

BISCAYNE

December 2011

www.BiscayneTimes.com

Volume 9 Issue 10

Times

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Going Public

Rosa and Carlos de la Cruz have rewritten the rules for big-time art collectors

P. 32


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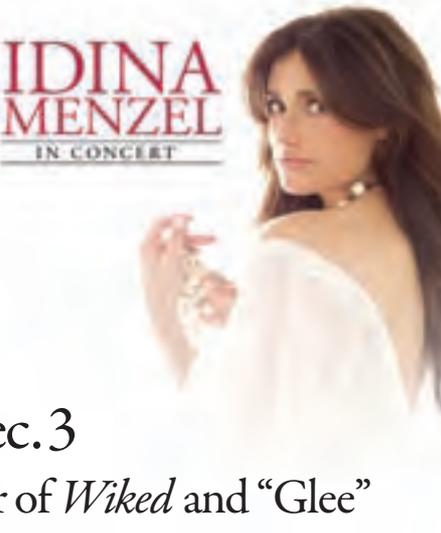
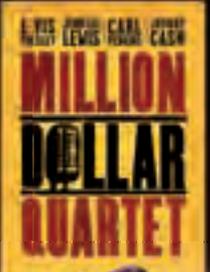
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SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY		
 <p>IDINA MENZEL IN CONCERT</p> <p>Dec. 3 Star of <i>Wicked</i> and "Glee"</p>	 <p>SHREK THE MUSICAL DEC. 6-11</p>	<p>2 Food Truck Fridays 11:30 AM</p> 	<p>3 Free Adrienne Arsht Center Tour 12 PM </p> <p>Idina Menzel in Concert 8 PM </p> <p>Stress Relief Comedy Jam 8 PM </p>	<p>6 Shrek The Musical 8:00 PM  "I'm still smiling, and I'm not the only!" <i>CityBeat</i></p>	<p>7 Shrek The Musical 8:00 PM  "Shrek brings fairytales to the stage." <i>The State Hornet</i></p>	<p>8 The Santaland Diaries 7:30 PM  A blisteringly funny evocation of Christmas hell! Shrek The Musical 8:00 PM </p>	<p>9 The Santaland Diaries 7:30 PM  Jazz Roots Down in New Orleans 8 PM  The Big Easy's biggest music stars! Shrek The Musical 8 PM </p>	<p>10 Free Adrienne Arsht Center Tour 12 PM  Shrek The Musical 2 & 8 PM  The Santaland Diaries 2 & 7:30 PM  Brasil Classical Series 8 PM </p>
<p>18 M.C.B. presents George Balanchine's The Nutcracker™ 1 & 6:30 PM  The Santaland Diaries 4 PM  Free Gospel Sundays 4 PM </p>	 <p>MILLION DOLLAR QUARTET</p>	<p>20 The Santaland Diaries 7:30 PM  Starring Carbonell Award winner Michael McKeever.</p>	<p>21 The Santaland Diaries 2 & 7:30 PM  "Hilarious! A wonderful show!" <i>Talk Theater Chicago</i></p>	<p>22 The Santaland Diaries 7:30 PM  </p>	<p>23 The Santaland Diaries 7:30 PM   Watch behind the scenes video of the creators of this production of Santaland!</p>	<p>25 Free Adrienne Arsht Center Tour 12 PM  Enjoy a free tour of the fantastic Adrienne Arsht Center!</p>		
<p>DEC. 27- JAN. 1</p> 		<p>27 Million Dollar Quartet 8 PM  "Whips the crowd into a frenzy with blast after blast of explosive vitality!" <i>The New York Times</i></p>	<p>28 Million Dollar Quartet 8 PM  "Wildly entertaining!" <i>Hollywood Reporter</i></p>	<p>29 Million Dollar Quartet 8 PM  Inspired by the true story of the famed recording session that brought together four rock 'n' roll icons.</p>	<p>30 Million Dollar Quartet 8 PM  Salute to Vienna 8 PM  Sold out in New York, Chicago and Toronto!</p>	<p>31 Free Adrienne Arsht Center Tour 12 PM  Million Dollar Quartet 2 & 7 PM </p>		

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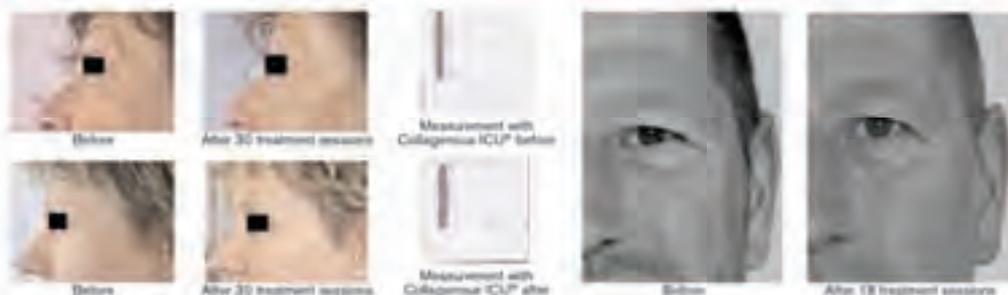
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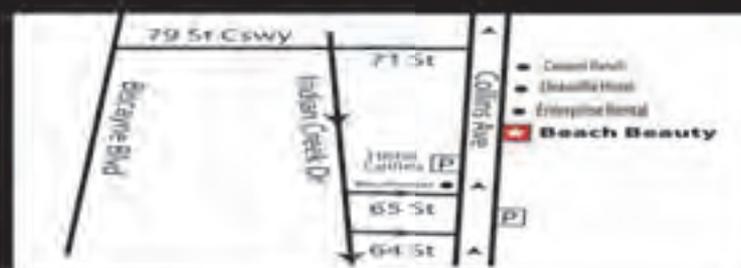
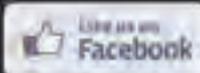
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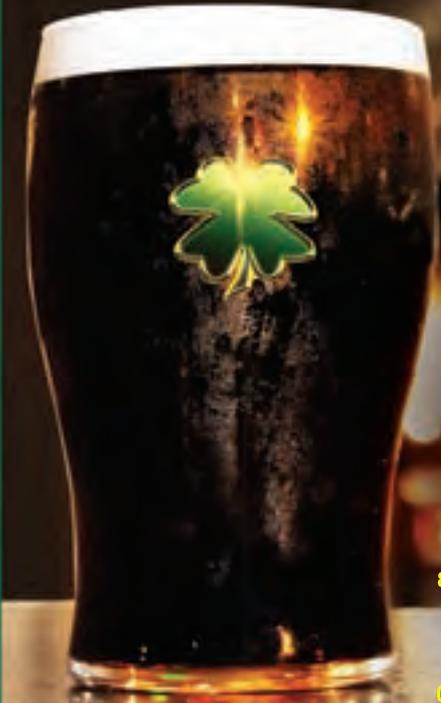
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Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

Eastern steak tartare). It's hard to resist putting together a grazing meal of starters and wraps, but there's also a roster of full entrées (with soup or salad plus starch), including tempting vegetarian and seafood meals for noncarnivores. \$\$

Kebab Indian Restaurant

514 NE 167th St., 305-940-6309
Since the 1980s this restaurant, located in an unatmospheric mini strip mall but surprisingly romantic inside (especially if you grab one of the exotically draped booths) has been a popular destination for reasonably priced north Indian fare. Kormas are properly soothing and vindaloes are satisfactorily searing, but the kitchen will adjust seasonings upon request. They aim to please. Food arrives unusually fast for an Indian eatery, too. \$\$

King Palace

330 NE 167th St. 305-949-2339
The specialties here are authentic Chinatown-style barbecue (whole ducks, roast pork strips, and more, displayed in a glass case by the door), and fresh seafood dishes, the best made with the live fish swimming in two tanks by the dining room entrance. There's also a better-than-average selection of seasonal Chinese veggies. The menu is extensive, but the best ordering strategy, since the place is usually packed with Asians, is to see what looks good on nearby tables, and point. \$\$

Lime Fresh Mexican Grill

14831 Biscayne Blvd., 305-949-8800
(See Midtown / Wynwood / Design District listing)

Laurenzo's Market Café

16385 W. Dixie Hwy., 305-945-6381
It's just a small area between the wines and the fridge counters - no potted palms, and next-to-no service in this cafeteria-style space. But when negotiating this international gourmet market's packed shelves and crowds has depleted your energies, it's a handy place to refuel with eggplant parmesan and similar Italian-American classics, housemade from old family recipes. Just a few spoonfuls of Wednesday's hearty pasta fagioli, 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. \$\$\$

New China Buffet

940 North Miami Beach Blvd., 305-957-7266
The venue (a former Bennigan's) is clean, casual, and not kitschy. The all-you-can-eat fare is voluminous - scores of Chinese dishes (recommended: Mongolian pork, spicy garlic shrimp, and surprisingly authentic steamed fish with ginger and scallion); international oddities (pizza, plantains, pigs-in-blankets); plus sushi, salad, and pastry/ice cream bars. And the price is sure right. Lunch is \$6.75 (\$7.75 Saturday and Sunday). Dinner features more seafood, \$9.55. There's an inexpensive take-out option, too, and reduced kids' prices. \$

Oishi Thai

14841 Biscayne Blvd., 305-947-4338
At this stylish Thai/sushi spot, try the menu of specials, many of which clearly reflect the young chef's fanatical devotion to fresh fish, as well as the time he spent in the kitchen of Knob: broiled miso-marinated black cod; rock shrimp tempura with creamy sauce; even Nobu

Matsuhisa's "new style sashimi" (slightly surface-seared by drizzles of hot olive and sesame oil). The specials menu includes some Thai-inspired creations, too, such as veal massaman curry, Chilean sea bass curry, and sizzling filet mignon with basil sauce. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Panya Thai

520 NE 167th St., 305-945-8566
Unlike authentic Chinese cuisine, there's no shortage of genuine Thai food in and around Miami. But Panya's chef/owner, a Bangkok native, offers numerous regional and/or rare dishes not found elsewhere. Plus he doesn't automatically curtail the heat or sweetness levels to please Americans. Among the most intriguing: moo khem phad wan (chewy deep-fried seasoned pork strips with fiery tamarind dip, accompanied by crisp green papaya salad); broad rice noodles stir-fried with eye-opening chili/garlic sauce and fresh Thai basil; and chili-topped Diamond Duck in tangy tamarind sauce. \$\$-\$\$\$

Paquito's

16265 Biscayne Blvd., 305-947-5027
From the outside, this strip-mall Mexican eatery couldn't be easier to overlook. Inside, however, its festivity is impossible to resist. Every inch of wall space seems to be covered with South of the Border knickknacks. And if the kitschy décor alone doesn't cheer you, the quickly arriving basket of fresh (not packaged) taco chips, or the mariachi band, or the knockout margaritas will. Food ranges from Tex-Mex burritos and a party-size fajita platter to authentic Mexican moles and harder-to-find traditional preparations like 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-Louisianian (and ex-Dolphins player) Larry Robinson and his Cuban-American wife Elena started a catering company in Miami Lakes, their mouthwateringly moist Caribbean-style buttered rum/walnut-glazed rum cake instantly became the star attraction. But after relocating to a real (if tiny) restaurant space in BT territory, the Factory now features a small supporting cast of Cajun fare scrumptious enough to upstage the star. Always available: authentic remoulade-dressed New Orleans po-boy sandwiches (shrimp, catfish, fried turkey), and humongous house-smoked chicken wings. Rotating specials include hearty gumbo, jambalaya, and BBQ. \$\$

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. \$\$\$



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Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

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. \$-\$\$

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 www.tunasrawbarandgrille.com

The reincarnated Tuna's has gained new owners, a new name, a dazzling outdoor bar and dining area, and a new chef, Rolf Fellhauer, who spent 28 years at the famed La Paloma. He has added his touch to the menu, with delicacies such as Oysters Moscow, mussels Chardonnay, and Grouper Brittany. Traditional house favorites remain, and the emphasis is still on fresh fish from local waters. Open daily till 2:00 a.m., the place can get rather festive after midnight, but since the kitchen is open till closing, Tuna's draws a serious late-night dining crowd, too. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Vegetarian Restaurant by Hakin 73 NE 167th St. 305-405-6346

Too often purist vegetarian food is unskillfully crafted bland stuff, spiced with little but sanctimonious intent. Not at this modest-looking vegan (dairy-free vegetarian) restaurant and smoothie bar. Dishes from breakfast's blueberry-packed pancakes to Caribbean vegetable stews sparkle with vivid flavors. Especially impressive: mock meat (and fake fish) wheat-gluten items that beat many carnivorous competitors. Skeptical? Rightly. But we taste-tested a "Philly cheese steak" sandwich on the toughest of critics – an inflexibly burger-crazy six-year-old. She cleaned her plate. \$\$

Yakko-San 3881 NE 163rd St. (Intracoastal Mall), 305-947-0064

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

Yes, Pasta! Trattoria Italiana 14872 Biscayne Blvd., 305-944-1006

At Roman-native Flaminia Morin's casual, family-friendly eatery, the specialty is pasta yo ur 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. \$\$\$

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 hand-made 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. \$\$\$

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

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 portobellos, capers, parmesan slices, and lemon/tomato dressing) and linguine carbonara (in creamy sauce with pancetta and shallots) are a breath of fresh, albeit familiar, air. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

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Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

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. \$\$\$\$

Fresko

19048 NE 29th Ave., 786-272-3737
Forget thick, dough-wrapped potato knishes and blintzes slathered with sour cream. As its name suggests, this kosher dairy eatery eschews the starch/sugar-laden traditional favorites for salads, smoothies, and similar healthy fare as casual, clean, and contemporary as the restaurant's décor. Asian-influenced items, like wakame-topped tuna tartare with pineapple chutney, are particularly appealing, while those craving classic combinations like smoked salmon and cream cheese can enjoy them on a light-crust designer pizza. To drink, smoothies are supplemented by refreshing herbal infusions like green lemonade (with mint and basil). \$\$

Fuji Hana

2775 NE 187th St., Suite #1, 305-932-8080
A people-pleasing menu of typical Thai and Japanese dishes, plus some appealing contemporary creations (like the Spicy Crunchy Tuna Roll, an inside-out tuna/avocado/tempura maki, topped with more tuna and served with a luscious creamy cilantro sauce) has made this eatery a longtime favorite. But vegetarians — for whom seafood-based condiments can make Asian foods a minefield — might want to add the place to their "worth a special drive" list, thanks to chefs' winning ways with tofu and all-around accommodation to veg-only diets. \$\$\$

Gourmet Carrot

3599 NE 207th St., 305-749-6393
Since the first Gourmet Carrot — a healthy and kosher but not at all preachy eatery — opened in South Beach, its menu expanded to include many red-meat items. The same is true of this new Waterways mall branch. When confirmed cholesterol-careless carnivores like ourselves opt voluntarily for an eatery's veggie burgers (a brown rice/lentil/veggie blend more satisfying than beef), or remarkably juicy ginger-mayo-dressed chicken burgers, over normal hamburgers, based solely on flavor — well, religion aside, that's a major miracle. \$\$\$

Heavy Burger

19004 NE 29th Ave., 305-932-7555
Sure, South Beach is our town's burger capital, if you're judging by high profile. But if creativity is what counts, no joint bangs a gong like homeboy Mark Panunzio's place, where the concept is: Nothing goes together better than heavyweight burgers and heavy-metal music. What rocks us: a fire-grilled, 10 oz. Motley Burger (with cheddar, applewood bacon, tomato, Bibb lettuce, and frizzled plus raw onions on a challah roll; upon request, chipotle aioli was cheerfully substituted for BBQ sauce). Get hand-cut cheese fries, too, and get wasted on craft beer. \$\$

Kampai

3575 NE 207th St., 305-931-6410
At this longtime neighborhood favorite Japanese/Thai restaurant, many come just for the slightly pricy but very generous sushi specialties. Most makis are cooked, but for raw-fish

fans the tempura-flake-topped crunchy tuna/avocado roll with spicy mayo, and tuna both inside and out, is a people-pleaser. Don't neglect Thai specialties, though, especially red and green curries customizable as to heat (mild, medium, hot, and authentic "Thai hot"). And for a bargain light lunch, try tonjiru, miso soup jazzed up with veggies and pork. \$\$\$

