never* to taste any mushroom they find outside. To be sure that I have correctly identified the fungi that I am collecting, I send samples to the University of Florida TREC Plant Diagnostic Clinic in Homestead to let a professional mycologist (fungi specialist) determine the species.

One of the mushrooms we have been dining on at home is *Agaricus campestris*, or the meadow mushroom. It is found in lawns and mulch beds, where it lives off decaying wood (making it saprobic).

This mushroom is closely related and looks very similar to the cultivated button mushroom that you purchase in the supermarket, although I have collected some meadow mushrooms that were eight to ten inches wide — much larger than the button mushroom. I sent off two batches of samples just to make sure I had a positive identification before we ate them.

After being sautéed in olive oil with onions, garlic, Italian parsley, kosher salt, and fresh cracked pepper, they were placed atop some nice steaks. Delicious. An added benefit of eating this species of mushroom (and many others) is its crude protein content, which ranks below animal meat but well above most other foods, including milk.

Edible mushrooms are also typically high in carbohydrates, moderate in crude



BT photo by Jeff Shimonski

**This jelly ear fungus is very popular in Asian cuisine. It was photographed growing in a local garden.**

fiber, and low in fat content. Another species of fungi we are preparing at home is *Auricularia auricula*, or jelly ear. The fruiting body of this particular species does not look like your typical mushroom. It has jellylike flesh and looks and feels very much like part of an ear — cartilaginous, and not very appetizing.

It is reported to be the first mushroom ever cultivated in China (600 A.D.) and it remains one of the most popular edible mushrooms there. It is used in Asian cuisine for its crisp, snappy texture and its color, rather than its taste. It is also said to have a high nutritional value. I've been collecting this fungus from decaying branches attached to living trees.

Recently I found several clumps on gumbo limbo trees and on decaying trunks of ficus, as can be seen in the photo that accompanies this column. Mushrooms generally have to be harvested within one or two days of maturing to preserve the maximum flavor. Sometimes when collecting wild mushrooms or those I cultivate, I don't have enough for a meal or perhaps there

is no time to cook them. I've been using a food dehydrator with great results.

I first clean the mushrooms, cut off the stems, and slice them into sections. The moisture content of fresh mushrooms varies from 70 to 95 percent and, when dehydrated, the moisture is around 10 percent or perhaps a bit more.

Keeping the moisture below 20 percent should keep mold and insects at bay. I harvested some of my homegrown oyster mushrooms several weeks ago and placed them directly into the dehydrator. I removed them in 24 hours and put them into an airtight container. When needed, they were easily rehydrated and we cooked them along with fresh oyster mushrooms just purchased from a local supermarket. There was no difference in taste.

*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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**Volatile Voters**

Continued from page 52

International Airport and then fell into a fight with two Miami-Dade police officers.

When Winton was removed from office soon after, Mayor Diaz replaced him with another Coconut Grove resident: Linda Haskins, previously the city's chief financial officer. Although the mayor helped Haskins raise a staggering \$729,000 in campaign contributions, Sarnoff's reform and controlled-development platform enabled him to trounce her with just half the money in a November 2006 special election.

Since his election, Sarnoff spearheaded a 35-foot height limit along Biscayne Boulevard in the Upper Eastside's Miami Modern Historic District, and curtailed closing times for bars in the Grove, creating sharp divisions in both communities.

Other controversial moves include advocating for outdoor advertisements along I-95, and pushing for lucrative pay raises for firefighters, only to later criticize their bloated salaries.

Yet Sarnoff still has plenty of fans. Jack Spirk, past president of the Shorecrest

Homeowners Association, credits the commissioner for initiating a major roads project in his neighborhood, and for spearheading the purchase of property along the Little River, known as Manatee Bend, for a public park. "Every time we meet with Marc," says Spirk, "he listens to our concerns and responds to our requests."

Bob Powers, president of the Palm Grove Homeowners Association in the Upper Eastside, also thinks Sarnoff has done an "excellent" job representing a constituency with widely differing interests. "Now, have I had disagreements with him? Absolutely!" Powers exclaims. "I have not liked all the things the man has done all the time. I am not in love with him all the time, but I am not supposed to be. That's life."

*A District 2 candidates' forum, moderated by former county manager Merrett Stierheim, will take place on October 21 at Legion Park, 6447 NE 7th Ave. Doors open at 5:45 p.m. For more information, contact the League of Women Voters, 305-666-0186.*

*Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com*

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**First Cargo**

Continued from page 54

allow private firms to bid on running Tri-Rail." The FEC, which is interested in bidding, claims it can operate Tri-Rail for \$10 million less than the state. The company would use that leftover subsidy money to jumpstart passenger service on its own coastal line. An east-west connection between the two systems could give South Florida its first expansive commuter rail service.

Other companies, such as Richard Branson's Virgin Trains, the *Palm Beach Post* goes on to say, are rumored to be interested in bidding too, so an FEC-dominated rail network in South Florida is not guaranteed. But, says FDOT's Goddeau, "FEC is an operator which would surely love to, if they privatize Tri-Rail, get that money and run trains on Tri-Rail and then also their own trains on the FEC." Privatization, she notes, "seems to be the way we're trending as a state."

Impatient for the arrival of passenger trains, one Miami official has put forward his own local, interim plan. Two months ago Miami-Dade County

Commissioner Xavier Suarez proposed running a hybrid train/trolley system on the FEC from Midtown to downtown Miami. Suarez's "trolley trains" would have rubber wheels to allow them to transition from rails to city streets (presumably at Biscayne Boulevard). The future of that proposal depends in large part on cooperation from the City of Miami. Whether the FEC would welcome Suarez's trolleys on their newly revived freight line — and future passenger corridor — remains to be seen.

This much is certain: Several years' worth of planning and fund-seeking still lay ahead. Back in 2009, rail study consultant Sue Gibbons cautioned, "In the very best of circumstances, it's going to be six years or more before we actually have service running anywhere on this corridor — and probably many more years than that before the whole plan is implemented."

That timeline, which FDOT confirms is still accurate, leaves Biscayne Corridor residents with four more years to dream.

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




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# Dining Guide

## Restaurant Listings

The Biscayne Corridor's most comprehensive restaurant guide. Total this month: 286.

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 globetrotting 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 brisquet/gruyere sandwich with dipping juice. Breakfast, too, from 6:30 a.m. \$\$-\$\$\$

**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 crêpes (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 intentionally masculine steakhouse. Here, ensconced in your black leather booth, everything is humongous: dry-aged choice-grade steaks like the Bludgeon of Beef (a boldly flavorful 40-ounce bone-in ribeye, described as "part meat, part weapon"); king crab legs that dwarf the plate; cocktail shrimp that could swallow the Loch Ness monster whole; two-fisted cocktails that would fell a T-Rex. Not for the frail. \$\$\$

**Crazy About You**  
1155 Brickell Bay Dr. #101, 305-377-4442

The owners, and budget-friendly formula, are the same here as at older Dolores, But You Can Call Me Lolita: Buy an entrée (all under \$20) from a sizable list of Mediterranean, Latin, American, or Asian-influenced choices (like Thai-marinated churrasco with crispy shoestring fries) and get an appetizer for free, including substantial stuff like a Chihuahua cheese casserole with chorizo and pesto. The difference: This place, housed in the former location of short-lived La Broche, has an even more upscale ambiance than Dolores – including a million-dollar water view. \$\$\$

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

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

### MIAMI

#### BRICKELL / DOWNTOWN

**Bryan in the Kitchen**  
104 NE 2nd Ave., 305-371-7777

This quirky café-market's chef/owner is a former smoothie-swilling model who is now into fresh whole foods, and though his eclectic "green gourmet" menu does uniformly reflect his dedication to ecological consciousness, it otherwise could only be described as intensely personal. Offerings are an odd but appealing saint/sinner mix, ranging from healthy pasta/grain salads and homemade-from-scratch snacks (beef jerky, granola) to unique cupcakes featuring not-too-sweet adult flavors and irresistible sticky buns. If we had to choose just one category, we'd sin. But luckily, you can have it all. \$-\$\$

**Kork Wine & Cheese Bar**  
2 S. Miami Ave., 305-377-8899

From the owner of Transit Lounge, a hip hangout long before the downtown/Brickell revival, this more upscale-cool venue is worth checking out for its almost medieval dimly lit décor alone, including a subterranean wine cellar/party room, formerly a WW II-era bomb shelter. Comestibles are limited to wine and cheese plus accompaniments. Both are available to go. Kork is as much market as lounge. But with a stock of roughly 5000 bottles, and a selection of roughly two dozen perfectly ripe artisanal cheeses – curated by a cheese sommelier who'll create perfect pairings – who needs more? \$\$