The Grill on the Alley

19501 Biscayne Blvd. (Aventura Mall), 305-466-7195
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 char-broiled meats and seafood, plus classics like creamy chicken pot pie. New retro dishes are added quarterly, but our favorite remains Sunday night's prime rib special: a \$32 hunk of juicy beef that'll take care of Monday's meals too. \$\$\$\$

Mahogany Grille

2190 NW 183rd St., 305-626-8100
Mahogany Grille has drawn critical raves and an international clientele since retired major league outfielder Andre Dawson and his brother transformed this place in 2007. Today it's white tablecloths and, naturally, mahogany. The menu is a sort of trendy yet traditional soul fusion of food from several African diaspora regions: Carolina Low Country (buttery cheese grits with shrimp, sausage, and cream gravy), the Caribbean (conch-packed fritters or salad), and the Old South (lightly buttermilk-battered fried chicken). The chicken is perhaps Miami's best. \$\$\$\$

Mo's Bagels & Deli

2780 NE 187th St., 305-936-8555
While the term "old school" is used a lot to describe this spacious (160-seat) establishment, it actually opened in 1995. It just so evokes the classic NY delis we left behind that it seems to have been here forever. Example: Lox and nova aren't pallid, prepackaged fish, but custom-sliced from whole slabs. And bagels are hand-rolled, chewy champions, not those machine-made puffy poseurs. As complimentary pastry bites suggest, and the massive size of the succulent, sufficiently fatty pastrami sandwiches confirm, generous Jewish Mo(m) spirit shines here. \$\$

Mr. Chef's Fine Chinese Cuisine & Bar

18800 NE 29th Ave. #10, 786-787-9030
Considering our county's dearth of authentic Chinese food, this stylish eatery is heaven-sent for Aventura residents. Owners Jin Xiang Chen and Shu Ming (a.k.a. Mr. Chef) come from China's southern seacoast province of Guangdong (Canton). But you'll find no glopplily 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." \$\$\$

Pilar

20475 Biscayne Blvd. 305-937-2777
Chef/owner Scott Fredel previously worked for Norman Van Aken and Mark Millitello. He has been executive chef at Rumi, and cooked at NYC's James Beard House. Armed with those impressive credentials, Fredel and his wife launched Pilar (named for Hemingway's boat) aiming to prove that top restaurants can be affordable. Consider it proven. Floribbean-style seafood is the specialty: fresh hearts of palm slaw and Caribbean curry sauce, rock shrimp spring rolls with sweet soy glaze, yellowtail snapper with tomato-herb vinaigrette. Forget its strip-mall location. The restaurant itself is elegant. \$\$\$

Pizza Roma

19090 NE 29th Ave. 305-937-4884
Despite its name, this homey hidden eatery serves not Rome's wood-cooked, crunchy-crust pizzas but New York-style pies with medium-thick crusts pliable enough to fold in half for neat street eating. Unlike chains, though, this indie is accommodating, so if you want your crust thin and crisp, just ask. Also featured are Italian-American entrées like baked manicotti (that's "mani-goat", for those not from NJ) big enough to share, and sub sandwiches, here called "bullets," to put you in a Sopranos frame of mind. \$\$

Playwright Irish Pub

801 Silks Run Rd. #2597, 954-457-7563
The vintage Old World look and convivial atmosphere of this new pub, located in the Village at Gulfstream Park, are more traditionally Irish than most of the menu, which ranges from penne with marinara sauce to Thai-inspired spring rolls. But fish and chips are always crisp-coated and satisfying; potato leek soup is the real thing; and the crab cakes (crab meat mixed with just enough celery, onions, and peppers for interesting texture) are so good you'll be thinking Maryland, not Dublin. \$\$

Sushi Siam

19575 Biscayne Blvd. 305-932-8955
(See Miami / Upper Eastside listing)

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"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. 1.59M



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!! 1.79M

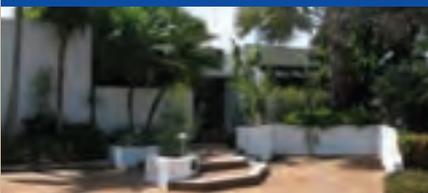


KEYSTONE POINT ISLAND #5 CORNER LOT 175' ON WATER

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. \$925K mortgage, \$899K cash

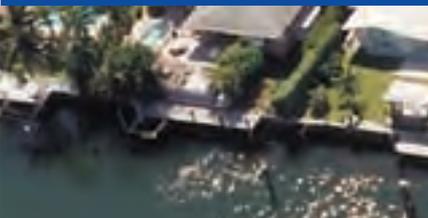


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WATERFRONT RENTAL SANS SOUCI ESTATES FOR SALE OR RENT - \$4500. MTH or OPTION



4bdr/3.5bth, pool, boatlift. All remodeled and brandnew. 24" marble & bamboo floors, granite kitchen & baths. Rent or lease option \$4500 mth. For Sale \$899K

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



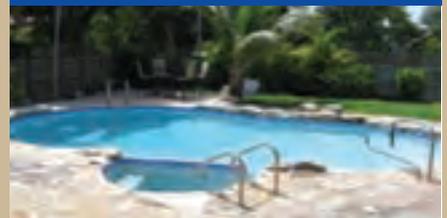
4bdr/3bth, pool, aprx. 3000 sq. ft. Brand new rebuilt home. Marble floors, granite kitchen w/SS appliances, granite baths, also new seawall, dock & boatlift. 1.1M

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



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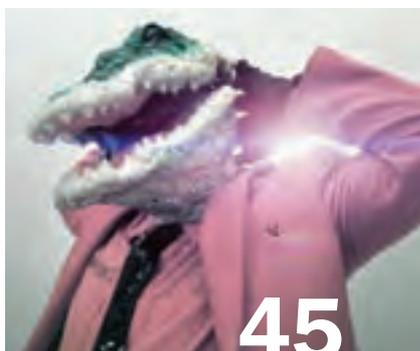
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South Florida Distributors

PRINTING

Stuart Web, Inc.

www.stuartweb.com

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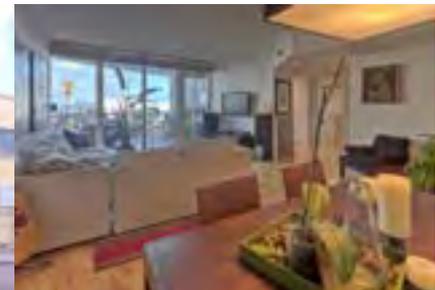
WATER VIEWS AT ONE MIAMI
325 S Biscayne Boulevard #3926 | Miami

1,416 SQ FT | 3 BD / 2 BA | OFFERED @ \$570K
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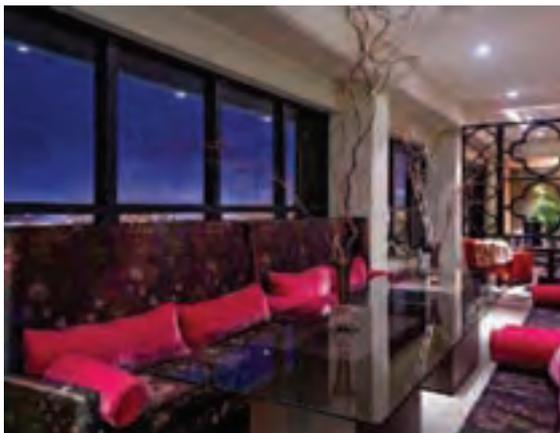
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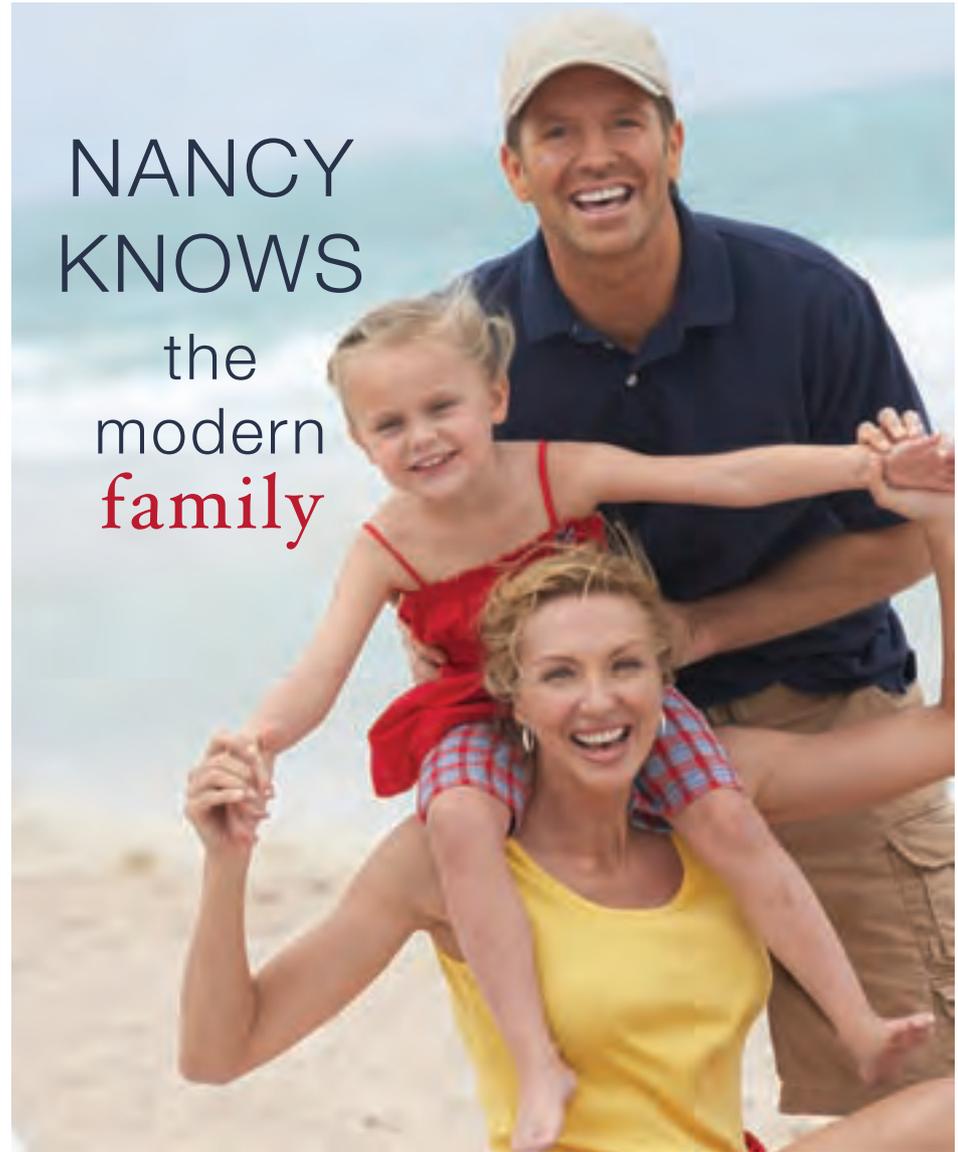


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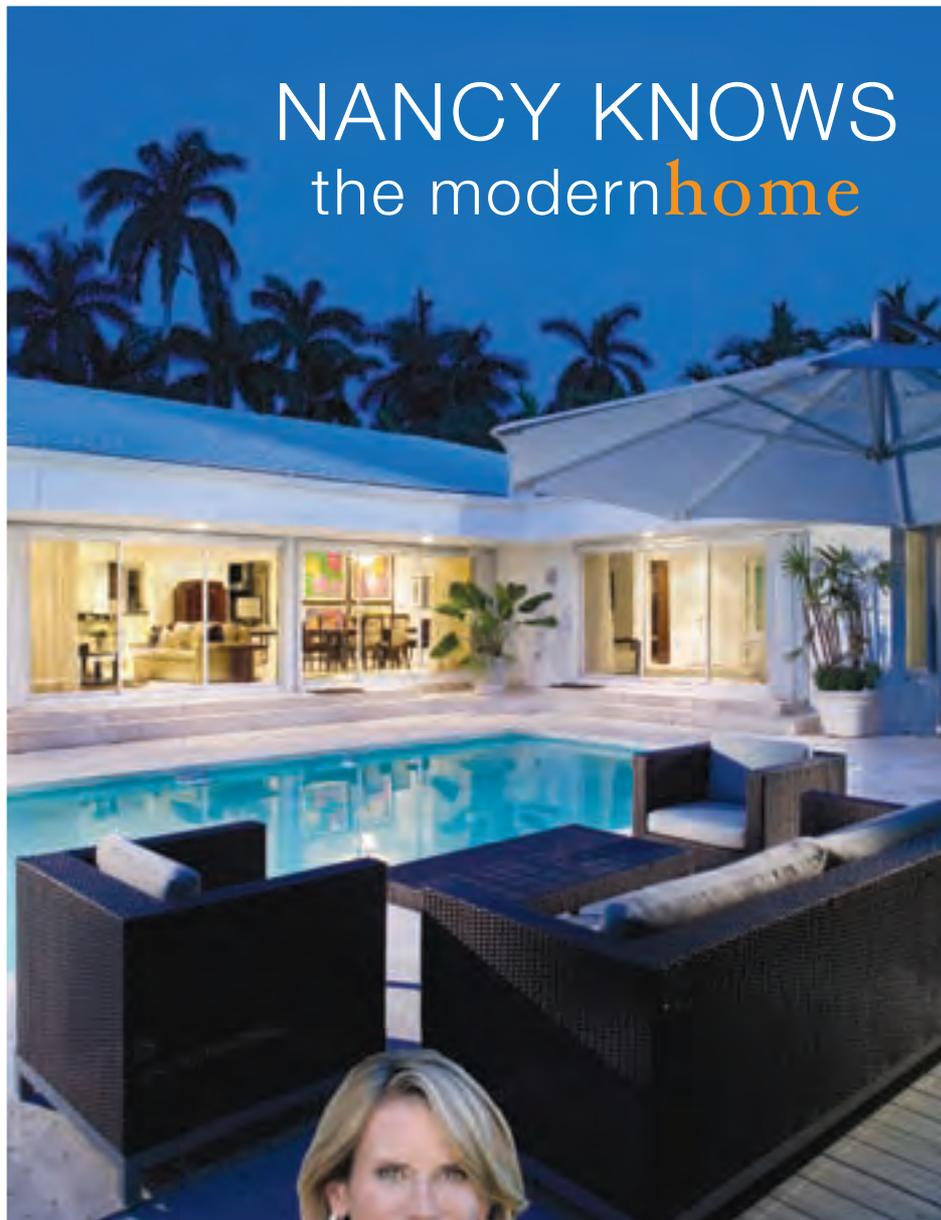


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10166 NE 12 AV	4	4 / 0	1950	2,591	\$850,000	\$750,000
540 SABAL PALM RD	0	0 / 0	2010	100	\$769,000	\$690,000
1250 NE 87 ST	4	3 / 0	1953	3,456	\$725,000	\$625,000
910 BELLE MEADE ISL	3	2 / 1	1951	3,024	\$725,000	\$725,000
8530 NE 10 AV	3	3 / 1	1941	3,854	\$699,000	\$500,000
308 NE 96 ST	5	3 / 0	1947	3,200	\$670,000	\$670,000
520 NE 92 ST	4	3 / 1	1948	3,190	\$649,000	\$600,000
9915 NE 4TH AVE RD	3	3 / 0	1950	2,705	\$549,000	\$528,000
1150 NE 86 ST	3	3 / 1	1953	2,143	\$525,000	\$520,000

AREA 33160-33180

Address	Beds	Baths	Yr Built	Sq Ft Liv	List Price	Sale Price
263 OCEAN BL	6	8 / 1	1998	8,718	\$8,800,000	\$6,300,000
415 CENTER ISL DR	2	2 / 0	1952	2,934	\$2,460,000	\$2,150,000
16486 NE 32 AV	6	7 / 0	2003	6,711	\$2,400,000	\$2,100,000
16425 NE 31 AV	5	5 / 2	2007	5,979	\$2,395,000	\$1,650,000
333 ATLANTIC AV	4	3 / 0	1972	3,000	\$2,225,000	\$1,925,000
439 CENTER ISL DR	5	6 / 1	1987	4,664	\$2,195,000	\$2,000,000
357 CENTRE ISL	5	4 / 1	1982	4,390	\$1,999,000	\$1,466,750
3752 NE 199 ST	6	5 / 1	1998	5,228	\$1,500,000	\$1,423,000
3323 NE 171 ST	5	2 / 1	2011	0	\$1,425,000	\$1,100,000
20125 NE 23 CT	4	4 / 1	1972	5,234	\$899,900	\$759,400
19469 40 AV	4	5 / 1	1998	3,432	\$899,000	\$855,000

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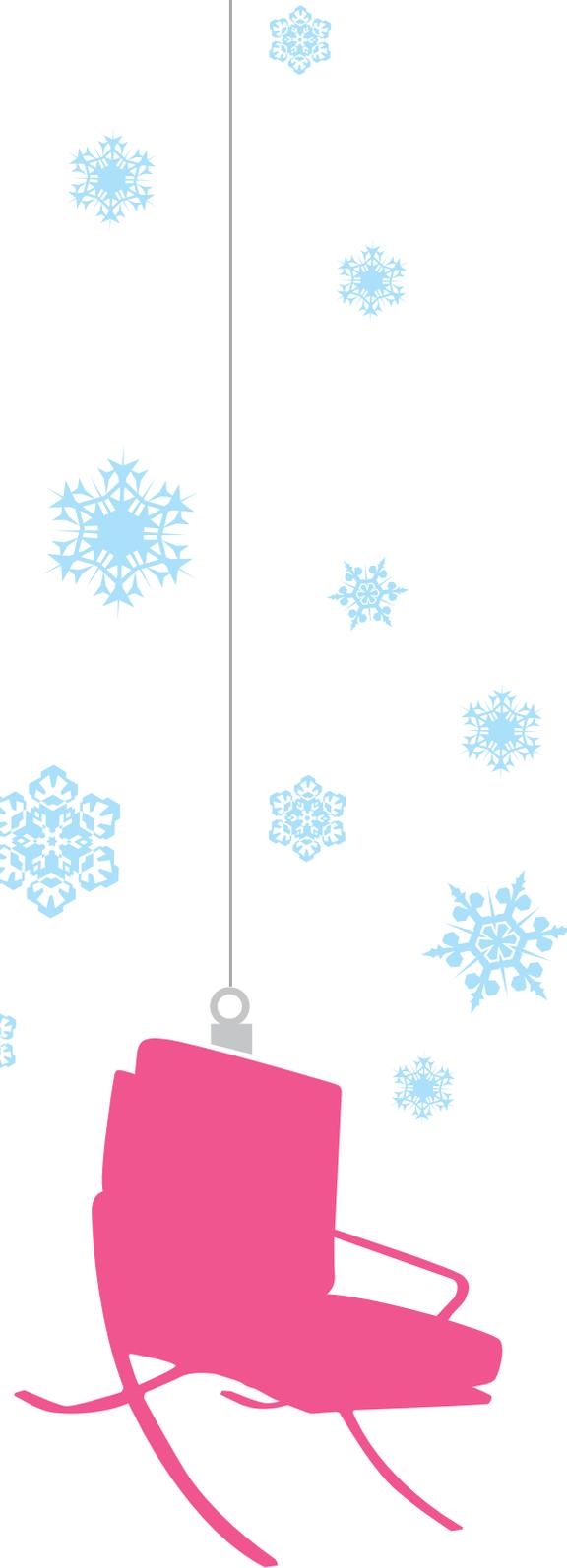
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Commentary: LETTERS

John to Christian: You, My Friend, Can't Grow Up Too Soon

I have fun sometimes guessing how mature a journalist's analytical skills are, and Christian Cipriani's flawed but entertaining "Urbana" column about Brickell was an easy one to break down ("Brickell: Your Parents Will Love It," November 2011).

Here are some excerpts that showcase the writer's analytical imperfections:

"Today's Brickell is a mishmash of new businesses, and while the common thread seems to be high price tags for high-rise customers, their generic sheen gives off a blurry aura without much definition. The neighborhood wants to be everything for everyone."

Anyone who has studied Brickell carefully can easily diminish the writer's credibility, because the writer's mediocre vocabulary to describe a feeling is full of inaccurate word choices. We all have opinions, and many are not credible.

"Then we stepped out back to see a live band on the patio with a late 30s, early 40s crowd that appeared to have read up on how Miami people dress. But I'll bet that they have the same contempt for the trendy-broke fashionistas crawling around my Edgewater neighborhood."

This sentence is terribly flawed for such obvious reasons that it would be too long to debate in this letter. The passage would be my first choice to send to the writer's psychologist for further analysis. The honesty of communicating insecurity is the most impressive, yet the word choice lacks credibility.

More hogwash in smaller doses: "... Guys puffing up their proverbial manes... Underage cliques loitering happily... Wealthy-looking South Americans... The new Brickell is still trying to figure out... [Brickell has] generous portions of vanilla."

Christian, Brickell has it more figured out than you do. You are still trying to figure *yourself* out. You'd do well as a "confessional writer," à la Jewel or Fiona Apple from the turn of the century — that is, late 1990s.

Another: "Brickell's charm is calibrated to include anyone and everyone who can pay their way."

I would diagnose a hint of insecurity, but the poor word choice shines brilliantly ("charm" and "calibrated" linked with dollar signs).

"I held the door for a group of young, overdressed couples and received not even a grateful nod."

It's a well-written sentence that showcases lack of writer perspective and

a hint of insecurity.

"They [parents] find my hood a little too... raw."

Anyone who has carefully studied the Edgewater neighborhood knows that describing it as "raw" is a very limiting word choice.

"...Listening in on the bar's middle-age singles scene...a woman blurted, interrupting two men that weren't speaking to her... They did not take the bait..."

It was a clever sentence flawed by the link between what the writer considered to be mediocre bar conversation and middle-age people.

And finally, the pièce de résistance: "We're too young, too hungry for genuine flavor to make this area routine," which is a contradiction of words packed into a small place, combined with a classic boring case of generational assertiveness.

As someone who likes both Brickell and Edgewater, as well as many other Miami neighborhoods (like Wynwood, where I happen to reside), I have a rewrite suggestion of that last excerpt: Christian is routinely too young, too hungry to make the meaning of the words "genuine" and "flavor."

The best news is that, hopefully, Christian will one day live to be "middle-age" so he can critique and laugh at his own naiveté.

Time flies like a high-speed train, and it's an excellent revenge against immature journalists.

John M. Steria
Wynwood

You Got to Ac-cent-tchu-ate the Positive

Wonderful news from Erik Bojnansky's article "Banking on the Boulevard" (November 2011). A new Chase bank, 25 feet tall, will replace the old BP gas station at Biscayne Boulevard and 68th Street.

In the article, my friend Joe Canale also commented on the fact that three new projects under 35 feet will soon grace our beloved thoroughfare. I'm hoping this quiets some of my MiMo Biscayne Association friends who continually predicted a doomsday scenario regarding any future development because of the 35-foot height limit.

Now they are unhappy with the implementation of the "safety and mobility" upgrades, two of which will make crossing a lot safer up at the Shorecrest and El Portal end of the Boulevard.

Continued on page 22



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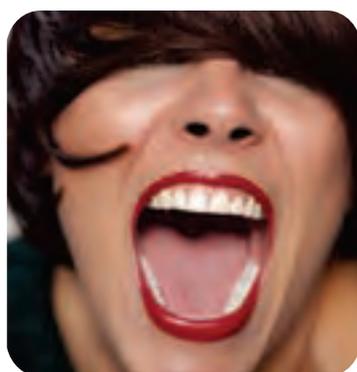
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North Miami Beach, FL 33181

Just North of Costco in the Biscayne Commons Plaza

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Your One Stop Smile Shop



Commentary: LETTERS

Letters

Continued from page 20

While I am also in favor, as they are, of adding parallel parking to the Boulevard, why can't we start appreciating what we have rather than biting the hand that feeds us all the time?

For example, like him or not, Marc Sarnoff just won this past election hands down. He provided most every neighborhood with improvements and provided funding for the MiMo Biscayne Association and the Business Improvement Committee. If he's attacked every chance some people have, do you think he's going to donate to their causes?

Alex Adams, our city's preservation officer, wanted to develop an overall strategy that would bring all of our Upper Eastside neighborhoods together. Once again, in a public forum, the opposition won out. Have we heard any more from his office since that evening?

Most recently, a small group of folks in my neighborhood tried to stop the opening of a new lounge on the corner of NE 82nd Street and Biscayne Boulevard. Fortunately, in this case, the supporters won out.

May I suggest that, in 2012, we approach issues in a more positive light, and that we work on projects in a more proactive way and be grateful when someone, or some agency, makes an improvement in the quality of our lives.

Jack Spirk

*Upper Eastside Preservation Coalition
Shorecrest*

How Not to Design a Bank Building for an Historic District

In reference to "Banking on the Boulevard," this is a perfect opportunity for Chase bank to connect with new customers in diversely rich neighborhoods and to generate additional new income.

Why, then, would Chase assemble its same old cookie cutter storefront that is so reminiscent of the less-than-stellar attitudes still simmering over bankers and banking, when it could make a real attempt to shine with a Miami Modern architectural sparkle?

Perception is reality, and Chase would do well to execute on that and to reconnect with the core of its profits — people!

Showing a genuine interest in and making the added effort toward looking and being a part of our special MiMo community would be a great start in that direction.

*Daniel Thornton
Belle Meade*

After Decades of Arguing for Casinos, I'm About to Get Lucky

Regarding Frank Rollason's column about casino gambling ("Gambling on the Future," November 2011), I came to Florida in 1978, when the first vote on casino gambling was approaching, and I established my corporation at that time.

Seven months after I arrived here, the vote, which was supposed to be 3-2 in favor, went down to defeat. This was caused by the governor and his cohorts putting out a lot of negative political ads.

I then began to conduct casino theme parties and to teach the general public how to play all the games properly. Also I ran a daily junket flight to El Casino in Freeport in the Bahamas.

The second vote was in 1986. It went down because the parimutuels were not included and because of the cruise lines, deities, and the Bahamas.

The third vote was in 1994. This time the parimutuels were included along with the Las Vegas organizations. The biggest negativity was that the Vegas casinos were "carpetbaggers."

I was approached by the parimutuels and the Vegas people to debate all over Florida in favor of casino gambling. Since I owned my company for 16 years, no one could accuse me of being a carpetbagger. In fact, I began every debate by saying, "When casino gambling comes to Florida, I'll be out of business. But I still know it's the best thing for all of us." I won every straw poll after every debate by either 3-1 or 4-1 votes.

You'll notice, as I did, that the next vote, which was scheduled for 2002, never occurred.

*Lowell Richman, president
Casino Gambling, Inc.
Miami*

Our Motto: Feel Better Sooner

Thanks for the accolades in Jen Karetnick's "Neighborhood Correspondents" column ("A Stitch in Time," November 2011). We are proud to be a part of the community and are grateful for the support and positive feedback from our patients in the Shores and surrounding areas. Providing quality, convenient healthcare will always be our focus.

Please check with our office regarding insurance participation. We are continually updating our insurance plans and try to participate in all. If we do not

Continued on page 57

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40FT DOCK SPACE INCLUDED

NORTH MIAMI BEACH

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

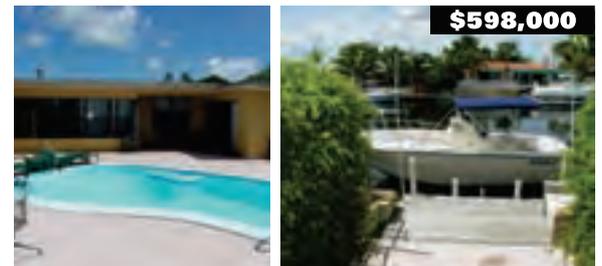


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NORTH MIAMI

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Totally renovated waterfront townhome located on private island in guard-gated community just across from the ocean. Private deeded dock space included behind unit. Ocean Access with no fixed bridges to Haulover Inlet. 1 Car garage attached. A must see!!



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Eastern Shores - Direct Wide Water



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Plus Maids Quarters

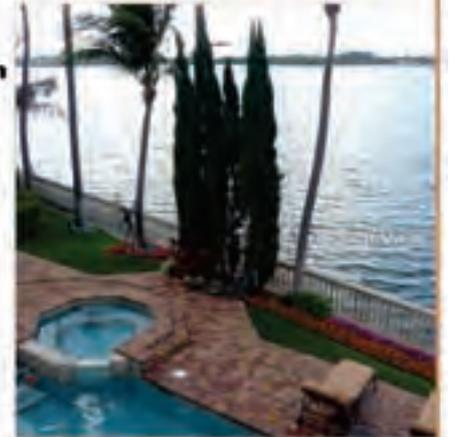
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220FT Waterfront

80FT Dock Space

Ocean Access

No Fixed Bridges
to Haulover Inlet



Large point lot waterfront Mediterranean style home in guard-gated community. Over 6,300 sq ft under air. 5 bedrooms plus maids quarters and 7 1/2 bath. 220 FT of waterfront. High Ceilings, Game Room, Wet Bar and Large Master Suite. Heated pool & Spa. Great Wide Water Views.

South Beach 2.0

Midtown Miami's "urban lifestyle" is being commoditized, repackaged, and sold at a markup

By Christian Cipriani
BT Contributor

Bisecting the heart of our Magic City, N. Miami Avenue marks the geographic divide between east and west. From a cultural standpoint, it's become a line in the sand. East of the avenue, everything is getting cheesier, pricier, and, come on, let's just say it: South Beachier. But step across four lanes of traffic and you'll find a gritty, rough-and-ready world of affordable fun.

Much like Brickell, which I wrote about last month, Midtown Miami is still figuring out what it wants to be. It started life billed as "urban living" but hasn't evolved as advertised. In reality, Midtown is a highly controlled, upscale environment safely insulated from nearby ghettos. How long its renters will last is also in question; the last block of 538 units was snapped up at the end of November with plans to turn them back into owner-condos.

Over the past year, Midtown has developed a growing nightlife component. Chic bar/restaurants like Sugarcane, Sustain, and Mercadito bring South Beach sheen and prices, and now there's Ricochet Bar & Lounge.

Alan Roth and Tommy Pooch, Ricochet's proprietors, are South Beach nightlife veterans, and while they've set out to create something un-South Beach, this isn't quite the case. Ricochet is reflective of where Midtown is going wrong in general: upscale, faux-South

Beach establishments that pretend to have an artistic, "urban" edge, as if there's a buy-and-build recipe to it.

The venue instead has all the markings of a Lincoln Road club — black suits out front, a DJ shuffling through pop remixes, a crowd that looks like it's auditioning for *Entourage*.

Midtown's "urban living" sales slogan has worn hollow: It *is* the new South Beach. So let's cross its western edge and traverse N. Miami Avenue in search of authentic urban culture.

Bardot sets the stage for this side of the street. Amir Ben-Zion is a South Beach veteran not unlike Roth and Pooch, but like Mark Soyka, he possesses an uncanny ability to create tuned-in social experiences with neighborhood appeal.

He used lessons from Buck 15, the lounge he used to own behind Lincoln Road, to craft Bardot's secret speakeasy cool — antique décor, people from all ends of society, and a no-cheese rock-and-roll vibe.

Just a few doors north, he opened the restaurant Gigi and filled the need for awesome late-night dining with well-priced and intriguing fare. There's no manual for building something with local appeal, but one tactic is to partner with promoters and people who have a genuine connection to the neighborhood cultural scene. They become your brand ambassadors, and in this tight-knit hood, perception quickly becomes reality.

South of Bardot is the best club in Miami, musically speaking. The Electric



BT photo by Silvia Ros

Pickle on NE 29th Street has evolved into an internationally recognized dance club. Every week it has someone from the crème of underground house and techno behind the decks. Its owner, Will Renuart, rather than being a bandwagon investor trying to cash in on a neighborhood's newfound cool, has instead rightly focused on building a true local's venue with world-class programming.

Now cruise up the street from Bardot and you'll hit Miami's newest hotspot — Mamushka's, on NW 36th Street just west of N. Miami Avenue. What's so great about this place? Nothing, which is why I had to see what everyone keeps talking about.