**Pieducks**  
1451 S. Miami Ave., 305-808-7888

If you can overlook a name as unenlightening as most in-jokes (it evidently refers to a favorite character of owner Claudio Nunes's kids – we assume the Pokemon Psyduck), you'll experience pretty perfect pizza. Sadly, not all brick ovens turn out perfectly char-broasted crusts, crisp outside and airy/chewy inside, but that's what you'll consistently find here and a newer take-out/delivery-only Midtown branch. And unlike many artisan pizzerias, Pieducks doesn't get cheesy with cheese quantity (though we like that extra cheese is an option). Elaborate salads complete the menu. \$\$

#### MIDTOWN / WYNWOOD / DESIGN DISTRICT

**Ming Yuan**  
3006 NW 2nd Ave., 305-576-6466  
What this tiny (three booths plus counter seats) Wynwood

in citrus-spiked chili/cream sauce). But traditional fusion dishes like Chinese-Peruvian Chaufa fried rice (packed with jumbo shrimp, mussels, and calamari) are also fun, as well as surprisingly affordable. \$\$

**Damn Good Burger**  
20 Biscayne Blvd., 305-718-6565

At restolounge MIA, the hip, high-tech nightclub component remains the same, as does much of the restaurant space's mod décor. The liquid nitrogen tanks are gone from the kitchen, however, and the atmosphere aims for a retro all-American feel to match the fare: burgers (from a hormone/antibiotic-free ground Angus chuck/brisket/short rib blend), with choice of 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

place serves isn't authentic Chinese cuisine. It's Chinese immigrant cooking: America's original Cantonese-based chop sueys and egg foo youngs plus later, spicier but also Americanized Szechuan/Hunan-inspired 1970s inventions like Mongolian beef and General Tso's this-or-that. But all the above (ordered extra-spicy if you like heat), plus crab rangoons and treat-packed special fried rice, are truly tasty. And since almost everything on the menu comes in several sizes, with even "small" being substantial, prices are unbeatable. \$-\$\$

**Pieducks**  
3500 N. Miami Ave., 305-576-5550  
(See Brickell / Downtown listing)

### NORTH BEACH

**The Wine Market**  
908 71st St., 305-865-6465

This rustic-chic wine shop, tapas bar, and restaurant is the sort of place that every emerging neighborhood needs. The wine stock isn't huge but the selection is thoughtful, with many bottles priced from \$10 to \$20. Take it home or pay a small corkage fee and drink on-premises over a meal centered on typical Parisian bistro entrées like steak or moules frites (the latter regularly available all-you-can-eat). If you'd prefer going the tapas bar route, highlights include a silky cognac/truffle chicken liver mousse and battered shrimp with remoulade sauce to make your own po'boy crostinis. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

### BAY HARBOR ISLANDS

**Open Kitchen**  
1071 95th St., 305-865-0090

If we were on Death Row, choosing a last meal, this very chef-centered lunchroom/market's PBLT (a BLT sandwich with melt-in-your-mouth pork belly substituting for regular bacon) would be a strong contender. Co-owners Sandra Stefani (ex-Casa Toscana chef/owner) and Ines Chattas (ex-Icebox Café GM) have combined their backgrounds to create a global gourmet oasis with a menu ranging from light quiches and imaginative salads to hefty balsamic/tomato-glazed shortribs or daily pasta specials (like wild boar-stuffed ravioli). Also featured: artisan grocery products, and Stefani's famous interactive cooking class/wine dinners. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

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 smallish plates include fried fresh zucchini with dip (cheese recommended); chorizo with homemade cilantro Mayo; or steak tacos, served Mexican-style with onions, cilantro, and spicy salsa. Sadly for breakfast-brew enthusiasts, the DRB isn't open that early. But it is open late – till 5:00 a.m. \$

**Dolores, But You Can Call Me Lolita**  
1000 S. Miami Ave., 305-403-3103

From the stylish setting in Miami's historic Firehouse No. 4, one would expect a mighty pricy meal. But entrées, which range from Nuevo Latino-style ginger/orange-glazed pork tenderloin to a platter of Kobe mini-burgers, all cost either \$18 or \$23. And the price includes an appetizer – no low-rent crapola, either, but treats like Serrano ham croquettes, a spinach/leek tart with Portobello mushroom sauce, or shrimp-topped eggplant timbales. The best seats are on the glam rooftop patio. \$\$\$



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## Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

### 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. \$

### Eos

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

Unlike their Michelin-starred New Adriatic restaurant Anchos, 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, nontraditional 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-crusted, doughy crescents – baked, not fried, so relatively guilt-free – are amply stuffed with fillings both classic (beef and chicken, either mild or spicy) and creative: the bacon cheeseburger, the pancetta/mozzarella/plum-filled Americana, and several vegetarian options. At just over two bucks apiece, they're a money-saving moveable feast. \$

### Il Gabbiano

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

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

### Indigo / Table 40

**100 Chopin Plaza, 305-577-1000**

Long known for its power-lunch buffet – including hot entrées, carving station, custom pastas, packed-to-the-gills salad, sushi, and dessert stations – the InterContinental Hotel's Indigo restaurant now has a hip offspring intended for private dining: Table 40. The charming, glassed-in wine "cellar" (actually in the kitchen) enables 12-14 diners to watch the action in heat-shielded, soundproofed comfort while eating creations by veteran chef Alexander Feher, combining Continental technique with local seasonal ingredients. Highlights: tender house-smoked, stout-braised short ribs; lavish lobster salad with grilled mango; and a seductive fresh corn gazpacho. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

### Iron Sushi

**120 SE 3rd Ave., 305-373-2000**

(See Miami Shores listing)

### Jackson Soul Food

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

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

### Jamón, Jamón, Jamón

**10 SW South River Dr., 305-324-1111**

From the outside, you know you're walking into the ground floor of a new condo building. But once inside the charmingly rustic room, you'd swear you're in Spain. Obviously Spain's famous cured hams are a specialty, as are other pork products on the weekly changing menu, from a roast suckling pig entrée to a fried chorizo and chickpea tapa. But seafood is also terrific. Don't miss bacalao-filled piquillo peppers, or two of Miami's best rice dishes: seafood paella and arroz negro (with squid and its ink). \$\$\$-\$\$\$

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

### 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

**14 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 arena 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., 305-372-233**

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

### Lime Fresh Mexican Grill

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

(See Midtown / Wynwood / Design District listing.)

### 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 flageolet (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 nicoise. \$\$-\$\$\$

### Martini 28

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

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

### Miami Art Café

**364 SE 1st St., 305-374-5117**

For businessfolk on the go, this breakfast/lunch-only French café serves up evocative baguette sandwiches (like camembert) loaded, if you like, with greens, olives, and more. For those with time to sit, we'd recommend the savory crêpes, garnished with perfectly dressed salad, or sweet crêpe like the Bonne Maman (whose sugar/salted butter stuffing brings Brittany to downtown). And quiches are nicely custardy. But there are surprises here, too, including just a few full entrées, with correctly made traditional sauces one wouldn't expect at a luncheonette – except, perhaps, in Paris. \$\$\$

### Miami's Finest Caribbean Restaurant

**236 NE 1st Ave., 305-381-9254**

Originally from Jamaica, proprietor Miss Pat has been serving her traditional homemade island specialties to downtown office workers and college students since the early 1990s. Most popular item here might be the weekday lunch special of jerk chicken with festival (sweet-fried cornmeal bread patties), but even vegetarians are well served with dishes like a tofu, carrot, and chayote curry. All entrées come with rice and peas, fried plantains, and salad, so no one leaves hungry. \$

### Mint Leaf

**1063 SE 1st Ave., 305-358-5050**

Part of London's famous Woodlands Group, this stylish spot, like its Coral Gables parent, serves the sort of upscale Indian food rarely found outside Great Britain or India. More interestingly, the menu includes not just the familiar northern Indian "Mughlai" fare served in most of America's Indian restaurants, but refined versions of south India's scrumptious street food. We've happily assembled whole meals of the vegetarian chaat (snacks) alone. And dosa (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 peed chicken, spicy/tangy rather than overly sweet. And a single two-course Peking duck (skin in crepes, stir-fried meat and veggies with lettuce cups) makes mouthwatering finger food, shared among friends. \$\$\$

### 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 sausage, hibiscus syrup, and maple granules. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

### Novecton

**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 crab 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 sauce. And it would be unthinkable to call it quits without homemade sweet potato pie or banana pudding, plus a bracing flop – half iced tea, half lemonade. \$\$\$

### Perricone's

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

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

### Prelude

**Adrienne Arsht Center**

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

Though the opening of Barton G.'s elegant performing arts

## Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

center eatery did feature a live giraffe, the food's actually more grown-up than at his original SoBe spot. The concept is prix fixe: Any three courses on the menu (meaning three entrées if you want) for \$39. Highlights include silky, tarra-gon-inflected corn/bacon mustard, 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-habane-ro-pepper cream sauce), or Rosa's signature guacamole en molcajete, made tableside. A few pomegranate margaritas ensure no worries. \$\$\$