Mamushka's is an absolute dump filled with sneering hipsters who drag their feet around its uneven concrete floors, but it's oddly great. I took pleasure in the idea that the Ricochet crowd would hate this place.

Opened by former employees of Bar, which once occupied a tiny sliver next to Vagabond on NE 14th Street, Mamushka's looks like someone hosed down a dank, cavernous warehouse, gave it a memorably odd name, and flung open the doors. It has almost no backdrop for the people getting smashed on \$6

cocktails and \$3 Pabst, nodding along to a half-assed sound system. I've seen better dance floors at a bar mitzvah.

For all of Ricochet's gloss and hip ardor, you can't manufacture atmosphere; it just happens. Mamushka's feels like a 1980s set piece from a Bret Easton Ellis novel, throbbing with the ennui of being young, broke, and over it.

Gentrification is screwing up Wynwood-Edgewater. The first wave brought galleries, artists, and renegade developers who saw the potential of Wynwood's warehouses and empty lots. Now a second wave is here with Midtown Miami, as the "concept" of urban lifestyle — once an organic phenomenon — is commoditized, repackaged, and sold at a markup.

The kids who made living and hanging around here cool are being permanently pushed west of N. Miami Avenue.

So take my advice: Enjoy what's left of Midtown's appeal before Walmart gets here. Park your nice car safely in a garage and splurge on dinner, but afterward, traipse across the street and check out all the seedy fun to be had just a few steps west.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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Oldest House of Worship Still Saving Souls

A view of our past from the archives of HistoryMiami

By Paul George
Special to the BT

Grace Methodist Church represented a pillar of old Lemon City, the homesteading community that emerged along Biscayne Bay near today's NE 61st Street in the era following the Civil War.

By the end of the 19th Century, Lemon City began exhibiting the institutional trappings of an emerging frontier community, including the Lemon City Methodist Church. Founded at the outset of the 1890s, Lemon City Methodist Church, later renamed Grace Methodist

Church, is Miami-Dade County's oldest house of worship in continuous operation.

In this photograph, taken in September 1948, members of the robust congregation, located at 6313 NE 2nd Ave., its second home, is seen emerging from Sunday services. At the time, Lemon City was a working-class community with Deep South roots and a predominantly Protestant religious orientation.

In 1959 the congregation moved to a large brown brick building complex at 6501 N. Miami Ave. Two decades later the neighborhood had changed dramatically, with an influx of Haitian refugees replacing many white



Photo courtesy of Miami News Collection, HistoryMiami, #1989-011-3169

families who had moved out. The congregation then became the Grace Haitian United Methodist Church, and continues to serve a large Haitian community amid an area of Little Haiti offering many houses of worship.

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

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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BizBuzz

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

By Pamela Robin Brandt
BT Contributor

Ah, December... the month that makes you tired just thinking about it. What to buy for all those family members, friends, co-workers, pets... How to entertain all the vacationing kids, visiting friends, etc.... How to feed all the vacationing kids, visiting friends, etc.... How to deal with all the month's social events... Where to buy the Xmas tree/Hanukah bush... Where to go for New Year's Eve...

Hey! Wake up! We haven't even started helping you whittle away at that to-do list yet. This month there's a record number of deals and special offers from BT advertisers.

So first off, rouse yourself with a visit to new advertiser **Alaska Coffee Roasting** (13130 Biscayne Blvd., 786-332-4254). This new market/eatery, like its parent in Alaska (where it has been operating since 1993), serves up wood-oven pizzas and baked goods as well as coffee that'll open your eyes in more ways than one; organic, estate, and cooperative varietal beans — especially African, but also from the Americas and Near/Far East — are roasted in-house, for the ultimate in full-flavored yet smooth brews.

Then take a brisk hop just a bit farther south to find a premium North Carolina Frasier fir (from 3 to 40 feet tall) from the largest selection on the Boulevard, at **Oh Christmas Tree** (10900 Biscayne Blvd., 305-981-1955). There are wreaths and

holiday floral arrangements, too. And if you don't want to schlep the tree yourself, they'll deliver and even set the thing up for you.

As for decorating the tree, **LoudGirl Exchange** (6621 Biscayne Blvd., 305-458-5783) can help, with a hand from your kids. Stop by the unique shop "where families trade clothes, art, and ideas" on December 4 for an imaginative workshop, produced in collaboration with Funshine (a local company dedicated to nurturing childhood creativity), that'll teach you and the small fry to make your own holiday paper ornaments. (You can also visit the MiMo Art in the Park festival next door at Legion Park.)

Of course fabulous home décor goes beyond seasonal froufrou, as South Floridians know. In fact **Beau Living Contemporary Design** (8101 Biscayne Blvd. #102, 305-751-1511) just opened a new warehouse twice as big to accommodate the firm's growing market in our area. This month BL is introducing new furniture and lighting collections, and celebrating its fourth anniversary by offering special discounts (15% off all new arrivals).

Gearing up for the holidays with new furniture pieces and accessories from Horchow and similar high-end designers, **360 Furniture Consignments** (18340 W. Dixie Hwy., 305-627-3148) is also making it easier for BT readers to gift yourselves and others: Mention us for a 20% discount.

Dreaming of a White Christmas? **The Collection German Furniture** (15400



Biscayne Blvd. #112, 305-944-3727) is, this month, introducing something that makes snow superfluous: a new white, high-gloss line of coffee tables, side boards, bedroom sets, and more.

Attention artists — or art collectors who bought something beautiful during Art Basel and now need some way to showcase it: **Plexi-house** (4030 N. Miami Ave., 305-576-9991) has pedestals that are artworks in themselves. Ask for Charlotte, who'll give you 20% off any size pedestal when you mention the BT.

Looking for gifts for friends who have everything — supposedly? We're betting you'll find something they've never even dreamed of at **Details at 55th Street Station** (5580 NE 4th Ct. #4a, 305-757-2009). Among the items we've found in the shop's stock of "cultured curiosities and little luxuries": their own jewelry and clothing lines, neon Buddhas, a child's fork shaped like an airplane, and chocolate bon bons. They now do custom upholstery, too.

No one ever has enough jewelry, and no other small-size gifts make such a huge impression. For elegant pieces that are exclusive yet affordable, call for an appointment to check out the stock at **Direct Jewelry Outlet** (2001 Biscayne Blvd. #117, 305-979-3636). Mention the BT for an additional 10% off purchases.

It's also impossible for anyone to be too beautiful. So welcome to new advertiser **Beach Beauty** (6685 Collins Ave., Miami Beach, 786-380-3699). See this issue's ad for a holiday gift certificate offering a free skin care kit for the first 24 guests to buy an anti-aging red-light therapy package, plus special discounts.

This month's huge sale at **Harmony Salon & Beauty Supply** (2512 Biscayne Blvd., 305-576-1551) means it'll be easy for you to make someone happy with a gift of professional beautification products: Buy any item and get a second one for half off.

Give the gift of beauty in another form via gift certificates from Wynwood's uniquely artsy **Control Salon & Gallery** (2814 N. Miami Ave., 305-573-6910). Purchasers mentioning the BT will get 20% off the certificate amount.

And at **Hannah & Her Scissors** (611 NE 86th St., 305-772-8426), where hair artist Hannah Lasky added manicure and waxing services earlier this year, there's another new addition: She's now selling Votivo candles and other gift items, so you can get prepped for those holiday parties and buy a hostess gift at the same time. Mention the BT this month for \$5 off a facial, color, or cut.

Continued on page 30



Busy Bee Car Wash
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www.BusyBeeCarWash.net

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CUSTOM DETAILING: The ultimate in detailing: wash and wax, carpet shampoo, super interior cleaning, seat conditioning, headlights restored and more. Try our clay and liquid-glass products for "showroom" appearance.

UNLIMITED WASH PLANS: Drive a clean car every day of the month for as low as \$19.99. Our radio-frequency tag gives you access to the car wash whenever we're open. Plus discounts on all services!

SELF-SERVE BAYS: Coin-operated facilities allow you to high-pressure wash and rinse your own vehicle.

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The gift of CLEAN for that hard-to-buy for person. Busy Bee Car Wash is adding **FREE MONEY!**

Gift Cards during December get you more!

Spend \$20 - get a gift card to give for \$25

Spend \$40 - get a gift card to give for \$50

Spend \$60 - get a gift card to give for \$75

Spend \$80 - get a gift card to give for \$100

Good for purchasing any car wash service, any day and never expires!

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545 NE 59TH STREET

Magnificent and architecturally stunning 1925 2-story Old Spanish home on double lot in Morningside. 4-bedroom main house and two 1-bedroom guest houses. Original wood floors, fire-place, beamed volume ceilings, large wood/granite/stainless steel eat-in kitchen, formal dining room, foyer, library. Fenced yard with 8-foot privacy wall. Property has much potential as it is residential on tree-lined street in gated neighborhood but zoned for office. In the Upper Eastside and close to shops and restaurants. **\$1,095,000**



790 NE 72ST

Beautiful 1927 Mediterranean Revival two-story corner pool home w/separate guest house. Located in the Historic Bayside neighborhood. Featured in films, TV and print ads. Restored to perfection. Gourmet kitchen w/top of the line appls including Sub-Zero, Thermador, Fisher Paykel, and Ann Sacks/Herbeau sinks and faucets. Grand living areas. Full-size generator in backyard. Double French doors lead to lush gardens which enhance this gated 10,000SF property. Walk to bay and Upper Eastside restaurants and shops. **\$1,195,000**



5600 N. BAYSHORE DRIVE

Mid-Century Modern home featured on HGTV, numerous print ads and photoshoots in guard-gated Morningside Historic District, across the street from the bay and in the heart of the hot Upper Eastside. Black terrazzo flooring, one-of-a-kind sculptural den, indoor koi pond, walls of glass to allow lots of natural light, all built around screened-in slate pool area for indoor/outdoor tropical living. High-end gourmet kitchen w/concrete flrs. Luxurious master suite w/spa-like bthrm. Home is a work of modern art. **\$1,395,000**



1366 S. BISCAYNE POINT ROAD

Super chic bayfront tropical paradise describes this gated 6 bed/6 bath pool home with guest house on over 15,000SF lot hedged and gated for privacy in guard-gated Miami Beach. Stunning bay views throughout. Wide open living area with wetbar, high ceilings, impact glass, top-of-the-line gourmet kitchen, super chic baths with mosaic redone by French designer. Amazing master suite, 102-foot wide bay, pool with cabana and tiki hut, exotic landscaping and bamboo, Chicago brick circular driveway, guest house. **\$1,995,000**



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Our Sponsors: DECEMBER 2011

Biz Buzz

Continued from page 28

For the perfect smile to match, visit **Biscayne Dental Center**, which has just added three new specialists to its growing team: Dr. Brad Santelli, an orthodontist; and Dr. Cynthia Bouchard and Dr. Edgar Lopez, who both specialize in cosmetic dentistry. During December, the center has two offers: \$500 off any orthodontic treatment including Invisalign, and a \$300 discount for any implant procedure. Just mention this issue's *BT* ad.

Buying clothes for someone else can be iffy, but there's something about the styling of new advertiser **Joseph Ribkoff's** versatile and affordable, award-winning apparel that makes most any woman look great. For the locations of nearby boutiques carrying the made-in-Canada clothing: 1-800-226-6362 or info@ribkoff.com.

Doubtless you already know **Salad Creations** (2001 Biscayne Blvd., 305-576-5333) as the perfect alternative to fast-food McMeals — chef-created or DIY salads and wraps that are just as fast and as filling, but are good for you, too. What you might not know: The eatery sells gift cards. And throughout December, you'll receive a "healthy savings booklet" with over \$50 in discounts with every \$50 in gift cards purchased.

Pets deserve healthy eats, too, and **Biscayne Pet House** (10789 Biscayne Blvd., 305-895-6164) has some stocking stuffers that fit the bill: By Nature dog and cat foods. This month, buy four cans and get one free.

At the Upper Eastside's **Antiques Plaza** (8650 Biscayne Blvd.), Danny Reyes (305-458-7134) announces expansion into four new storefronts, available 12/31/2011. Obviously this holiday season's gift seekers will find nothing in these spaces except hope for next year. But fortunately the plaza already has 19 other nationally noted antiques dealers.

Many of your holiday gifts will need to be mailed to far-flung friends. So welcome new advertiser **Private Postal Systems** (12555 Biscayne Blvd., 305-895-6974), a one-stop shop for packaging supplies as well as shipping. In fact, Barbara and Nancy, who've been at it 32 years, will do all your packing, wrapping, and shipping for you. For the holidays, the store has extended hours; consult this issue's ad.

If you're father south, not to worry. The **UPS Store** (6815 Biscayne Blvd., 305-759-8877) is there for all your packing and shipping needs. Ask proprietor John Tsialis about this month's 15% discount on all products and services.

There's no place like home for the holidays. So if you're worried about losing your

home, go see attorney **Jake Miller** (305-758-2020), whose legal work specializes in real estate and bankruptcy, as longtime *BT* readers know from his famed free seminars. Don't go to his old offices, though; Miller has just moved to a larger space: 11900 Biscayne Blvd., suite 618. Congratulations, Jake, on the snazzy new digs.

Speaking of home and congratulations: Please note the note, in this month's ad from new advertiser **Hellinger Penabad** (www.hellingerco.com), a total real estate solutions company, thanking Andrew Hellinger for all his work in obtaining land enabling residents at the Oaks at Biscayne Landing to plan (finally!) their community amenities — a pool, playground, and more.

One thing many don't want to do at home during this busy season is cook every day. Let one of our restaurant advertisers bring meals to you instead.

Design District/Midtown Miami-area residents who crave home-cooked Italian-American pastas, pizzas, soups, subs, and more at truly affordable prices need only call new advertiser **Basani's** (3221 NE 2nd Ave., 786-925-0911) for prompt delivery by friendly staffers. Go to www.basanis.com for online ordering.

Veteran Midtown residents still salivate at the memory of the French and Latin pastries and sandwiches from the original **Cane á Sucre**, the ahead-of-its-time café just south of 36th Street, owned by the Vega brothers (before they opened totally timely Uva 69). Admittedly, it's a bit of a drive for Midtowners to their new Cane á Sucre Sandwich Bar in North Miami (899 NE 125th St., 305-891-0123), but considering the tasty rewards, who cares?

New advertiser **Fratelli Milano** (213 SE 1st St., 305-373-2300) will not only deliver authentic Italian dinners to downtown/Brickell residents, but will, throughout December, throw in a free dessert with each total order from diners who mention the *BT* when phoning in.

If you'd prefer a holiday meal at someone else's place, the **Royal Bavarian Schnitzel Haus** (1085 NE 79th St., 305-754-8002) will be doing its eighth annual traditional Christmas goose dinner on December 24. Reserve early for this popular event, featuring a live piano show and festive theme décor, both inside and in the outdoor biergarten, second only to Walt Disney World.

Returning advertiser **Anise Taverna** (620 NE 78th St., 305-758-2929) will take diners on a regional culinary tour during this month's "Mediterranean Mondays": December 5, taste Sicily; December 12, southern France; December 19, Lebanon.

Five-course dinners, including wine and entertainment, are \$55. Reservations required.

With the budget prices at **Raja's** (33 NE 2nd Ave., 305-539-9551), any time is a good time to visit, especially for this tiny café's custom-cooked South Indian dosas and uttapam pancakes. But be sure to stop by for the eatery's 21st anniversary celebration on December 14, when diners will be treated to special Indian sweets and drinks.

Made New Year's Eve plans yet? If the night's typical glam overkill doesn't do it for you, consider welcoming in 2012 in the quaint, cozy atmosphere of returning advertiser **Trattoria Il Migliore** (2576 NE Miami Gardens Dr., 305-792-2902), where executive chef Brett Redstone offers creative specials with products from around the world.

With **Werner Staub's Peppermill** (350 Bayview Dr., Sunny Isles Beach, 305-466-2016) already almost entirely booked for Christmas meals, we needn't tell you that if you crave a seafood (and waterfront) New Year's Eve dinner, book immediately. The four-course meal includes live entertainment and champagne.

The New Year's Eve "Black & White Gala" at **Trio on the Bay** (1601 79th St. Cswy., 305-866-1234), for those who reserve for 8:00 p.m., features a four-course dinner for \$75 per person. An earlier seating, at 6:00 p.m., is \$50.

Tuna's Raw Bar & Grille (17850 W. Dixie Hwy., 305-932-0630) is offering two New Year's Eve packages: gold for \$100 per couple, and platinum for \$175, the difference being Chef Rolf Fellhauer's menus. Gold entrées: New York steak Madagascar, red snapper Française, duck a l'orange, or veal Oscar. Platinum entrées: chateaubriand béarnaise for two, Maine lobster, grilled veal chop, or ribeye steak. Call for more details and reservations.

At The Garden, a new addition to longtime Johnson & Wales student favorite **Mama Jennie's** (11720 NE 2nd Ave., 305-757-3627), ring in the New Year Italian-American style. Tickets start at \$75 for a festive formal sit-down dinner including open bar and music.

Need a break from traditional and satisfying but heavy holiday eating? Lighten up at new advertiser **Ozzi Sushi** (200 SE 1st St., 786-704-8003). The concept is casual conveyor-belt sushi/sashimi/Japanese small plates — so it's the norm to grab just a few. Or many. Whatever you want.

Even when cooking seems inescapable, because you're throwing the party, help is at hand from new advertiser **Sisters in Pink Catering** (16679 NE 19th St, 305-949-5883). Sisters Susan and Soco can cater for a crowd or just feed your family with their

take-out menu. They do tasty gift baskets, too. And this month *BT* readers get \$10 off any purchases of \$50 or more.

Naturally *BT* readers need no intro to the no-effort holiday feasts from **Bagels & Company** (11064 Biscayne Blvd., 305-892-2435). But your guests needn't know. Just order a complete stuffing-to-sweets turkey dinner for ten — for Xmas, Hanukah, or whatever holiday you prefer — and tell 'em you slaved for days.

If you'll be throwing that party outdoors on your deck, now's the time to check in with returning advertiser **Renu at Hand** (305-866-8408). Owner Sal Guerra and his crew will sand, refinish, and seal your deck so it'll look like new. Have a new deck built and Sal will throw in a \$250 discount — plus a Weber grill!

The **Aventura Arts & Cultural Center** (3385 NE 188th St., 877-311-7469) suggests giving the gift of entertainment — tickets to one of its very varied upcoming shows. Until December 30, the center is also offering a chance to win two tickets to see Mandy Patinkin in *Let Go*, February 23-26. Visit www.AventuraCenter.org/EnterToWin_Mandy.

Something the kids will enjoy: creating an original performance in five fun-filled days at one of two Holiday Mini-Camp sessions at **The Playground Theatre** (9806 NE 2nd Ave., 305-751-9550). Sessions run 12/19-23 and 12/26-30; price per session is \$200.

For an activity the whole family and/or friends will enjoy, Daniel Acosta invites you to join **Turnberry International Realty** and other Bay Harbor Islands businesses for two nights of "Bay Harbor Bliss," December 15 and 29 from 6:00-10:00 p.m. The street festival (featuring live music, art, and shopping ops) will run along 96th Street, starting two blocks west of the Bal Harbour Shops.

Whew. Obviously there's no season in which it's easy to wear yourself out and/or overindulge — resulting in illness that makes it impossible to enjoy further excesses. And unfortunately, most doctors work fewer hours during holiday week, or take off entirely. So **Medi-Station Urgent Care Center** (9600 NE 2nd Ave., 305-603-7650) wants readers to know the facility will be open their usual extended hours every day except December 25 and January 1, to fix up you or your out-of-town visitors. Go to www.MedistationUrgent-Care.com for hours and details.

And have excessively happy, healthy holidays.

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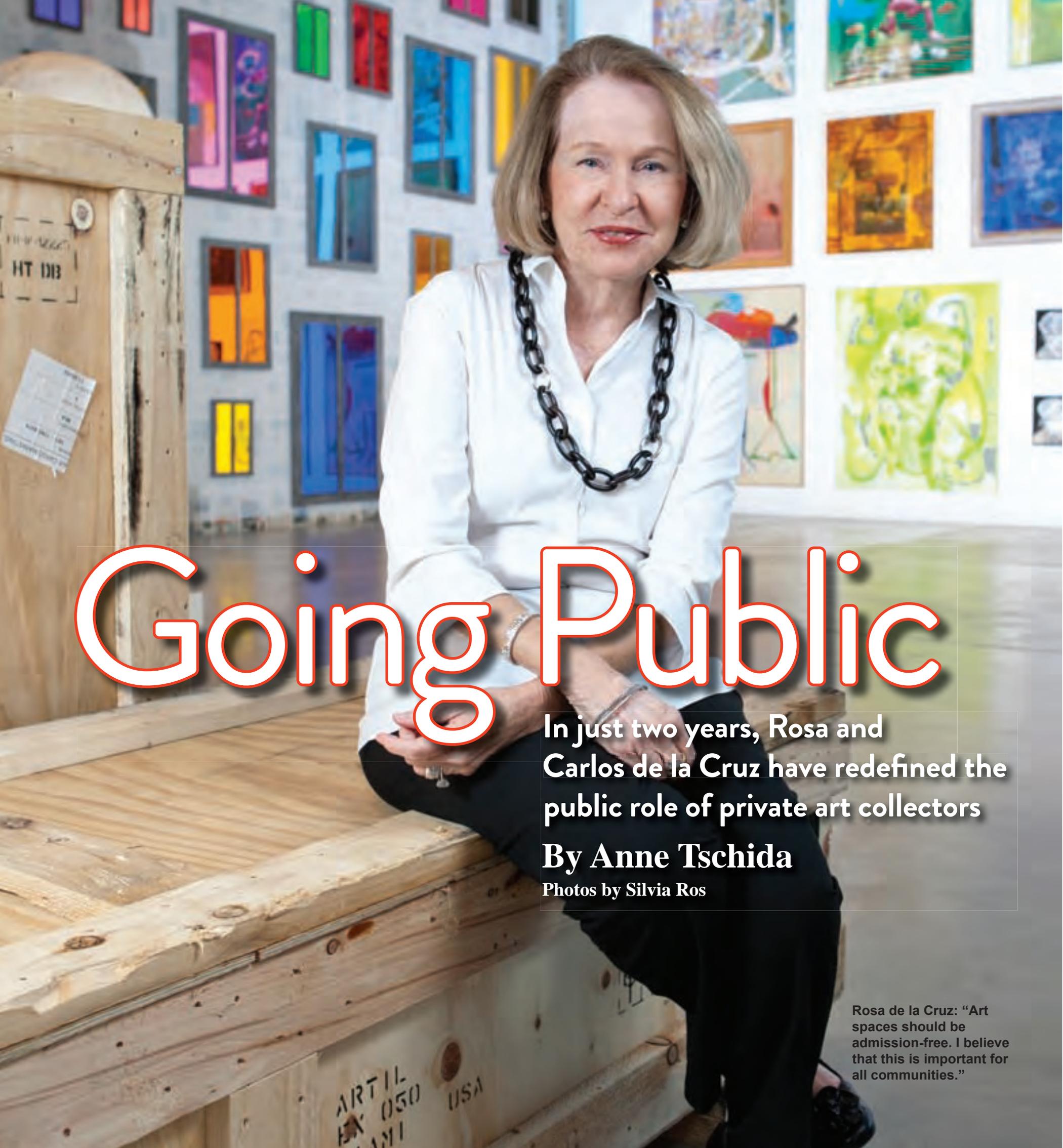
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Going Public

In just two years, Rosa and Carlos de la Cruz have redefined the public role of private art collectors

By Anne Tschida

Photos by Silvia Ros

Rosa de la Cruz: "Art spaces should be admission-free. I believe that this is important for all communities."

When the de la Cruz Collection Contemporary Art Space opened two years ago, just in time for Art Basel Miami Beach 2009, art aficionados traipsed up and down three floors of the open, beautifully planned space to take in the latest addition to Miami's growing art infrastructure.

A design feat of John Marquette, the building with one wall made entirely of windows was the new home of the collection of Carlos and Rosa de la Cruz, who have a highly regarded selection of contemporary art and are considered to be among the nation's most prominent collectors.

On the top floor, one room of the 30,000-square-foot building was dedicated to the haunting photography and video of iconic, Cuban-born artist Ana Mendietta. Much of the center space was devoted to work from another famous contemporary Cuban artist, Felix Gonzalez-Torres: one piece consisted of two stacks of paper, on one which was written "Nowhere better than this place," and on the other pile, "Somewhere better than this place." (Both died untimely, early deaths.)

Among the impressive array of international art, there was also work from current Miami residents Cesar Trasobares, Naomi Fisher, and Cristina Lei Rodriguez.

Visitors got the feeling that this new private collectors' space was closely tied to the artistic ground around it. Their intuition turned out to be right.

In the past two years, the de la Cruz space has played host to a number of locally generated exhibits, many of which have pressed the edge of mainstream and made for some exciting art. It instituted a travel and scholarship program that has enabled both college and high school students to pay visits to art hubs from New York to Berlin. It has given over evenings to improvised music (including a night of musicians who normally play at the down-and-dirty Churchill's Pub), and started a residency program. At the same time, the space has also brought in internationally known artists and curators to exhibit and lecture.

And one of the best things: It's free and open five days a week. That is a departure not just from local private collections but from most art institutions nationally.

In other words, on its second birthday, the de la Cruz Collection space in



Sculpture by Thomas Houseago, with Rosa and Carlos de la Cruz and staffers in the background.

the Design District has proven to be an active player in the development of the cultural community. That's not to say there have been no detractors in the almost Byzantine world of art politics.

While many people believe that the vast private collections in Miami are superior to the museums here, some also think that has hindered the growth of our public institutions, particularly those still in their formative years.

But this is where the de la Cruz space has surprised initial skeptics. On any given day, busloads of students can be seen roaming the galleries, attending workshops, or sitting in the library. In fact unlike most art centers in Miami, there is a constant stream of visitors. It doesn't get much more public than that.

Someone coming on a tour or just stopping in last year at this time would have encountered a video from local artist Christy Gast, who also shows at Gallery Diet in Wynwood. Titled *Herbert Hoover Dyke*, the video shows Gast, dressed in a tuxedo jacket and cowboy hat, tap-dancing across the dike that holds in Lake Okeechobee.

Under an expansive Florida sky, Gast taps around limestone pilings, egrets, and steel grates, creating a musical soundtrack. There are a couple of dualities here: Gast is dressed in what would traditionally be formal men's wear; and the 30-foot-high barrier surrounding the huge inland sea is both loved and hated. Some say the Hoover dike is a great impediment to the natural flow of the Everglades, and ugly too.

Others, who reference the massive floods that killed thousands in the 1920s, say it is a life-saver. It was an alternative — and literal — take on barriers and what they mean.

The video was shown in the Project Room, which is set aside to highlight local art, and site-specific pieces at that. *Herbert Hoover Dyke* was commissioned by the de la Cruzes after a proposal that Gast sent in. It's clear, says the artist, that "there is a lot of community involvement, and artists feel at home there."

Gast was later invited to give a workshop on so-called inflatables — sculptures that are inflatable, temporary, and pretty much fun. "The collection has a super interesting educational program, where artists give workshops on topics that interest *them*, rather than a set curriculum," she says of the workshop.

The artist guided students from New World School of the Arts, the Design and Architecture High School, and University of Miami "through the process of conceptualizing and fabricating a large-scale, collaborative, site-responsive inflatable sculpture," says Gast. The de la Cruzes "decided to exhibit the piece in the space for a few months, which was a thrill for the folks who made the project. It looked really great in the space, since it was inspired by the architecture and the art."

Kids also played with the clever but informative installation by Miami artist Karen Rifas in the Project Room, which included huge clear containers filled with leaves from her backyard, millions of oak leaves and pine needles collected over the years. Rifas asked visitors, big and little, to pick out two matching leaves, which she hung on a wall.

Of course, there are no real matching leaves. Like snowflakes, each shape is unique. The room smelled like autumn. When you rummaged through the leaf piles, other little pieces of nature turned up, such as sticks and seeds. Rifas toyed with the concept of a leaf "laboratory" with the exhibit, bringing up questions about how and what we classify in our world.

An intimate view of the world was revealed with multimedia artist Kevin Arrow's installation *Amor Infinitus*. Using old-fashioned snapshots, he created an old-fashioned slide show of a

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Going Public

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couple's travels, in which they wave and smile at each other through the filter of the camera, in front of far-flung locations such as the Kremlin in Russia and the Forbidden City in China. It was about nostalgia, where both the dated medium and the old photographs evoked memories of our own.

The de la Cruzes have been showing off their art collection for some 25 years, first at their home on Key Biscayne (during previous Art Basels, getting into the house party there was probably the biggest ticket in town), and now also at their space. As she readies for yet another Art Basel exhibition, Rosa de la Cruz maintains that the Design District building is an extension of, not a replacement for, their home collection. Together the two locations are exhibiting works from 62 artists.

"Both spaces hold part of our collection, and our home can be visited by appointment," says the Cuban-born art enthusiast. Aside from collecting the work of Cuban artists, the couple has specialized in cutting-edge German art, especially from the former East Germany, including from what is now known as the Leipzig School. "The books in our libraries also are available to the public in both places. Through a computer program, visitors can see what books are in our collection."

In both spaces, then, a visitor can see work or read about such major contemporary German artists as Neo Rauch, Martin Kippenberger, Thomas Schütte, Albert Oehlen, John Bock, and Jonathan Meese.

Meese is a bit of an art-world prankster, along with being one of its stars. His installations, featuring collages crammed with pop-culture references, and his performances have been seen at the Tate Modern and Saatchi Gallery in London, as well as the Georges Pompidou Center in Paris.

He also has an increasingly close connection to Miami, thanks initially to the de la Cruzes. In 2005 the couple let Meese run wild in their home, stapling images to the walls and then painting all over them. Last year, during Art Basel Miami Beach, the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) in North Miami gave him his first American solo exhibit.

As it turns out, Meese played a role in another of the de la Cruz initiatives



Scene from Christy Gast's *Herbert Hoover Dyke*, commissioned by the de la Cruz Collection.



Works by Ana Mendieta displayed on the art space's third floor.

to develop the local art community. For the second year this summer, the de la Cruz Collection sponsored a New World student trip, this time to both Berlin and Venice. “In Berlin we organized visits to museums, monuments, and artists’ studios — Jonathan Meese welcomed them to his studio,” says Rosa de la Cruz about the trip, which was made possible through a matching grant from the Knight Foundation. “I think the travel program is essential for the students’ education. In order to enrich their culture and knowledge of art, they need to have exposure to the national and international art scene. These trips allow the students exclusive access to world-class museums, galleries, and private collections.”

On a separate trip, the de la Cruzes also traveled with a group of Miami artists and art students to Princeton University to see a major retrospective of Kurt Schwitters. He was an influential early 20th-century avant-garde artist — yes, also German — who pioneered collage, gluing together train tickets and candy wrappers, and eventually also delved into architecture, which led to his famous *Merzbau*, a radical reworking of his family’s home in Hanover. It was destroyed during a World War II bombing raid.

Although the structure itself disappeared, it continued to have an impact on 20th-century movements, which not just art students but the Miami public were able to grasp when local gallerist Fred Snitzer put on a show this year called “*Merzbau — Now*.” Snitzer presented works by current artists who were influenced by Schwitters, including several who are in the de la Cruz Collection.

All of this is evidence of the growing interaction between Miami and a broader arts world, both national and international, that the de la Cruzes have helped to foster.

In another example: This past summer Ibett Yanez, director of the De La Cruz Collection Contemporary Art Space, co-curated a show at the well-known Fabric Workshop and Museum in Philadelphia, which included artists from Miami and New York. Yanez has been working with Rosa de la Cruz since 2004, when Rosa, along with developer and collector Craig Robins, ran the Moore Space on the second floor of the Design District’s Moore Building, which Robins owns.

“We’ve built a great relationship with the Fabric Workshop and Marion ‘Kippy’ Stroud, the founder,” says Yanez.



Leaf installation by Miami artist Karen Rifas.