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

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

### **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 Lucania sausage and a balsamic reduction. Or maybe an even more evocative Roman ice cream tartufo? Mangia! \$\$\$

### **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, huancaina cheese sauce? \$\$

### **Thai Angel** 152 SE 1st Ave., 305-371-9748

Inside a colorful courtyard that rather resembles Munchkinland, this downtown "insider's secret" serves serious Thai food till 9:00 p.m. daily. Tasty classics like the four curries (red, green, panang, and massaman) come custom-spiced – mild to authentically brain-searing – and are so affordable there's no guilt in splurging on superb house specials like crisp-coated duck or fresh snapper (whole or filleted) in tamarind sauce. The young chef has a heavenly hand at tofu, too, so vegetarians are very well-served. \$\$

### **Tobacco Road** 626 S. Miami Ave., 305-374-1198

Prohibition-era speakeasy (reputedly a fave of Al Capone), gay bar, strip club. Previously all these, this gritty spot has been best known since 1982 as a venue for live music, primarily blues. But it also offers food from lunchtime to late night (on weekends till 4:00 a.m.). The kitchen is especially known for its chili, budget-priced steaks, and burgers. There's also surprisingly elegant fare, though, like a Norwegian salmon club with lemon aioli. A meat-smoker in back turns out tasty ribs. \$\$

### **Tre Italian Bistro** 270 E. Flagler St., 305-373-3303

"Bistro" actually sounds too Old World for this cool hangout, from the owners of downtown old-timer La Loggia, but "restolounge" sounds too glitzy. Think of it as a neighborhood "bistrolounge." The food is mostly modernized Italian, with Latin and Asian accents: a prosciutto-and-fig pizza with Brazilian catupiry cheese; gnocchi served either as finger food (fried, with calamata olive/truffle aioli), or plated with orange-ginger sauce. But there are tomato-sauced meatballs with r'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

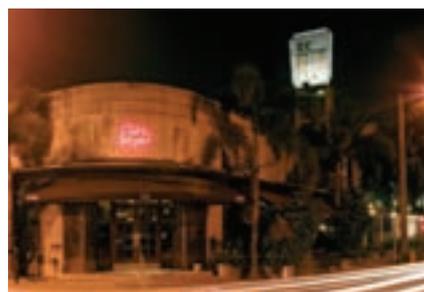
While the menu of this casually *crac* (Gaelic for "fun") Irish pub will be familiar to fans of the South Beach Waxy's, the location is far superior – on the Miami River, with waterfront deck. And none of Miami's Irish eateries offers as much authentic traditional fare. Especially evocative: imported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

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

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

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

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



# Soyka

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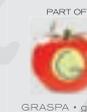
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## Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

### Midtown / Wynwood / Design District

#### 3 Chefs Chinese Restaurant

1800 Biscayne Blvd. #105, 305-373-2688

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

#### Adelita's Café

2699 Biscayne Blvd., 305-576-1262

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

#### 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 cazones (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. \$\$\$

#### 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 figgiotto: 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 fries, salmon atop rataouille, or many changing blackboard specials. Portions are plentiful. So is free parking. \$\$\$

#### Buena Vista Deli

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

At this casual café/bakery, co-owned by Buena Vista Bistro's Claude Postel, the day starts in authentic French fashion, with fresh breakfast breads, chocolate almond croissants, and other delights. At lunch cornichon-garnished baguette sandwiches (containing housemade pâtés, sinfully rich pork

rillettes, superb salami, and other charcuterie classics) are irresistible, and a buttery-crust, custardy quiche plus perfectly dressed salad costs little more than a fast-food combo meal. As for Postel's homemade French sweets, if you grab the last Paris-Brest, a praline butter-cream-filled puff pastry, we may have to kill you. \$\$\$

#### Cafeina

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

This elegantly comfortable multi-room indoor/outdoor venue is described as an "art gallery/lounge," and some do come just for cocktails like the hefty café con leche martinis. But don't overlook chef Guilly 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 antichuchos, 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. \$\$\$

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

#### 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. \$

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## Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

### Delicias Peruanas

**2590 Biscayne Blvd., 305-573-4634**  
Seafood is the specialty at this pleasant Peruvian spot, as it was at the nearby original Delicias, run by members of the same family. The food is as tasty as ever, especially the reliably fresh traditional ceviches, and for those who like their fish tangy but cooked, a mammoth jalea platter. As for nonseafood stuff, Peru practically invented fusion cuisine (in the 1800s), such as two traditional noodle dishes: tallerin saltado and tallerin verde. \$\$\$

### Egg & Dart

**4029 N. Miami Ave., 786-431-1022**  
While co-owners Costa Grillas (from Maria's, a Coral Gables staple) and Niko Theodorou (whose family members have several Greek islands restaurants) describe their cuisine as "rustic Greek," there is surprising sophistication in some dishes: an especially delicate taramasalata (cod roe dip); precisely crisp-fried smelts (like a freshwater sardine); galactobourico, an often heavy and cloyingly vanilla-saturated dessert, here custardy and enlivened by orange flavor. Extensive lists of mezze (snacks) and creative cocktails make the expansive, invitingly decorated space ideal for large gatherings of friends who enjoy sharing. \$\$\$

### Egyptian Pizza Kitchen

**Shops at Midtown Miami  
Buena Vista Avenue, 305-571-9050**  
Pizza, pita – hey, they're both flatbreads. So while many pizzas do indeed, as this halal place's name suggests, have initially weird-seeming Middle Eastern toppings, it's really not surprising that the Giza (topped with marinated lamb, feta, olives, peppers, and pungently spiced cumin sauce) works at least as well as Italian classics. Additionally the menu includes interesting Middle Eastern fare like fowl, a hummus-like but lighter Egyptian dish of fava, tahini, garlic, lemon juice, and olive oil. A brick oven makes both pizzas and homemade pitas superior. \$\$

### 18th Street Café

**210 NE 18th St., 305-381-8006**  
Most seating in this cool, pioneering neighborhood café is in a giant bay window, backed with banquettes, that makes the small space feel expansive – fitting, since the menu keeps expanding, too. Originally breakfast/lunch only, the café, though closed weekends, now serves dinner till 10:00 p.m., with comfort food entrées like secret-recipe meatloaf joining old favorites: daily-changing homemade soups, varied burgers, layered international salads, inspired sandwiches (like roast beef and provolone with creamy horseradish). Beer and wine is available, and now so is delivery. \$\$

### Five Guys Famous Burger and Fries

**Shops at Midtown Miami  
Buena Vista Ave., 305-571-8341**  
No green-leaf faux health food here. You get what the name says, period, with three adds: kosher dogs, veggie

burgers, and free peanuts while you wait. Which you will, just a bit, since burgers are made fresh upon order. Available in double or one-patty sizes, they're well-done but spurtingly juicy, and after loading with your choice of free garnishes, even a "little" burger makes a major meal. Fries (regular or Cajun-spiced) are also superior, hand-cut in-house from sourced potatoes. \$

### Fratelli Lyon

**4141 NE 2nd Ave., 305-572-2901**  
This Italian café has been packed since the moment it opened. No surprise to any who recall owner Ken Lyon's pioneering Lyon Frères gourmet store on Lincoln Road (1992-97), another joint that was exactly what its neighborhood needed. The restaurant's artisan salumi, cheeses, flavorful boutique olive oils, and more are so outstanding that you can't help wishing it also had a retail component. Entrées include properly al dente pastas, plus some regional specialties like Venetian-style calves liver, rarely found outside Italy. \$\$\$

### Gigi

**3470 N. Miami Ave., 305-573-1520**  
As befits its location in artful, working-class Wynwood, Gigi has minimalist modern diner ambiance paired with truly creative contemporary Asian-influenced comfort food from Top Chef contender Jeff McInnis (formerly of the South Beach Ritz-Carlton) at surprisingly low prices. From a menu encompassing noodle and rice bowls, steam-bun ssams, grilled goodies, and raw items, highlights include pillowy-light roast pork-stuffed buns, and possibly the world's best BLT, featuring Asian bun "toast," thick pork belly slices rather than bacon, and housemade pickles. There's \$2 beer, too. \$\$\$

### The Grrrlz of Sandwich

**555 NE 15th St., 2nd floor (Venetia condo)  
305-374-4305**  
Riot Grrrl DIY spirit shines in the homemade soups, sweets, salads, and exceptionally tasty warm baguette sandwiches (like prosciutto and fresh mozzarella, dressed with a unique sumac vinaigrette) at this concealed café, hidden on the Venetia condo's mezzanine. Owners Ana Oliva and Fadia Sarkis scour local markets daily for the freshest of ingredients, and their breads (plus light-crust-ed empanadas and sinful Ghirardelli chocolate cake) are all baked in-house. On Saturdays the grrrls'll even deliver you an elegant (yet inexpensive) breakfast in bed. \$

### Hurricane Grill & Wings

**Shops at Midtown Miami  
Buena Vista Avenue, 305-576-7133**  
This Florida fast/casual chain became an instant hit in Midtown Miami owing to a winning concept: more than 35 heat-coded sauces and dry rubs meant for custom-tossing with wings and other things (including white-meat "bone-less 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-ed pizzas like the creative Dolce e Piccante or orgasmic Carbonara. Pastas are fresh; produce is largely local; the mosaic-centered décor is minimalist but inviting. And no need to be wary of the warehouse district at night: Valet parking is free. \$\$\$

### La Provence

**2200 Biscayne Blvd., 305-576-8002**  
(See Brickell / Downtown listing.)

### Latin Café 2000

**2501 Biscayne Blvd., 305-576-3838**  
The menu is similar to that at many of our town's Latin cafés, largely classic Cuban entrées and sandwiches, with a smattering of touches from elsewhere in Latin America, such as a Peruvian jalea mixta (marinated mixed seafood), or paella Valenciana from Spain, which many Miami eateries consider a Latin country. What justifies the new millennium moniker is the more modern, yup-pified/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-ed salmon, chipotle-drizzled endive stuffed with lump crab, or customizable tacos average \$5-\$8. Also available: big breakfasts and salads, hearty soups, housemade pastries like lemon-crust-ed wild berry pie, and a hip beer and wine list. \$

### Maitardi

**163 NE 39th St., 305-572-1400**  
Though we admired the ambitious approach of Oak Plaza's original tenant, Brosia, this more informal, inexpensive, and straightforwardly Italian concept of veteran Lincoln Road restaurateur Graziano Sbroggio seems a more universal lure for the Design District's central "town square." The mostly outdoor space remains unaltered save a wood-burning oven producing flavorfully char-bubbled pizza creations, plus a vintage meat slicer dispensing wild boar salami, bresaola (cured beef), and other artisan salumi. Other irresistibles: fried artichokes with lemony aioli; seafood lasagna with heavenly dill-lobster sauce. \$\$\$

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## Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

### 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 mezze: a Greek sampler of creamy tzatziki yogurt dip, smoky eggplant purée, and airy tarama caviar spread; and a Turkish sampler of hummus, fava purée, and rich tomato-walnut dip. The meze of mussels in lemony wine broth is, with Mandolin's fresh-baked flatbread, almost a full meal in itself. \$\$-\$\$\$

### Mario the Baker

250 NE 25th St., 305-438-0228  
(See North Miami listing)

### Mercadito Midtown

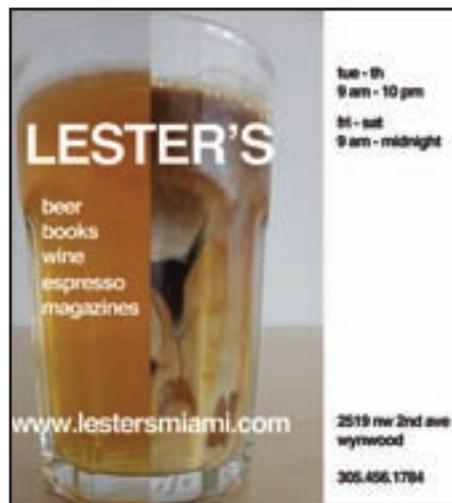
3252 NE 1st Ave., 786-369-0423  
Some people frequent this fashionable restorlounge, festooned with graffiti-style murals designed to evoke a bustling Mexican street market, just for the dangerously smooth margaritas. But the main must-haves here are tacos, encased in a rarity: genuinely made-from-scratch corn tortillas, small but fatly-stuffed. Of 11 varieties, our favorite is the carnitas (juicy braised pork, spicy chili de arbol slaw, toasted peanuts). A close second: the hongos, intensely flavorful huitlacoche and wild mushrooms, with manchego and salsa verde – a reminder that vegetarian food need not be bland. \$\$-\$\$\$

### Michael's Genuine Food and Drink

130 NE 40th St., 305-573-5550  
An instant smash hit, this truly neighborhood-oriented restaurant from chef Michael Schwartz offers down-to-earth fun food in a comfortable, casually stylish indoor/outdoor setting. Fresh, organic ingredients are emphasized, but dishes range from cutting-edge (crispy beef cheeks with whipped celeriac, celery salad, and chocolate reduction) to simple comfort food: deviled eggs, homemade potato chips with pan-fried onion dip, or a whole wood-roasted chicken. There's also a broad range of prices and portion sizes to encourage frequent visits. Michael's Genuine also features an eclectic, affordable wine list and a full bar. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

### Mike's at Venetia

555 NE 15th St., 9th floor, 305-374-5731  
This family-owned Irish pub, on the pool deck of the Venetia condo, for more than 15 years has been a popular lunch and dinner hang-out for local journalists and others who appreciate honest cheap eats and drinks. Regulars know daily specials are the way to go. Depending on the day, fish, churrasco, or roast turkey with all the trimmings are all prepared fresh. Big burgers and steak dinners are always good. A limited late-night menu provides pizza, wings, ribs, and salad till 3:00 a.m. \$\$\$



### Morgans Restaurant

28 NE 29th St., 305-573-9678  
Housed in a beautifully refurbished 1930s private home, Morgans serves eclectic, sometimes internationally influenced contemporary American cuisine compelling enough to attract hordes. Dishes are basically comfort food, but ultimate comfort food: the most custardy, fluffy French toast imaginable; shoestring fries that rival Belgium's best; mouthwatering maple-basted bacon; miraculously terrific tofu (crispy panko-crust and apricot/soy-glazed); even a "voluptuous grilled cheese sandwich" – definitely a "don't ask, don't tell your cardiologist" item. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

### NoVe Kitchen & Bar

1750 N. Bayshore Dr., 305-503-1000  
At NoVe, the restorlounge 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. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

### 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, flocchi 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 iza-kaya (in Japan, a pub with food) than a sakaya (sake shop). But why quibble about words with so many more intriguing things to wrap your mouth around? The concept takes on street-food favorites from all over Asia, housemade daily from quality fresh ingredients. French Culinary Institute-trained Richard Hales does change his menu, so we'd advise immediately grabbing some crispy Korean chicken wings and Chinese-inspired, open-faced roast pork buns with sweet chili sauce and homemade pickles. \$\$

### Sake Room

275 NE 18th St., 305-755-0122  
Sake takes a back seat to sushi – and sophisticated décor – at this small but sleek restorlounge. Among the seafood offerings, you won't find exotic or local catches, but all the usual sushi/sashimi favorites, though in

more interesting form, thanks to sauces that go beyond standard soy – spicy sriracha, garlic/ponzu oil, and many more. Especially recommended: the yuzu hamachi roll, the lobster tempura maki, and panko-coated spicy shrimp with hot-and-sour Mayo and a salad. \$\$-\$\$\$

### Salsa Fiesta

2929 Biscayne Blvd., 305-400-8245  
The first statewide 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-righteous? It is at this casual/chic restorlounge, where dedication to local, sustainable food comes with considerable humor. Fare includes playful items like "wet" fries (with mouthwatering gravy), corn dogs, housemade soft pretzels with mustard and orange blossom honey, and a "50 Mile Salad" that seems almost like a game show in its challenge: All ingredients must come from within a 50-mile radius. At brunch don't miss the glazed "sin-a-buns." \$\$\$-\$\$\$

### 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 oven) that are this popular pizzeria's speciality, along with executive chef Frank Cr upia's famed Philly cheese steak sandwiches. Also available are salads and panini plus reasonably priced wines and beers, including a few unusually sophisticated selections like Belgium's Hoegaarden. \$\$\$

### Anise Taverna

620 NE 78th St., 305-758-2929  
The new owners of this river shack are banking on Greek food and festivity for success – a good bet, judging from their wildly popular previous eatery, Ouzo. The mainly mezze menu ranges from traditional Greek small plates to creative Mediterranean-inspired dishes like anise-scented fish croquettes with spicy aioli. But don't neglect large plates like whole grilled Mediterranean fish (dorade or branzino), filleted tableside. The interior is charming, and the outdoor deck on the Little River is positively romantic. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

### Balans Biscayne

6789 Biscayne Blvd., 305-534-9191  
It took longer than expected, but this Brit import's third Miami venue finally opened, and rather quietly – which has an upside. It's easier to get a table here (and to park, thanks to the free lot on 68th Street) than at Lincoln Road or Brickell. This, along with the venue's relatively



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## Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

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 pot stickers 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. \$

### 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 Technon. Snacks match the casual chicness: sandwiches like the Renato (prosciutto, hot cappicola, pepper jack cheese, red peppers, and