“She invited us to do an exhibition at her space after seeing the video exhibition *Fighting, Kissing, Dancing* at our space, curated by local artist Carlos Rigau.” The result of Stroud’s enthusiasm was a show called “*Liquid Matter*,” which Yanez says “helped local artists branch out of Miami and gain exposure to other art scenes.”

Yanez points to another distinctive aspect of the de la Cruz operation. “Even though we’re not a museum or foundation, we act as a public institution,” she says. “We’re helping to build the structure that our city needs.” And, she stresses, it’s at no cost to that public.

Says Rosa de la Cruz: “Art spaces should be admission-free. I believe that this is important for all communities.”

Of course, many art spaces would go broke without admission fees, which underscores another way in which Rosa and Carlos de la Cruz are the exceptions to the rules that seem to govern the art world.

Thanks to Carlos’s success as a businessman (among other business interests, he is CEO of Eagle Brands, exclusive distributor of Anheuser-Busch products in Miami-Dade County and the Keys, as



Works by Thomas Houseago and Ugo Rondinone on the first floor.

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Rosa de la Cruz, Meredith Darrow, Kathryn Andrews, and Carlos de la Cruz considering an installation.



Rosa is hands-on: Shown here are works by Sterling Ruby and Nate Lowman.

Going Public

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well as chairman of the Coca-Cola bottler in Puerto Rico), he and his wife can fund their Contemporary Art Space at a very high level.

Director Yanez was a judge in this year's annual Optic Nerve experimental film festival at MOCA. For the first time ever, the festival was opened up to participants from across the country. And for the first time the festival traveled to the de la Cruz Collection to show for

a month, giving the festival that much more exposure. "We think it's important to collaborate between public and private institutions," explains de la Cruz. "Bonnie Clearwater [director of MOCA] had collaborated before with us at the Moore Space, and she liked the idea

of extending the days of the exhibition Optic Nerve by showing it in our space for one month."

Another Optic Nerve judge this year was Justin Long. Circling back to the Project

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Indeed the percentage of Miami's foreign buyers has increased from 10% in 2007 to 31% in 2011. Within Brickell, Downtown and the Biscayne Corridor, it is estimated that the percentage of foreign buyers has surpassed 50%. An example of the recent uptick in demand for housing in Miami was the breathtaking pace at which 23 Biscayne Bay, a pre-construction project of 98 units on 23 Street and the bay was sold out within eight months of its initial launch date. La Playa Properties Group spearheaded the sales efforts as the exclusive broker for this project. Thanks to La Playa Properties' extensive list of international buyers, the firm was able to sell out the building's entire inventory in record time.



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Linette Guerra, Managing Partner of La Playa Properties, and Director of Sales for 23 Biscayne Bay answers a few questions about 23 Biscayne Bay, the first pre-construction project along Biscayne Blvd since 2007.

Q. What were the price points of 23 Biscayne Bay that enabled the project to be sold so quickly?

A. Prices at 23 Biscayne Bay ranged from \$180,000 to \$360,000. The units in the building sold at an average of \$235 per sq. ft.

Q. Where is 23 Biscayne Bay located and how did its location affect the sales of the project?

A. 23 Biscayne Bay is located on 23rd Street and Biscayne Bay. This up and coming area is referred to as Edgewater, otherwise known as the Arts and Entertainment District. We certainly did not expect for the building to sell so quickly, but this area has very little inventory. Also, thanks to the myriad projects that are approved and being planned in the area such as the Miami Art and Miami Science Museum, as well as various shopping, hotel and entertainment complexes that have recently been highlighted on the national stage, many buyers that were historically likely to purchase in the beaches are increasingly seeing this part of Miami as a destination unto its own. They are also seeing the area along Biscayne Blvd. just north of Downtown as an increasingly attractive area in which to invest.

Q. When is the closing date anticipated for 23 Biscayne Bay and how will the units be delivered?

A. The developer, Melo Construction, has a history of finishing high quality, affordable projects with luxury detail finishes in record time. To date they have developed 6 buildings in Miami and all have finished on time and under budget. The closings will be in June of 2012 and the units, which all have ample windows and expansive terraces with spectacular views of the Bay will be delivered to the new owners in ready to move in condition, with flooring, ceiling light fixtures, blinds, etc. Thus the owners will have no new out of pocket expenses after closing and will be able to immediately move in or rent the unit as they see fit.

Q. Is there a glut in the Miami Housing Market?

A. All new data and economic figures point to the fact that the level of existing, as well as planned new inventory are within current and predicted levels of demand. In fact, 90% of the units that were built in Miami in between 2005 and 2010 are now occupied and there is still strong demand for middle income housing in the local rental market.



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Linette Guerra, Sales Director 23 Biscayne Bay

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George Sanchez-Calderon's *Family of Man* occupied the Project Room this past fall.



The collection's extensive library, like the space itself, is open to the public at no charge.

Going Public

Continued from page 36

Room dedicated to local art, he will work with Robert Lorie (they are known as the collaborative Funner Projects) for "Maintain Right," the Project Room show for this year's

Art Basel. "Artists are invited to propose ideas or site-specific installations, and then we have three projects per year," says de la Cruz. "It's an integral part of our mission to showcase art from artists living in Miami."

In keeping with the Project Space's developing custom, Long will be pushing

some boundaries with "Maintain." In the past, Funner Projects has used knives, machetes, and meat in their work. Long describes what we will encounter this way: "Every hour on the hour, the garage door opens. Two men emerge, wheeling a large crossbow into position. They take

some measurements, and wind back the bow. The arrow is in place. All clear. Fire in the hole! *Bang!!*"

Long says Rosa de la Cruz read about a version of this installation on a

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Going Public

Continued from page 38

blog. “Then we discussed what parts of the show would work best in the Collection for Basel.”

As anyone who has visited the space and seen Rosa de la Cruz actively working in the library or on an installation, it’s clear she has a hands-on, daily interaction with the art, and what is exhibited and how it is displayed.

As for the main exhibit opening this month for Art Basel, de la Cruz says it too will be somewhat unconventional, at least in delivery. “Rather than doing a traditional thematic exhibition or creating a dialogue between the individual artists,” she says, “this year’s overall pattern could be interpreted as a large puzzle.” Some of the walls in the space will be installed salon-style, crowded with work. “At first glance, the viewer will be overwhelmed by color and pattern; on closer observation, the pattern dissolves and the individual works reveal themselves.”

Artist George Sanchez-Calderon was given the previous Project Room



On the third floor: Works by Gabriel Orozco.

exhibit this fall, which he called *Family of Man*, a name taken from one of the biggest photography exhibits of all time, the “every-man” photographs collected by Edward Steichen for a show at New York’s Museum of Modern Art in 1955.

For his reimagined version, Sanchez-Calderon bought an old train-station sign, which once announced times and destinations in South Boston. In this case, however, not just destinations but also names of corporations pop up, actually flip over. It’s both a nod to an era past (most train



Second-floor installation by Aaron Curry.

and airport signs are now digital), and to the current one we inhabit.

Sanchez-Calderon often comments of the state of man, on our relationship to the urban landscape, and in this instance on

Continued on page 42

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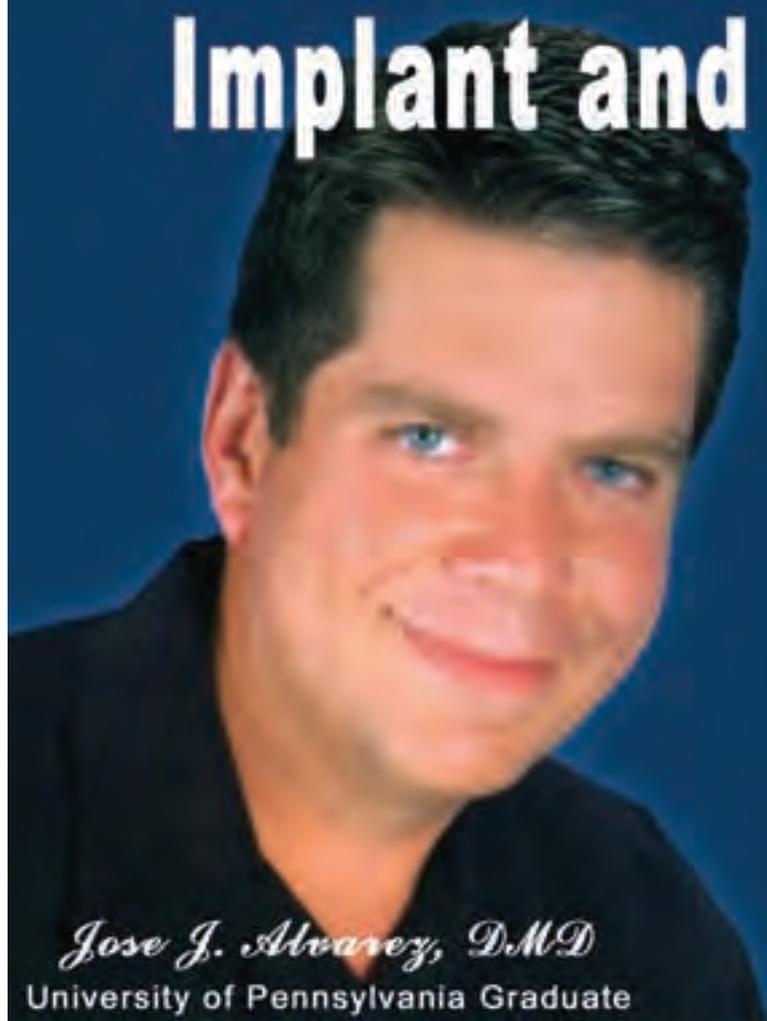
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The People Have Spoken (Okay, Call It a Whisper)

Analysis of Miami's District 2 election reveals the runaway winner: Apathy

By Erik Bojnansky
BT Senior Writer

Armed with a campaign war chest totaling \$509,300, which was nearly \$200,000 more than all four of his challengers combined, Marc Sarnoff raked in 53 percent of the vote on November 1, enabling his re-election to the District 2 seat on the Miami City Commission without a runoff.

"It was a great victory, I thought," says Sarnoff, who was first elected commissioner five years ago. Thanking his campaign team, especially his wife, Teresa, he adds, "We did a good job getting our message out there and staying positive."

Sarnoff's win, however, was not ushered in by a majority of the residents in District 2, a diverse and eclectic area that includes some of the Miami's most affluent neighborhoods from Coconut Grove to the Upper Eastside.

In fact voter turnout in the district was a pitifully poor eight percent. Only 5431 of the district's 45,901 registered voters went to the polls or mailed in absentee ballots. Of those, 2873 voted for Sarnoff.

According to Sean Foreman, associate professor of political science at Barry University and an expert in state and local politics, with such a low turnout, Sarnoff's victory can hardly be called a mandate. "It's nothing to be proud of," says Foreman, "but a win is a win."

Frank Rollason, vice president of the Belle Meade Homeowners Association and a BT columnist, contends that Sarnoff is not so popular outside his Coconut Grove home base and the Brickell area, which, thanks to the incumbent's efforts,

received a \$4 million park.

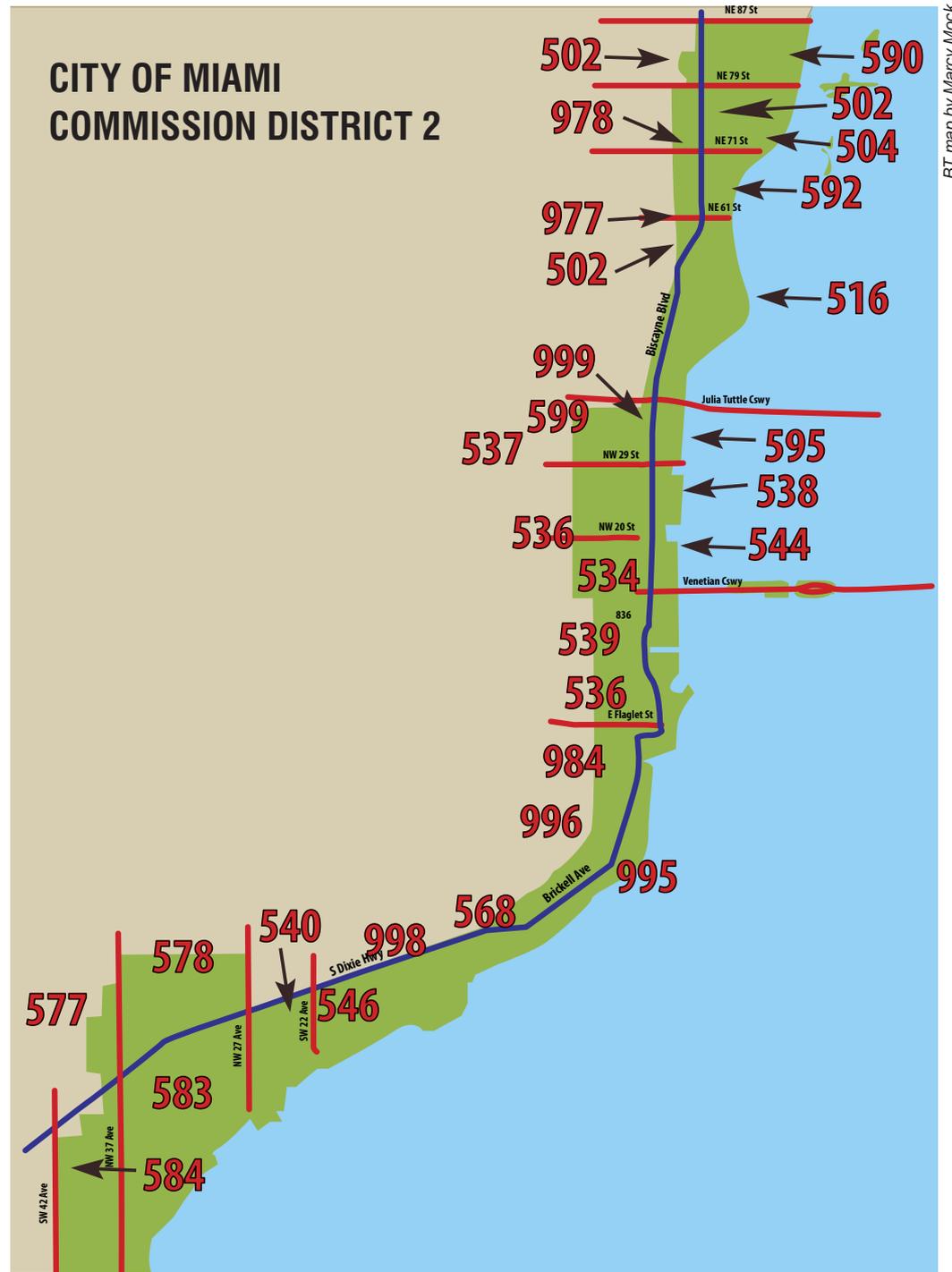
Many dissatisfied residents, Rollason believes, were so apathetic they didn't bother voting. "Don't you think people are disillusioned with the political process?" he asks. "The whole thing is so corrupt, no one in government wants to listen to you, and then, come election time, people say, 'To hell with it.'"

Foreman, who doesn't live in Miami, moderated a forum among the District 2 candidates. In his view, there was a good deal of anti-Sarnoff sentiment within District 2. "A lot of people thought he was arrogant, lost touch with certain parts of the district, or wasn't true to his word," he says, adding that Sarnoff actually benefited from drawing so many opponents: "For Sarnoff to have four challengers was a perfect scenario. He can deflect all the criticism and know that a single person was unable to benefit from his unpopularity."

Even with a divided opposition, Sarnoff captured less than 50 percent of the vote in 14 of the 37 precincts in District 2. Among the neighborhoods where at least half the vote went to Sarnoff's challengers were Belle Meade, Shorecrest, Wynwood, Park West, downtown's Central Business District, Coral Way, and West Grove.

In four precincts Sarnoff was outright defeated by a challenger.

Donna Milo, a Republican and former member of the city's Planning Advisory Board, finished third in the



BT map by Marcy Mock

election with a total of 789 votes. But in precinct 504, which covers much of the Belle Meade neighborhood where Milo lives, she received 109 votes, compared to Sarnoff's 96 votes.