Romano cheese dressing); an elaborate almond-garnished Chinese chicken salad; H&H bagels, the world's best, flown in from NYC. And the car cleaners 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 lunches), 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 1601 Biscayne Blvd., 305-762-7229

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

### Go To Sushi 5140 Biscayne Blvd., 305-759-0914

This friendly, family-run Japanese fast-food eatery offers original surprises like the Caribbean roll (a festively green parsley-coated maki stuffed with crispy fried shrimp, avocado, sweet plantain, and spicy Mayo), or a wonderfully healthful sesame-seasoned chicken soup with spinach, rice noodles, and sizable slices of poultry. Health ensured, you can enjoy a guiltless pig-out on Fireballs: fried dumplings of chicken, cabbage, and egg, crusted with quills – really a delectable crunchy noodle mix. \$

### Jimmy's East Side Diner 7201 Biscayne Blvd., 305-754-3692

Open for more than 30 years, Jimmy's respects the most important American diner tradition: breakfast at any hour. And now that the place is open for dinner, you can indulge your breakfast cravings for several more hours. There are blueberry hot cakes and pecan waffles; eggs any style, including omelets and open-face frittatas; and a full range of sides: biscuits and sausage gravy, grits, hash, hash browns, even hot oatmeal. And don't forget traditional diner entrées like meat loaf, roast turkey, liver and onions, plus burgers, salad platters, and homemade chicken soup. \$\$\$

### La Cigale 7281 Biscayne Blvd., 305-754-0014

"Bistro" can mean almost anything these days, but with owners who are a husband/wife team recently arrived from Marseille, it's not surprising that this neighborhood wine bistro is the classic kind found in France – a home away from home where the contemporary but cozy space is matched by the southern French comfort food coming from the open kitchen. Drop in for drinks and snacks such as artisan cheeses and charcuterie, or enjoy full meals ranging from classic (wine-poached mussels; a boldly sauced steak/frites) to creative (Parma ham-wrapped tuna loin). \$\$\$-\$\$\$

### 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 restolounge, 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 resumé, 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 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. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

### Reva's Italian Ristorante 8601 Biscayne Blvd., 305-758-1010

Owned by two couples (including former Village Café Marlon Reyes), this eclectic eatery occupies the former space of Frankie's Big City Grill, and fulfills much the same purpose in the neighborhood as an all-day, family-friendly place with affordable prices. The menu includes wraps and elaborate salads of all nations. But simple yet sophisticated Italian specialties like spaghetti ai fume (with pancetta, tomato, garlic, basil, and a touch of cream) or yellowtail fraisee (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 bawernwurst, spicy garlicwurst) with homemade mustard and catsup; savory yet near-greaseless potato pancakes; and, naturally, schnitzels, a choice of delicate pounded pork, chicken, or veal patties served with a half-dozen different sauces. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

### Soyka 5556 NE 4th Court, 305-759-3117

Since opening in 1999, Soyka has often been credited with sparking the Upper Eastside's revival. Now the arrival of new executive and pastry chefs plus a wine-wise general manager, all Joe Allen veterans, signals a culinary revival for this neighborhood focal point. The concept is still comfort food, but a revamped menu emphasizes fresh local ingredients and from-scratch preparation. (The meatloaf gravy, for instance, now takes 24 hours to make.) Unique desserts include signature sticky date pudding, a toffee-lover's dream. And the wine list features new boutique bottles at the old affordable prices. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

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

On the menu of sushi-bar specialties plus a small selection of Thai and Japanese cooked dishes, there are a few surprises, such as a unique lobster maki that's admittedly huge in price (\$25.95), but also in size: six ounces of crisp-fried lobster chunks, plus asparagus, avocado, lettuce,

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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 Sinuhe Vega, this casual outdoor/indoor Euro-café and lounge has helped to transform the Boulevard into a hip place to hang out. Lunch includes a variety of salads and elegant sandwiches like La Minuta (beer-battered mahi-mahi with cilantro aioli and caramelized onions on housemade focaccia). Dinner features a range of small plates (poached figs with Gorgonzola cheese and honey balsamic drizzle) and full entrées like sake-marinated salmon with boniato mash and Ponzu butter sauce, and crispy spinach. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

### Yiya's Gourmet Cuban Bakery

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

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

## NORTH BAY VILLAGE

### Bocados Ricos

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

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

### The Crab House

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

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

### Japanese Market and Sushi Deli

1412 79th St. Causeway, 305-861-0143

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

### 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 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 chachapas, somewhat similar to arepas but harder to find in restaurants. These moist pancakes, made from ground corn kernels instead of just corn meal, are folded over salty white cheese for a uniquely bold balance of sweetness and savor. \$\$\$

### Lou's Beer Garden

7337 Harding Ave., 305-704-7879

"Beer garden" conjures up an image of Bavarian bratwurst, lederhosen, and oompah bands - none of which you'll find here. It's actually a hip hideaway in the New Hotel's pool-patio area, a locals' hangout with interesting eclectic fare and a perennial party atmosphere. Especially recommended: delicately pan-fried mini-crab cakes served with several housemade sauces; hefty bleu cheese burgers with Belgian-style double-cooked fries; blackened "angry shrimp" with sweet/sour sauce; fried fresh sardines. And of course much beer, a changing list of craft brews. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

### Tamarind Thai

946 Normandy Dr., 305-861-6222

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

## MIAMI SHORES

### Côte Gourmet

9999 NE 2nd Ave., #112, 305-754-9012

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

### Iron Sushi

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

With three Biscayne Corridor outlets (plus several branches elsewhere in town), this mostly take-out mini chain is fast becoming the Sushi Joint That Ate Miami. And why do Miamians eat here? Not ambiance. There isn't any. But when friends from the Pacific Northwest, where foodies know their fish, tout the seafood's freshness, we listen. There are some surprisingly imaginative makis, like the Maharaja, featuring fried shrimp and drizzles of curry Mayo. And where else will you find a stacked sushi (five assorted makis) birthday cake? \$\$\$

### Miami Shores Country Club

10000 Biscayne Blvd., 305-795-2363

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

### Mooie's

9545 NE 2nd Ave., 305-754-3666

"Kid friendly" generally means restaurants will tolerate youngsters. Mooie's, an ice cream parlor plus, positively pampers them, from the cute play area out back (equipped with old-school toys like giant bean bags) to a children's menu that doesn't condescend. (Who says kids don't appreciate pizzas with fresh mozzarella?) For grown-ups there are sophisticated salads and sandwiches like a turkey, pear, garlic oil, and brie panini on house-baked bread. Just don't neglect Mooie's mainstay: ice cream, dense yet creamy-soft Blue Bell. Pistachio almond is our pick. \$

### Village Café

9540 NE 2nd Ave., 305-759-2211

After closing for several months in early 2009, this café, spruced up to look like a bistro rather than a luncheonette (but with the same bargain prices), has been

## Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

reopened. The kitchen has also been rejuvenated, with head honcho Adam Holm (Whitticar's original sous chef) serving up new, globally influenced dishes like mint/pistachio-crusted lamb or tuna tartare with sriracha aioli, plus reviving old favorites like pork tenderloin with ginger-caramel sauce. \$-\$\$\$\$

### NORTH MIAMI

#### Los Antojos 11099 Biscayne Blvd., 305-892-1411

If it's Sunday, it must be sancocho de gallina, Colombia's national dish. If it's Saturday, it must be ajiaco. 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-fried fries. The cost is comparatively high, but such is the price of fame. \$-\$\$\$\$

#### Bulldog Burger 15400 Biscayne Blvd., 305-940-9655

Despite Miami's burger bar overload, this one from Howie Kleinberg, adjacent to his BBQ joint, stands out thanks to toppings like candied bacon, caramelized banana jam, and mayo that's flavored, like Southern red-eye gravy, with strong coffee. Bravehearts race for the infamous Luther burger's components – cheddar, bacon, fried onion, secret sauce, and a sweet-glazed mock (holeless) Krispy Kreme donut bun; calories are more than double a Big Mac's. And the thin-sliced, thickly crunch-crusted, deep-fried jalapeños will keep you coming back for more, should you live past the first order. \$\$

#### 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. \$-\$

#### Giraffas 1821 NE 123rd St., 786-866-9007

Festooned with eye-poppingly colored panels and giraffes – subtler but everywhere – this first North American branch of a wildly popular, 30-year-old Brazilian fast/casual chain is the flagship of a planned 4000 U.S. Giraffas. Given that the steaks, especially the tender, flavorful picanha, rival those at the most upscale rodizio joints – and beat the sword-wielding grandstanders for custom cooking (because staff asks your preference) – we'd bet on giraffe domination. Overstuffed grilled sandwiches, salads, even tasty veggie options are all here, too. The cheese bread is a must. \$\$

#### 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 week-day lunch specials. But there are also delightful surprises, like grilled kawahagi (triggerfish) with seasoned Japanese mayonnaise. This intensely savory/sweet "Japanese home cooking" treat satisfies the same yen as beef jerky, except without pulling out your teeth. Accompanied by a bowl of rice, it's a superb lunch. For raw-fish fans, spicy, creamy salmon tartare (accompanied by hiyashi wakame seaweed) is a winner. \$-\$\$\$\$

#### Here Comes the Sun 2188 NE 123rd St., 305-893-5711

At this friendly natural foods establishment, one of Miami's first, there's a full stock of vitamins and nutritional supplements. But the place's hearty soups, large variety of entrées (including fresh fish and chicken as well as vegetarian selections), lighter bites like miso burgers with secret "sun sauce" (which would probably make old sneakers taste good), and daily specials are a tastier way to get healthy. An under-ten-buck early-bird dinner is popular with the former long-hair, now blue-hair, crowd. Frozen yogurt, fresh juices, and smoothies complete the menu. \$-\$

#### Le Griot de Madame John 975 NE 125th St., 305-892-9333

When Madame moved her base of operations from her Little Haiti home to a real restaurant (though a very informal one, and still mostly take-out), she began offering numerous traditional Haitian dishes, including jerked beef or goat tassot and an impressive poisson gros sel (a whole fish rubbed with salt before poaching with various veggies and spices). But the dish that still packs the place is the griot: marinated pork chunks simmered and then fried till they're moistly tender inside, crisp and intensely flavored outside. \$

#### Little Havana 12727 Biscayne Blvd. 305-899-9069

In addition to white-tablecloth ambiance, this place features live Latin entertainment and dancing, making it a good choice when diners want a night out, not just a meal. It's also a good choice for diners who don't speak Spanish, but don't worry about authenticity. Classic Cuban home-style dishes like mojo-marinated lechon asado, topped with onions, and juicy ropa vieja are translated on the menu, not the plate, and fancier creations like pork filet in tangy tamarind sauce seem universal crowd-pleasers. \$\$\$

#### Mama Jennie's 11720 NE 2nd Ave. 305-757-3627

For more than 35 years this beloved red-sauce joint has been drawing students and other starvation-budget diners with prodigious portions of lasagna, spaghetti and meatballs (the latter savory yet light-textured), veal marsala topped with a mountain of mushrooms, and other Italian-American belly-busters. All pasta or meat entrées come with oil-drenched garlic rolls and either soup (hearty minestrone) or a salad (mixed greens, tomatoes, cukes, brined olives, and pickled peppers) that's a dinner in itself. Rustic roadhouse ambiance, notably the red leatherette booths, add to Mama's charm. \$-\$

#### Mario the Baker 13695 W. Dixie Highway, 305-891-7641

At this North Miami institution (opened in 1969) food is Italian-American, not Italian-Italian: spaghetti and meatballs, lasagna, eggplant parmigiana, and hot or cold subs. No imported buffalo, arugula, or other chichi stuff on the New York-style medium-thin-crust pizzas; the top topping here is the savory housemade sausage. And no one leaves without garlic rolls, awash in warm parsley oil and smashed garlic. New branches are now open in Miami's Midtown neighborhood and in North Bay Village. \$

#### Pastry Is Art 12591 Biscayne Blvd., 305-640-5045

Given owner Jenny Rissone's background as the Eden Roc's executive pastry chef, it's not surprising that her cakes and other sweet treats (like creamy one-bite truffle "lollipops") look as flawlessly sophisticated as they taste – perfect adult party fare. What the bakery's name doesn't reveal is that it's also a breakfast and lunch café, with unusual baking-oriented fare: a signature sandwich of chicken, brie, and caramelized peaches and pecans on housemade bread; quiches; pot pies; even a baked-to-order Grand Marnier soufflé. The pecan sticky buns are irresistible. \$\$

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## Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

### 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, hot, 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. \$

### Tokyo Bowl

**12295 Biscayne Blvd., 305-892-9400**  
This fast-food drive-thru (unexpectedly serene inside) is named for its feature item, big budget-priced bowls of rice or noodles topped with cooked Japanese-style items like teriyaki fish (fresh fish sautéed with vegetables), curried chicken and veggies, spicy shrimp, or gyoza dumplings in tangy sauce. There's also an all-you-can-eat deal – sushi (individual nigiri or maki rolls) plus tempura, teriyaki, and other cooked items for \$14; three bucks more for sashimi instead of sushi. \$\$\$

### Venezia Pizza and Café

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

### Wong's Chinese Restaurant

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

### Woody's Famous Steak Sandwich

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

### Yes Pasta!

**14871 Biscayne Blvd., 305-944-1006**  
At this fast/casual Italian eatery, the specialty is mix-and-match. Choose one of seven fresh or dried pastas (whole wheat and gluten-free options available), then one of 15 sauces. Our personal pick is carbonara, correctly creamy-coated (via egg thickening, not cream overload); Bolognese is a wise choice for those who like sauces rich and red. Many options exist for vegetarians and pescatarians as well as carnivores, all clearly coded on the menu. \$\$

## NORTH MIAMI BEACH

### Bamboo Garden

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

### Blue Marlin Fish House

**2500 NE 163rd St., 305-957-8822**  
Located inside Oleta River State Park, this casual outdoor eatery is a rare surprise for nature lovers. The featured item is still the house-smoked fish this historic venue

began producing in 1938, available in three varieties: salmon, mahi mahi, and the signature blue marlin. But the smokehouse now also turns out ribs and delectable brisket. Other new additions include weekend fish fries. Entry is directly from 163rd Street, not through the main park entrance. No admission fee. \$

### China Restaurant

**178 NE 167th St., 305-947-6549**  
When you have a yen for the Americanized Chinese fusion dishes you grew up with, all the purist regional Chinese cuisine in the world won't scratch the itch. So the menu here, containing every authentically inauthentic Chinese-American classic you could name, is just the ticket when nostalgia strikes – from simple egg rolls to pressed almond duck (majorly breaded boneless chunks, with comfortingly thick gravy). \$\$\$

### Chipotle Mexican Grill

**14776 Biscayne Blvd., 305-947-2779**  
Proving that national fast-food chains don't have to be bad for either diners or the environment, Chipotle serves what the company calls "food with integrity." The fare is simple, basically tacos and big burritos: soft flour or crisp corn tortillas stuffed with chipotle-marinated steak or chicken chunks, bolder shredded beef barbacoa, or herb-scented pork carnitas. But these bites contain no evil ingredients (transfats, artificial color/flavor, antibiotics, growth hormones). And the food, while not the authentic Mex street stuff dreams are made of, is darned tasty, too. \$

### Cholo's Ceviche & Grill

**1127 NE 163rd St., 305-947-3338**  
Don't be misled by the mini-mall location, or the relatively minimal prices (especially during lunch, when specials are under \$6). Inside, the décor is charming, and the Peruvian plates elegant in both preparation and presentation. Tops among ceviches/tiraditos is the signature Cholo's, marinated octopus and fish in a refined rocoto chili sauce with overtones both fiery and fruity. And don't miss the molded causas, whipped potato rings stuffed with avocado-garnished crab salad – altogether lighter and lovelier than the tasty but oily mashed spud constructions more oft encountered in town. \$\$\$

### Christine's Roti Shop

**16271 NE 6th Ave., 305-770-0434**  
Wraps are for wimps. At this small shop run by Christine Gouvela, originally from British Guyana, the wrapper is a far more substantial and tasty roti, a Caribbean mega-crepe made from chickpea flour. Most popular filling for the flatbread is probably jerk chicken, bone-in pieces in a spiced stew of potatoes, cabbage, carrots, onions, and more chickpeas. But there are about a dozen other curries from which to choose. Take-out packages of plain roti are also available; they transform myriad leftovers into tasty, portable lunches. \$

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

### 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-garished wrap of thin-sliced marinated beef schwarma. They also do a beautifully spiced, and reassuringly fresh-tasting, raw kibbi naye (Middle Eastern steak tartare). It's hard to resist putting together a grazing meal of starters and wraps, but there's also a roster of full entrées (with soup or salad plus starch), including tempting vegetarian and seafood meals for noncarnivores. \$\$

### Kebab Indian Restaurant

**514 NE 167th St., 305-940-6309**  
Since the 1980s this restaurant, located in an atmospheric mini strip mall but surprisingly romantic inside (especially if you grab one of the exotically draped booths) has been a popular destination for reasonably priced north Indian fare. Kormas are properly soothing and vindaloos are satisfactorily searing, but the kitchen will adjust seasonings upon request. They aim to please. Food arrives unusually fast for an Indian eatery, too. \$\$