Milo, the lone candidate living outside the Coconut Grove area, also won big in precinct 577, located in the Coral Way neighborhood, receiving 124 votes. Sarnoff got 95 votes. Rollason theorizes that the predominately Hispanic neighborhood responded to Milo's Spanish-language radio advertisements.

Adds Sarnoff: "Milo walked that area two or three days a week. She saw some people there 11 times." (Milo

could not be reached for comment.)

Kate Callahan, a healthcare consultant, finished second on election day, with 1067 votes. Yet she snagged top position in the Upper Eastside's precinct 502 with 46 votes. By contrast, Sarnoff received only 39. A precinct divided into three noncontiguous zones, the 502 represents portions of Belle Meade and Shorecrest, where it's possible that Callahan may have benefited from Rollason's tepid endorsement of "anyone but Sarnoff."

Rollason, a former city administrator who ran against Sarnoff in 2006, says

Continued on page 48

King Mango Strut Invades Wynwood!

On Saturday, December 10, a new incarnation of the Grove's satirical parade will hit the streets — well, not exactly the *public* streets

By Erik Bojnansky
BT Senior Writer

If you're strolling along a Wynwood sidewalk this coming Second Saturday afternoon, and you encounter someone with a green crocodile head wearing a loud suit and tie, do not be alarmed. It's just Alligator Jesus on his way to meet up with zombie art critics, an Anthony Weiner look-alike, walking slot machines, the Angry 1%, and other assorted characters who take humor very seriously.

After almost three decades of spoofing celebrities, current events, and life in general by dressing up and marching down the streets of Coconut Grove, the King Mango Strut will make its debut in gritty Wynwood on December 10 at 5:00 p.m. at the intersection of NW 22nd Street and NW 2nd Avenue.

"Wynwood is a perfect place for us original strutters to stage our simple, barebones, green event with no motorized vehicles," says Glenn Terry, co-founder of the King Mango Strut. "The business owners and artists there have

welcomed us with open arms."

Among those embracing the strut are Wynwood property owners David Lombardi and Tony Goldman. "I like the guy," Lombardi says of Terry. "And I like the gregariousness of the event. I think it is great."

So smitten is Lombardi that he's letting Terry and his strutters parade around his three-acre lot, which often hosts monthly events during Second Saturdays.

Then, at around 6:00 p.m., the King Mango Strut will convene at Wynwood Walls, property owned by Goldman. There, as a live band performs, the strut will be transformed into installation art. "It will be sort of like a stationary parade," Terry says. "The art zombies will criticize all the art on the walls and say things like 'Need more blood.' And Anthony Weiner will continue taking pictures of his crotch."

There will be local political satire as well. Nancy Liebman, acting president of the MiMo Biscayne Association, says her group plans to spoof the 35-foot height limit imposed on the MiMo Biscayne Boulevard Historic District.



BT photo by Wendy Doscher-Smith

Compelling evidence that Wynwood habitués are every bit as clever as strutting Grovites.

At press time, their skit, like the rest of the parade, was still evolving, but it will probably involve hats. "It is such a hoot that he's doing it in Wynwood," Liebman says. "There are as many clever people up there as there are in the Grove."

David Josef Tamargo, a 27-year-old performance artist and curator, says the Wynwood parade will mark his first-ever participation in the King Mango Strut. He'll perform in the guise of his alter ego, Alligator Jesus. "This is a King Mango Strut that will show a different side of what people are used to seeing in the Grove the past few years," Tamargo notes.

But the inauguration of the Wynwood King Mango Strut doesn't signal the end of the lampooning festivities in Coconut

Grove. The King Mango Strut also will take place in the Grove on December 31 at 2:00 p.m., beginning at corner of Commodore Plaza and Main Highway.

In keeping with the surrealist drama that characterizes King Mango, although both parades will be using the King Mango name, they're being run by separate entities. Terry says that, three years ago, he lost control of the nonprofit that organizes the Grove event. "They don't want my kind of parade in the Grove anymore," he explains. "That's probably why my permit was revoked in 2009."

But this is familiar territory for Terry. After all, the first King Mango

Continued on page 50

All in the Family

At North Miami's Biscayne Landing, the faces are as familiar as those on dollar bills

By Erik Bojnansky
BT Senior Writer

Former North Miami Mayor Josephat "Joe" Celestin says turning Biscayne Landing, a city-owned former landfill, into a multibillion-dollar residential and commercial project was "a dream of mine. The place is very close and dear to my heart."

Now Celestin is profiting from that dream.

Since May 17, Celestin's contracting firm has been earning \$19,500 a

month supervising the maintenance and decontamination of Biscayne Landing, a 190-acre tract of land just south of FIU's Biscayne Bay campus at 151st Street and Biscayne Boulevard.

Celestin, a licensed general contractor with a master's degree in architecture and engineering from the University of Haiti, says he has all the necessary permits needed to restart clean-up efforts. "We are moving forward and by the middle of [December] we will be in full operation," Celestin says. "By next year, we will have a clean site on hand."



BT photo by Wendy Doscher-Smith

As if the toxic mess below ground weren't enough, when the wind is right, Biscayne Landing can smell like sewage.

North Miami officials are counting on revenue from Biscayne Landing to balance the city's budget. Without the \$19

million developer Michael Swerdlow has promised to pay the city once it finalizes a

Continued on page 52

Crash Landing

A Miami flight attendant discovers he's the victim of identity theft — then things get *really* turbulent

By Margaret Griffis
BT Contributor

Robert Dunn speaks in a warm, mile-a-minute Georgia accent, glad to discuss anything under the sun while making sure his guests are comfortable and well served. Perhaps it's a holdover from his job as a flight attendant. Ironically, the last few years have been anything but smooth flying for the 51-year-old Dunn.

Back in 2008, like today, Dunn was living in a modest Upper Eastside house, driving an old Ford, and spending a great deal of time flying for U.S. Airways, where he has worked as a flight attendant for 23 years. Wanting

company for his dog and a sitter for his house, the openly gay Dunn invited Edgardo Ruben Bork, a friend and sometimes lover, to be his roommate.

Bork was a great roommate at first, says Dunn, but the airline veteran realized something was amiss when financial documents in both their names began arriving at the house. He recalled that his wallet had gone missing, briefly, after a trip to Paris. Dunn's alarm went off.

When he checked his credit report, Dunn discovered that he appeared to be a victim of identity theft. Not wanting drama, he amicably parted ways with Bork and filled out a police report. The nightmare, however, was only beginning.



BT photo by Margaret Griffis

Robert Dunn says he suffered the theft of his identity — and a personal insult.

One line Dunn found on his credit report was for a \$50,000 BMW convertible purchased on an installment plan by Gustavo Ecenarro, whom Dunn knew only as Bork's boyfriend. Dunn was listed as the co-signer on the loan. Dunn surmised the co-signer was

actually Bork, posing as him. (Attempts to reach Bork and Ecenarro for this story were unsuccessful.)

Dunn approached the dealership where the purchase had been made,

Continued on page 54

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District 2

Continued from page 44

he hosted an informal meet-and-greet for Callahan at his home, but did not campaign for anyone. But Rollason says his neighbors would sometimes ask him who he planned to vote for. And so he'd tell them. "Whoever was going to beat Sarnoff was going to come out of the Grove," Rollason says. And of the Grove candidates, Rollason felt that Callahan, who had the second-largest campaign chest in the race (\$144,200), had the best chance to win.

Williams Armbrister, a retired FP&L foreman with the smallest campaign account (\$1205) and the fewest votes overall (190), managed to tie Sarnoff in precinct 585, which covers the West Grove. Sarnoff and Armbrister, who campaigned to protect the historic Bahamian-American community from overdevelopment, each received 43 votes.

Michelle Niemeyer, a Coconut Grove Village Council member, finished fourth in the general election with 531 votes, but failed to win any precincts. She also couldn't draw more than 30 votes in any

precinct outside the Grove.

Sarnoff, meanwhile, garnered far more than 50 percent of the vote from precincts in Coconut Grove (except West Grove), Brickell, the Venetian Islands, Edgewater, Palm Grove, Morningside, and Bayside.

Precincts within Coconut Grove, where Sarnoff snagged the largest share of votes, had voter turnouts surpassing 15 percent. Although Precinct 581, which covers Vizcaya, Mercy Hospital, and Virginia Key, has only 443 voters, its turnout was the best in the election: 39 percent. Of the precinct's 125 votes for Sarnoff, fully 59 percent were absentee ballots.

Sarnoff, in fact, overwhelmed his opponents in terms of absentee ballots. He collected 1279 absentee votes while his four opponents combined received 1010.

"This was a race won by absentee ballots," Rollason says. "When they showed the vote count on TV, they showed the absentee ballots and early-voting results first, and Sarnoff was already at 54 percent. There was no way anyone was going to catch up to him at the polls."

Sarnoff did particularly well with absentee ballots in Brickell, receiving 65 percent of them (341) cast within precincts 541, 569, 995, and 996.

Candidate Niemeyer filed a complaint with the Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics regarding the Downtown Development Authority's "Downtown Votes" campaign, which collected information on voting patterns of downtown and Brickell area residents and encouraged them to send absentee ballots to the DDA office.

According to Niemeyer, the DDA, a taxpayer-supported agency chaired by Sarnoff, violated state statutes by allowing the commissioner to sit in on meetings discussing the "Downtown Votes" program.

Sarnoff says the DDA's voter drive was enacted more than a year ago and insisted that no one in his campaign "touched" the ballots sent to the offices. "Even if there were *no* absentee ballots," he says, "we would have won with 51 percent of the vote."

The commissioner also points out that the downtown-Brickell area had a dismal turnout of about six percent.

"That's why I'm laughing at this whole DDA issue," Sarnoff says. "No one got the message out to them [downtown residents] to vote."

The commissioner notes that his strongest support came from neighborhoods with the most full-time, property-owning residents throughout District 2. The reason, according to Sarnoff, was that they know he would insist District 2, which supplies 78 percent of Miami's revenue, deserves a return on their taxes: "People who pay taxes get services, and that includes parks, better streets, and sidewalks."

Elvis Cruz, president of the Morningside Civic Association, says Sarnoff's support for the 35-foot height limit for future development along the MiMo Biscayne Boulevard Historic District earned him support from residents living in the Upper Eastside. "Other factors that may have helped Sarnoff were his sponsorship and passage of a domestic-partner ordinance in the City of Miami and his responsiveness to infrastructure requests," Cruz writes in an e-mail to the *BT*.

Continued on page 56



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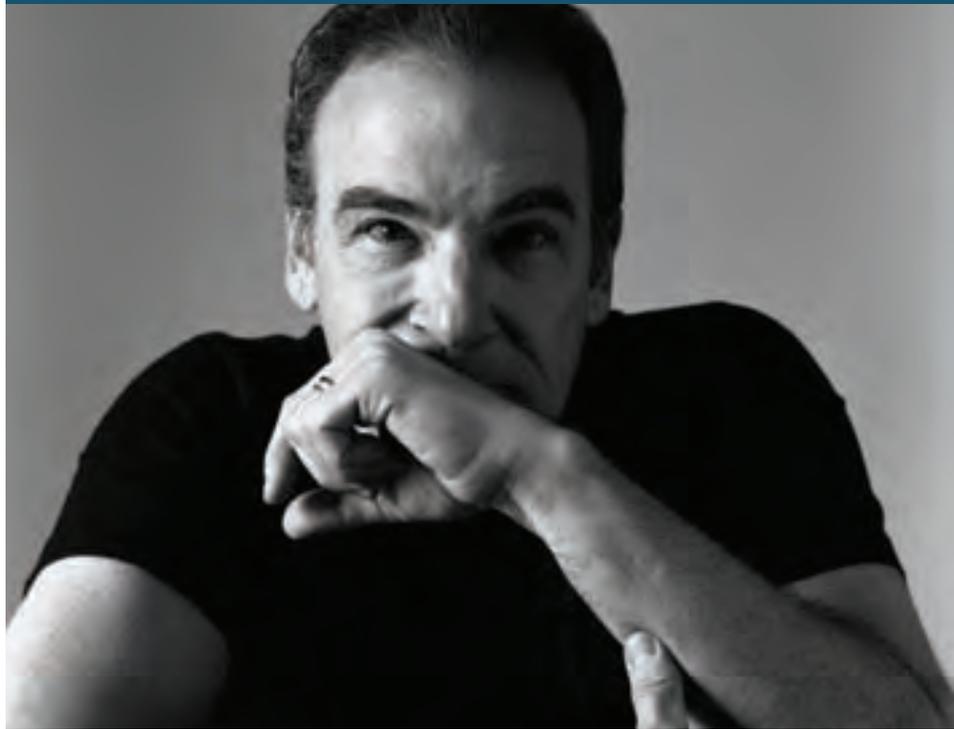
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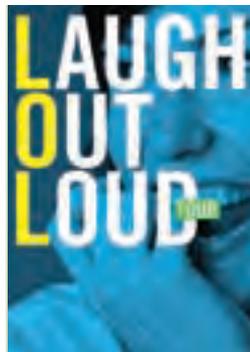
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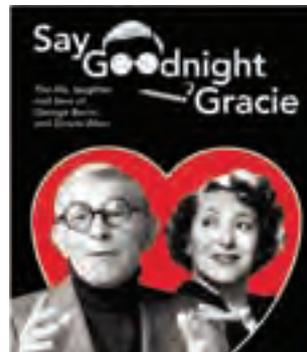
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BT photo by Wendy Doscher-Smith

Glenn Terry: "Business owners and artists have welcomed us with open arms."

King Mango Strut

Continued from page 45

Strut was born out of rejection.

Terry and his friends wanted to march in the Orange Bowl Parade as the Mango Marching Band. But the parade's mainstream organizers weren't impressed with a cassette tape of them playing kazoos while wearing cardboard mango heads during the Goombay Festival, another Grove mainstay.

So in 1982, Terry, computer specialist Bob Dobson, and other Coconut Grovites decided to throw their own parade. The Mangoheads, as they called themselves, posed as teens carrying ghetto-blasters, Cosmic Claus and his nearly topless helpers, the South Florida Dog Walkers and (close behind) the Pooper Scooper Brigade.

From then on, the King Mango Strut marched in Coconut Grove every December like clockwork, mocking news events and satirizing local issues. It even outlasted the 67-year-old Orange Bowl Parade, which ceased to exist in 2002.

Tamargo says he was a face-painted teen when he first saw the King Mango Strut in action ten years ago. While hanging out with a group of 50 adolescent fans of the band Insane Clown Posse, he saw gangs of zany, costumed middle-age folks (in their 30s and 40s) suddenly appear. "I just remember they were doing something really goofy and thinking, 'These guys are more crazy than we are,'" Tamargo recalls.

It was weeks later when Tamargo learned that what he'd witnessed was an event called the King Mango Strut. He became a follower, but says he noticed a change in the past couple of years. "The

King Mango Strut everyone has come to laugh at in the Grove has become a laughable bastardization of the original ideal," he sniffs.

The alleged decline in humor can be blamed on a Mangohead civil war. Following the death of Dobson in 2004, the nonprofit group overseeing the event, King Mango Strut, Inc., had two directors: Glenn Terry and Antoinette Baldwin, an organizer for the parade since 1991. The two had different ideas about how the parade should operate. "Around 2006 she started asking to expand the parade, to increase its budget, and in my opinion to dumb it down," Terry asserts. "She said I was stuck in the past. I told her we'd been very successful in the past. And so it went."

The dispute came to a head in 2009 when Terry, who owns the trademark to the King Mango Strut name and logo, splintered off from Baldwin and formed his own group: The King Mango Players. But that year and the next, the City of Miami opted to give the King Mango Strut permit to Baldwin's group instead of transferring it to Terry. (Baldwin did not respond to messages seeking comment.)

In an attempt to reclaim what he saw as the flagging spirit of King Mango under Baldwin's leadership, Terry launched a "flash parade" in neighboring South Miami on January 30 of this year. The King Mango Strut marched for five minutes along Sunset Drive, already closed off for an antique car show.