### King Palace

**330 NE 167th St. 305-949-2339**  
The specialties here are authentic Chinatown-style barbecue (whole ducks, roast pork strips, and more, displayed in a glass case by the door), and fresh seafood dishes, the best made with the live fish swimming in two tanks by the dining room entrance. There's also a better-than-average selection of seasonal Chinese veggies. The menu is extensive, but the best ordering strategy, since the place is usually packed with Asians, is to see what looks good on nearby tables, and point. \$\$

### Lime Fresh Mexican Grill

**14831 Biscayne Blvd., 305-949-8800**  
(See Midtown / Wynwood / Design District listing)

### Laurenzo's Market Café

**16385 W. Dixie Hwy., 305-945-6381**  
It's just a small area between the wines and the fridge counters - no potted palms, and next-to-no service in this cafeteria-style space. But when negotiating this international gourmet market's packed shelves and crowds has depleted your energies, it's a handy place to refuel with eggplant parmesan and similar Italian-American classics, housemade from old family recipes. Just a few spoonfuls of Wednesday's hearty pasta fagirole, 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. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

### Paguito's

**16265 Biscayne Blvd., 305-947-5027**  
From the outside, this strip-mall Mexican eatery couldn't be easier to overlook. Inside, however, its festivity is impossible to resist. Every inch of wall space seems to be covered with South of the Border knickknacks. And if the kitschy décor alone doesn't cheer you, the quickly arriving basket of fresh (not packaged) taco chips, or the mariachi band, or the knockout margaritas will. Food ranges from Tex-Mex burritos and a party-size fajita platter to authentic Mexican moles and harder-to-find traditional preparations like albóndigas - spicy, ultra-savory meatballs. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

### PK Oriental Mart

**255 NE 167th St., 305-654-9646**  
Unlike other Asian markets on this strip between I-95 and Biscayne Boulevard, PK has a prepared-food counter, serving authentic Chinatown barbecue, with appropriate dipping sauces included. Weekends bring the biggest selection, including barbecued ribs and pa pei duck (roasted, then deep-fried till extra crisp and nearly free of subcutaneous fat). Available every day are juicy, soy-marinated roast chickens, roast pork strips, crispy pork, and whole roast ducks - hanging, beaks and all. But no worries; a counterperson will chop your purchase into bite-size, beakless pieces. \$

### Racks Italian Kitchen

**3933 NE 163rd St. (Intracoastal Mall) 305-917-7225**  
The complexity of the Racks concept makes a sound-bite description impossible. It's part Italian market, with salumi, cheeses, and other artisan products plus take-out prepared foods; part enoteca (wine bar, featuring snacks like addictive Portobello fritti with truffle aioli, especially enjoyable on the waterfront deck); part ristorante (pastas and other Big Food); part pizzeria. What's important: All

components feel and taste authentically Italian. Just don't miss the coal-oven pizza. Superior toppings (including unusually zesty tomato sauce) plus an astonishingly light yet chewy crust make Racks' pies a revelation. \$\$

### Roasters & Toasters

**18515 NE 18th Ave., 305-830-3354**  
Attention ex-New Yorkers: Is your idea of food porn one of the Carnegie Deli's mile-high pastrami sandwiches? Well, Roasters will dwarf them. Consider the "Carnegie-style" monster containing, according to the menu, a full pound of succulent meat (really 1.4 pounds; we weighed it), for a mere 15 bucks. All the other Jewish deli classics are here too, including perfectly sour pickles, silky hand-sliced nova or lox, truly red-rare roast beef, and the cutest two-bite mini-potato pancakes ever - eight per order, served with sour cream and applesauce. \$\$

### The Rumcake Factory

**2075 NE 163rd St., 786-525-7071**  
When ex-Louisianan (and ex-Dolphins player) Larry Robinson and his Cuban-American wife Elena started a catering company in Miami Lakes, their mouthwateringly moist Caribbean-style buttered rum/walnut-glazed rum cake instantly became the star attraction. But after relocating to a real (if tiny) restaurant space in BT territory, the Factory now features a small supporting cast of Cajun fare scrumptious enough to upstage the star. Always available: authentic remoulade-dressed New Orleans po-boy sandwiches (shrimp, catfish, fried turkey), and humongous house-smoked chicken wings. Rotating specials include hearty gumbo, jambalaya, and BBQ ribs. \$\$

### Sang's Chinese Restaurant

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

### Shing Wang Vegetarian, Isee & Tea House

**237 NE 167th St., 305-654-4008**  
At this unique, mostly Taiwanese eatery, all seafood, poultry, and meats used to be skillfully crafted and delicious vegetarian imitations. These are still here, plus there's now a wider choice of dishes, some featuring real meat. Try the authentic-tasting Vietnamese banh mi sandwiches (available with a variety of meat and mock-meat fillings). Bubble tea is the must-not-miss drink. The cold, refreshing boba comes in numerous flavors, all supplemented with signature black tapioca balls that, sipped through straws, are a guaranteed giggle. \$

### Siam Square

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

### Scorch Grillhouse and Wine Bar

**13750 Biscayne Blvd., 305-949-5588**  
Though some food folks were initially exasperated when yet another Latin-influenced grill replaced one of our area's few Vietnamese restaurants, it's hard to bear a grudge at a friendly, casual neighborhood place that offers monster ten-ounce char-grilled burgers, with potatoes or salad, for \$8.50; steaks, plus a side and a sauce or veg topper, for nine bucks at lunch, \$15 to \$18.75 (the menu's top price) at night; and three-dollar glasses of decent house wine. \$\$\$

### Sushi House

**15911 Biscayne Blvd., 305-947-6002**  
In terms of décor drama, this sushi spot seems to have taken its cue from Philippe Starck: sheer floor-to-ceiling drapes, for starters. The sushi list, too, is over the top, featuring monster makis like the Cubbie Comfort: spicy tuna, soft-shell crab, shrimp and eel tempura, plus avocado, jalapeños, and cilantro, topped with not one but three sauces: wasabi, teriyaki, and spicy Mayo. Hawaiian King Crab contains unprecedented ingredients like tomatoes, green peppers, and pineapple. Boutique wines, artisan sakes, and cocktails are as exotic as the cuisine. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

### Sushi Sake

**13551 Biscayne Blvd., 305-947-4242**  
Chic Asian-accented décor, video screens, 99-cent drink deals, and late-night hours make this hip hangout not just a sushi bar but sort of a neighborhood bar, too. That said, the sushi is impressive, mainly because seafood is delivered daily and all except the shrimp is fresh, not frozen (as is customary at most Miami sushi places). Also notable: All sauces are housemade. Cooked makis like a crunch-topped Miami Heat are most popular, but it's as sashimi that the fish's freshness truly shines. \$\$\$

### Tuna's Raw Bar and Grille

**17850 W. Dixie Hwy., 305-932-0630**  
The reincarnated Tuna's has gained new owners, a new name, a dazzling outdoor bar and dining area, and a new 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

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## Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

midnight, but since the kitchen is open till closing, Tuna's draws a serious late-night dining crowd, too. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

### Vegetarian Restaurant by Hakin

**73 NE 167th St. 305-405-6346**  
Too often purist vegetarian food is unskillfully crafted bland stuff, spiced with little but sanctimonious intent. Not at this modest-looking vegan (dairy-free vegetarian) restaurant and smoothie bar. Dishes from breakfast's blueberry-packed pancakes to Caribbean vegetable stews sparkle with vivid flavors. Especially impressive: mock meat (and fake fish) wheat-gluten items that beat many carnivorous competitors. Skeptical? Rightly. But we taste-tested a "Philly cheese steak" sandwich on the toughest of critics – an inflexibly burger-crazy six year-old. She cleaned her plate. \$\$

### Yakko-San

**3881 NE 163rd. St. (Intracoastal Mall), 305-947-0064**  
After sushi chefs close up their own restaurants for the night, many come here for a rare taste of Japanese home cooking, served in grazing portions. Try glistening-fresh strips of raw tuna can be had in maguro neta – mixed with scallions and dressed with habi-forming honey-miso mustard sauce. Other favorites include goma ae (wilted spinach, chilled and dressed in sesame sauce), garlic steamed 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. \$\$

### Yes, Pasta! Trattoria Italiana

**14872 Biscayne Blvd., 305-944-1006**  
At Roman-native Flaminia Morin's casual, family-friendly eatery, the specialty is pasta your way. Choose one of seven fresh or dried pastas (including gluten-free options), then one of 15 sauces ranging from traditional carbonara to inventions like Mozzarella Filante (creamy tomato sauce with melted cheese); à la carte meat, seafood, or veg add-ons are also available. Build a full Italian feast with antipasti, salads, six secondi (entrées), and desserts. Budget diner alert: Check out Monday-Friday lunch specials, two courses plus drink for \$8.

## 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. \$\$\$

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### Caffe Da Vinci

**1009 Kane Concourse; 305-861-8166**  
After renovations in 2010, this old favorite (since 1989) reopened with a hip new lounge – but no fixes to what ain't broke, notably handmade artisanal pastas sauced with high quality ingredients. Choose luxe stuffed models (like crab-filled ravioli with rich lobster sauce) or relatively pristine preparations like linguini with garlic, wine, and fresh littlenecks. Eating light? Make a meal of lavish salads or starters like true beef carpaccio – dressed, like the original from Venice's Harry's Bar, with creamy mustard sauce rather than mere olive oil. \$\$\$

### The Palm

**9650 E. Bay Harbor Dr., 305-868-7256**  
It was 1930s journalists, legend has it, who transformed NYC's original Palm from Italian restaurant to bastion of beef. Owners would run out to the butcher for huge steaks to satisfy the hardboiled scribes. So our perennial pick here is nostalgic: steak à la stone – juicy, butter-doused slices on toast, topped with sautéed onions and pimientos. This classic (whose carb components make it satisfying without à la carte sides, and hence a relative bargain) isn't on the menu anymore, but cooks will prepare it on request. \$\$\$

## AVENTURA / 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 pricey 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**  
Ensclosed in a leather booth, with dark hardwood everywhere and a massive bar dispensing two-fisted drinks, you'd never know you were dining in a shopping mall – or in the new millennium. This upscale mini chain salutes America's great grill restaurants of yesteryear, with prodigious portions of charbroiled meats and seafood, plus classics like creamy chicken pot pie. New retro dishes are added quarterly, but our favorite remains Sunday night's prime rib special: a \$32 hunk of juicy beef that'll take care of Monday's meals too. \$\$\$

### Mahogany Grille

**2190 NW 183rd St., 305-626-8100**  
Mahogany Grille has drawn critical raves and an international clientele since retired major league outfielder Andre Dawson and his brother transformed this place in 2007. Today it's white tablecloths and, naturally, mahogany. The menu is a sort of trendy yet traditional soul fusion of

food from several African diaspora regions: Carolina Low Country (buttery cheese grits with shrimp, sausage, and cream gravy), the Caribbean (conch-packed fritters or salad), and the Old South (lightly buttered-frittered fried chicken). The chicken is perhaps Miami's best. \$\$\$

### Mo's Bagels & Deli

**2780 NE 187th St., 305-936-8555**  
While the term "old school" is used a lot to describe this spacious (160-seat) establishment, it actually opened in 1995. It just so evokes the classic NY delis we left behind that it seems to have been here forever. Example: Lox and nova aren't pallid, prepackaged fish, but custom-sliced from whole slabs. And bagels are hand-rolled, chewy champions, not those machine-made puffy poseurs. As complimentary pastry bites suggest, and the massive size of the succulent, sufficiently fatty pastrami sandwiches confirm, generous Jewish Mo(m) spirit shines here. \$\$

### Mr. Chef's Fine Chinese Cuisine & Bar

**18800 NE 29th Ave. #10, 786-787-9030**  
Considering our county's dearth of authentic Chinese food, this stylish eatery is heaven-sent for Aventura residents. Owners Jin Xiang Chen and Shu Ming (a.k.a. Mr. Chef) come from China's southern seacoast province of Guangdong (Canton). But you'll find no gloppily sauced, Americanized-Cantonese chop sueys here. Cooking is properly light-handed, and seafood specialties shine (try the spicy/crispy salt and pepper shrimp). For adventurers, there's a cold jellyfish starter. Even timid taste buds can't resist tender fried shrimp balls described this way: "With crispy adorable fringy outfit." \$\$\$

### Ocean Prime

**19051 Biscayne Blvd. (Aventura Mall) 305-931-5400**  
Most mall dining experiences are akin to NASCAR pit stops: quick pauses to refuel. Ocean Prime, as its super-sleek, circa 1930s cruise ship ambiance would suggest, is more like the tranquil trans-Atlantic crossings of slower-paced times – which makes the steak and seafood eatery's mall location perfect. After a frenetic shopping day, there's no better way to decompress than a couple of hours in a time warp, savoring retro supper-club specialties: pecan-crusted mountain trout with brown butter, an oversize cocktail, and a live lounge pianist. \$\$\$

### Pilar

**20475 Biscayne Blvd. 305-937-2777**  
Chef/owner Scott Fredel previously worked for Norman Van Aken and Mark Millettello. 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 Sikkis Run Rd. #2597, 954-457-7563**  
The vintage Old World look and convivial atmosphere of this new pub, located in the Village at Gulfstream Park, are more traditionally Irish than most of the menu, which ranges from penne with marinara sauce to Thai-inspired spring rolls. But fish and chips are always crisp-coated and satisfying; potato leek soup is the real thing; and the crab cakes (crab meat mixed with just enough celery, onions, and peppers for interesting texture) are so good you'll be thinking Maryland, not Dublin. \$\$

### Sushi Siam

**19575 Biscayne Blvd. 305-932-8955**  
(See Miami / Upper Eastside listing)

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**Marcy Kaplan & Lori Brandt | 786.543.5755**  
**[gimmeshelter@metro1properties.com](mailto:gimmeshelter@metro1properties.com)**



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**[jrussell@metro1properties.com](mailto:jrussell@metro1properties.com)**



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62,500 SF of development site, +/- 400,000 SF of gross development. Zoned D-1. Commercial/industrial/residential uses.

**Tony Cho | 305.571.9991**  
**[info@metro1properties.com](mailto:info@metro1properties.com)**



**PARK WEST: 697 N MIAMI AVENUE**  
**Asking Price: \$4,150,000**

19,020 SF building on a 12,000 SF lot. Grand Central night club is the anchor tenant. 4 nicely appointed office lofts on the second floor. 7% cap rate.

**Tony Arellano | 305.571.9991**  
**[tarellano@metro1properties.com](mailto:tarellano@metro1properties.com)**



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**MIDTOWN: 3500 NW 3RD AVENUE**  
**Drastically Reduced Price: \$399,000**

Fully leased 4,031 SF well maintained building with 6,950 SF lot. This property consists of 8 units each 1 bd / 1 ba with new roof and windows.

**Tony Cho | 305.571.9991**  
**[info@metro1properties.com](mailto:info@metro1properties.com)**



**WYNWOOD: 85 NE 27TH STREET**  
**For Sale: \$3,750,000 | For Lease: \$13.50 PSF**

23,500 SF building in a 26,320 SF lot. 115 parking spaces. Best value PSF in the area, 2 blocks from Midtown. Flexibility to subdivide building.

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**[tarellano@metro1properties.com](mailto:tarellano@metro1properties.com)**



**BISCAYNE CORRIDOR: 8101 BISCAYNE BLVD**  
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**ART DISTRICT: 1729 NORTH MIAMI AVE**  
**Lease Price: \$13.50 mod gross**

Unique urban space close to Wynwood. Features 260' of frontage on N Miami Ave, a fenced private lot and multiple bay doors. Wide range of uses.

**Tony Arellano | 305.571.9991**  
**[tarellano@metro1properties.com](mailto:tarellano@metro1properties.com)**



**BISCAYNE CORRIDOR: 2700 BISCAYNE BLVD**  
**Asking Price: \$20 PSF NNN**

High visibility corner building located in Biscayne Blvd. 11,300 SF perfect for a showroom, spa, daycare, market, and professional offices.

**Ruben Matz | 786.290.8815**  
**[rmatz@metro1properties.com](mailto:rmatz@metro1properties.com)**



**WYNWOOD: 2921 NW 6TH AVENUE**  
**Asking Price: \$3,100 per month**

3,500 SF warehouse with new A/C impact windows, new roof, electric & plumbing. Signage looking I-95. 15' ceiling throughout, large overhead & loading zone.

**Jane Russell | 305.799.7436**  
**[jrussell@metro1properties.com](mailto:jrussell@metro1properties.com)**



**BISCAYNE CORRIDOR: 5974 NE 4TH AVE**  
**Asking Price: \$5,200/month per bay**

8,000 SF 2 bay warehouse, impact proof with 2 offices & 2 BA. Gated Parking. Also for sale at \$1.2M. Units can be purchased separately. 1 space left for lease.

**Irene Dakota | 305.972.8860**  
**[idakota@metro1properties.com](mailto:idakota@metro1properties.com)**



**NORTH MIAMI: 12345 W. DIXIE HWY.**  
**Reduced Price: \$849,000**

5,600 SF gallery or showroom space with parking. Currently used as a photo studio & gallery. Space is air conditioned, has security and a 4,000 SF parking lot.

**Irene Dakota | 305.972.8860**  
**[idakota@metro1properties.com](mailto:idakota@metro1properties.com)**

South Florida **BUSINESS JOURNAL** ranks **metro 1** top 25 commercial real estate brokerages of 2011

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