Among the participants was South Miami Mayor Philip Stoddard. But the mayor's presence didn't stop a city magistrate from fining the King Mango

Continued on page 54



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Directed by Vincent Morisset



Inni is Sigur Rós' second live film following 2007's hugely-celebrated *Helma*. Whereas that film positioned the enigmatic group in the context of their Icelandic homeland, providing geographical, social, and historical perspectives on their otherworldly music, with uplifting results, *Inni* focuses purely on the band's performance, which is artfully and intimately captured by French-Canadian director Vincent Morisset (Arcade Fire's *Miroir Noir*). Interweaving archive material from the band's first ten years with the sometimes gossamer light, sometimes punishingly intense, concert footage, *Inni* is a persuasive account of one of the most celebrated and influential rock bands of recent years.

December 9th to 15th

Seducing Charlie Barker

Directed by Amy Glazer



Charlie Barker is an accomplished and respected actor in the New York scene. Married for 10 years to Stella, a television talk show producer who is equally accomplished and respected, with one difference. She works and

Charlie auditions. Despite that small drawback, they are happy and content. When Charlie attends a party thrown by his former best friend turned TV writer, they happen upon sexy, dumb and definitely weird Clea, a sex bomb who is at turns entertaining, engaging and repulsive all at once. How this encounter effects his main relationship and his view of himself is at the core of this smart, biting, clever, funny and deeply dark film.

December 15th to 25th

Being Elmo

Directed Constance Marks



Every day, millions of kids tune in to Sesame Street to see one of the world's most adored and recognizable characters, a furry red monster named Elmo. Yet, with all of Elmo's fame, no one knows the man behind the Muppet. Meet Kevin Clash. As average teenager growing up in Baltimore in the 1970s, Kevin had very different aspirations from his classmates—he wanted to be part of Jim Henson's team of Muppeteers. With a supportive family behind him every step of the way, Kevin made those dreams come true. Combining amazing archival footage with material from the present day, filmmaker Constance Marks explores the man behind Elmo in one of the years most touching films.

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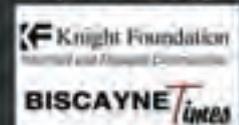
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Community News: BISCAYNE CORRIDOR

Biscayne Landing

Continued from page 45

100-year lease deal with him, the city may have to lay off as many as 100 employees to fill a \$6 million budget hole.

It will also cost the city \$619,000 per year just to maintain and secure the site. (A \$31 million county bond issue reimburses the city for environmental remediation and monitoring costs.)

But the longer the city holds the site, the more money Celestin makes overseeing a half-dozen companies who provide security, maintenance, environmental monitoring, and ground clean-up. Celestin's contract ends once Swerdlow finalizes a deal with the city to develop residential buildings, stores, restaurants, offices, hotels, an assisted-living facility, and a film and video production studio on the property.

Councilman Jean Marcellus recently suggested that remediation work at Biscayne Landing be completed *prior* to signing a deal with a developer. Marcellus made the argument at the end of a turbulent November 22 city council meeting that stretched past midnight, says Councilman Scott Galvin. "He was advocating for halting further negotiations with Swerdlow, spending nine months to clean up the land, [predicting that] once the land was clean, the value would be greatly increased," Galvin says.

It would also mean nine more months of money in Celestin's pocket.

Mayor Andre Pierre wasn't sure where Marcellus was headed with his suggestion: "The councilman was not really clear what exactly he wanted the council to discuss."

The city council moved to address Marcellus's proposal at its next meeting on December 13.

Marcellus could not be reached for comment. Celestin, reached by the *BT* after the November 22 meeting, denies any knowledge of Marcellus's proposal. "I only talked about the process of remediation and how many months it will take," he says.

Marcellus is a political ally of Celestin. This past February, according to Marcellus's Facebook page, the councilman was campaigning for Celestin in his failed Republican candidacy for state senator. Two months later Marcellus publicly supported Celestin obtaining the Biscayne Landing management contract.

Celestin also has a pre-existing relationship with Swerdlow. In September

2006, 16 months after Celestin left office, Swerdlow paid him \$10,000 and bought the mortgage of a house owned by the former mayor's construction company at 396 NW 159th St. for \$400,000 as part of a 150-unit townhouse land venture.

When the project fell apart two years later, Swerdlow sued to foreclose on the house. Under a settlement agreement, finalized this past May, Celestin rents the house from Swerdlow, who holds title to the property.

Both Celestin and Swerdlow claim their differences are behind them. "I loaned the guy too much money — am I supposed to hate him for it?" Swerdlow quips.

Yet as recently as July, Swerdlow's attorney, John Dellagloria, filed a legal motion claiming that Celestin "steadfastly refused, after numerous written and oral requests, to execute a warranty deed to the property as agreed."

Since 1945 a series of projects has been proposed on what was originally known as the Graves Tract. By 1974, the city hired a company called Munisport to turn the land into a golf course. To create artificial hills, Munisport ran the site as a 24-hour dump that accepted everything from yard clippings to medical waste.

The federal Environmental Protection Agency shut down the dump in 1982 and placed it on the notorious Superfund list. After the city spent \$6 million to somewhat remediate the land, the EPA took the tract off its list in 1999. However, the county's Department of Environmental Resources Management continues to monitor the site, which retains high levels of ammonia and methane.

In 2002, during Celestin's first term as mayor, the city picked Swerdlow and Boca Developers to build 6000 high-end condo units, 100,000 square feet of retail, and a hotel on the site. According to the *Miami Herald*, negotiations over the original 200-year Biscayne Landing lease included private meetings between Celestin and Swerdlow.

In 2006, Boca Developers bought Swerdlow's interest in Biscayne Landing for an undisclosed sum. Boca Developers managed to build two 24-story towers before defaulting on more than \$196 million worth of mortgages in 2009.

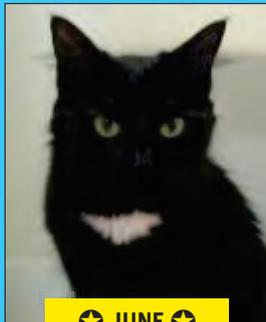
A financial trust tied to the mortgages tried to sell the lease to at least four

Continued on page 57

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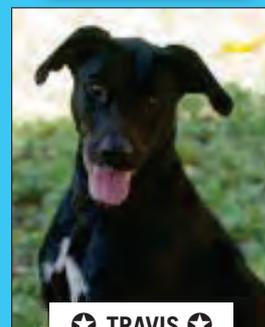
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Community News: BISCAYNE CORRIDOR

King Mango Strut

Continued from page 50

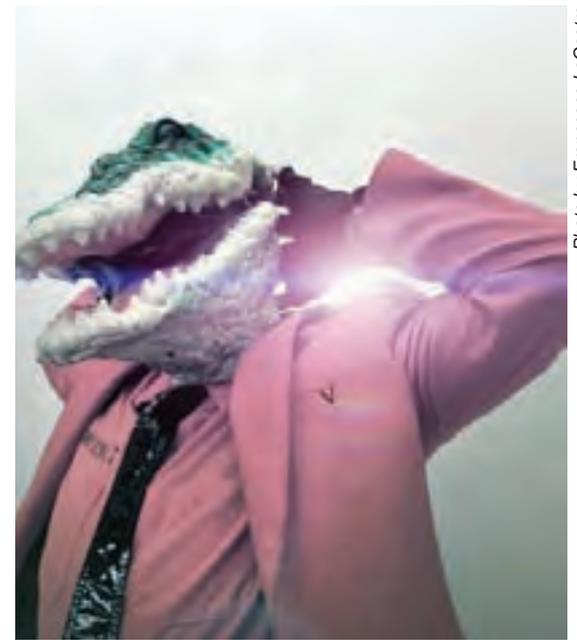
Players \$350 for holding a parade on public property without a permit. Terry says it would have cost about \$20,000 to pull a parade permit for the minutes-long flash mob.

“So I started thinking, ‘We need to reinvent what we’re doing here,’” Terry says. Instead of taking over a public street, the Wynwood King Mango Strut will take place on private property. No city permit required.

“This is the perfect place for a parade,” Terry says. “And we’ll do it early in the evening, before [the Second Saturday art walk] gets packed.”

Although the parade was founded in Coconut Grove, Terry says Wynwood has plenty of creative and youthful energy for the strut to prosper. Besides, he points out, “Some of the Mangoheads are just too old to strut. They can’t walk very well. For it to continue, we have to pass it on to a new generation.”

Paralegal Mylene Barrientos, a ten-year follower of the King Mango Strut who feels the event lost some of its humorous edge with Terry’s departure, plans to defect to the Wynwood strut



David Josef Tamargo as Alligator Jesus.

this year. Her boyfriend will be former Congressman Anthony Weiner.

Barrientos is still trying to figure out what part she’ll play. “Maybe a manatee driving a boat over humans,” she muses. But she still plans to watch the Coconut Grove strut, too. “A lot of my friends are still in it, and I always socialize and party afterward,” she says. “I really enjoy the parade. I hope they both do well.”

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

Crash Landing

Continued from page 46

Lauderdale BMW in Fort Lauderdale, explaining that Ecenarro and Bork had hoodwinked them. The dealership, says Dunn, didn’t seem to care. As far as it was concerned, it had gotten its money. The problem now belonged to Ohio-based BMW Financial Services.

Dunn remained optimistic that things could be cleared up. This, despite learning that the dealership had no showroom video of Ecenarro’s visit, which might have revealed the identity of the co-signer. (A BMW representative had driven the car down to Dunn’s home, where the papers were signed.) That didn’t matter, Dunn thought. Using flight records, he could prove he had been in New Hampshire that day.

Dunn attempted to explain the situation to BMW Financial and filled out a separate report for them, thinking the issue would be resolved quickly, as it had been with other duped creditors he notified. But BMW Financial didn’t seem to

care, either.

According to Dunn, someone he spoke with at BMW Financial instead dismissed the theft of Dunn’s identity as “a lover’s quarrel,” presumably because all three principals were gay.

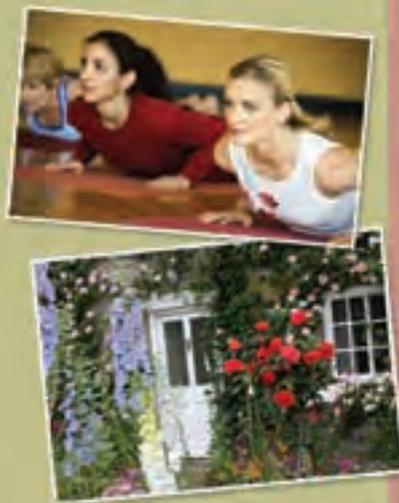
Dunn futilely sought help from police (no criminal charges have been brought against Bork or Ecenarro) and consumer advocates before turning to lawyer Scott R. Dinin, who, upon hearing Dunn’s story, immediately took on what he calls the rare “black-and-white” case late last year.

Because the Federal Aviation Administration regulates airlines, notes Dinin, the U.S. government is essentially a witness to Dunn’s work trip to New Hampshire on the day the sale took place. One phone call to U.S. Airways could have resolved the issue three years ago, but Dinin feels a couple of factors worked against Dunn.

One was alleged homophobic bigotry on the part of BMW employees,

Continued on page 56

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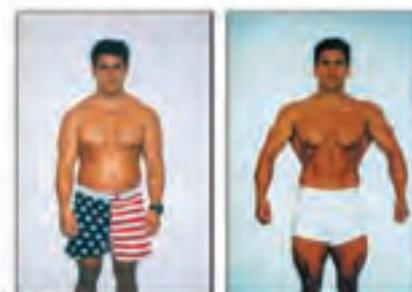
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Community News: BISCAYNE CORRIDOR

Crash Landing

Continued from page 54

as evidenced by the “lover’s quarrel” remark. The other was that Ecenarro had been making his payments, so BMW was getting their money.

Even with Dinin representing Dunn, BMW Financial continued to ignore requests for prompt, corrective action. In fact, things were about to get considerably worse.

Dunn claims that, when Ecenarro learned that Dunn had retained a lawyer, he returned the car to BMW. The car was then auctioned off at a \$15,000 loss that Dunn was liable for as co-signer. BMW informed the credit agencies of the “charge off” (meaning an uncollectible loss) and Dunn’s credit score nosedived. Dunn says BMW didn’t bother to report any of this to him. He only learned about it by monitoring his credit report.

BMW finally responded to Dinin’s demands for corrective action in April of this year, admitting in a letter that they “had determined that Mr. Dunn did not establish this account.” They promised to clear up the matter with the credit agencies within 60 days. As of October, one agency still carried the negative line.

Dunn says BMW Financial’s inadequate response has cost him. He has spent time and money trying to rectify a situation that was not of his making, and he also would have liked to take advantage of historically low interest rates to refinance his home and shrink his mortgage payments substantially. BMW robbed him of this opportunity by incorrectly keeping his credit score low.

This hit to Dunn’s financial health, and the alleged characterization of his troubles as a “lover’s triangle,” is why Dunn and Dinin filed a lawsuit in state court last month. They are claiming that BMW Financial and Holman

Automotive (owners of Lauderdale BMW) were negligent and, in the case of BMW Financial, defamed Dunn in violation of Miami-Dade’s Human Rights Ordinance, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

So far, both BMW and Holman are fighting the charges. A lawyer for Holman, Kenneth I. Paretti, gave the *BT* the following statement: “There are no allegations of wrongdoing as to the dealership at all. It seems to pertain only to [BMW Financial Services]. [The complaint] is devoid of any allegations of wrongdoing on behalf of the dealership. Though we are named as a defendant, it’s directed solely to BMW Financial Services.”

BMW Financial, through their attorney, Christopher W. Prusaski, declined any comment beyond the legal response to the suit, which asks the court to dismiss it on technical grounds. In essence, they claim that the Fair Credit Reporting Act — intended to help people like Dunn — forces all lawsuits of this type up to the federal court level.

The state court has yet to dismiss Dunn’s suit. Dinin is confident that, should he have to take the case to federal court, he can win there.

Even if BMW were to offer a settlement now, Dunn says he may not take it. He and Dinin believe there is more at stake here. “I want my client to be made whole, however he needs to feel whole” says the lawyer. “Second, I want to send a message to people throughout this country — and especially here in Florida — that you cannot discriminate against people because of their sexual preference.... And third, we need to send a message to BMW and other big corporations [that], if you’re going to do business in this state, it’s a privilege, it is not a right. You’re here to serve us, not take advantage of us.”

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

District 2

Continued from page 48

Within Cruz’s own precinct, 516, where voter turnout was 14 percent, Sarnoff garnered 124 votes, or 54 percent. Cruz says there would have been more voters had it not been for poor planning by the Miami-Dade Elections Department. “Precinct 516’s polling station was moved from Morningside Park to Legion Park without any prior notification from the Elections Department, and with only

a small, easily missed sign announcing it on Election Day,” Cruz writes. “I know of several voters who were confused and/or inconvenienced, some not able to vote because of the switch.”

Sarnoff is pleased with the support he received from District 2, despite the low turnout and the fact that each vote cost him at least \$162. “I think a lot of people were very satisfied,” he says. “They never thought I was in jeopardy of losing.”

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

Biscayne Landing

Continued from page 52

development teams, including Swerdlow. Finally, on March 31, 2011, after the trust refused to fulfill its financial obligations, the city reclaimed direct control of Biscayne Landing.

The council sent out a new request for proposals from developers on May 17, the same day Celestin won control of the manage-

ment contract by a narrow 3-2 vote. Four months later, Swerdlow once again became the de

facto winning bidder to develop Biscayne Landing after his only competitor, Ian Bruce Eichner, withdrew his proposal.

Mayor Pierre is reluctant to restart the bidding process, unless current negotiations with Swerdlow fail. "I am negotiating a contract with a developer and that is where I am at," he says. "If the negotiations fail, then we'll look at other options."

Attorney Dellagloria scoffs at the notion that Biscayne Landing can be

fully remediated in less than a year, as claimed by Celestin. "The site will be monitored for the next 20 years. There is no such thing as 'the site will be cleaned up in nine months,'" says Dellagloria, a former North Miami city attorney. "The site is today as it will be tomorrow. Anyone who alleges or believes that there will be a brand-new world nine months from now has no grasp of the actual situation."

"Anyone who alleges or believes that there will be a brand-new world nine months from now has no grasp of the actual situation."

Real estate analyst Michael Cannon agrees that fixing Biscayne Landing is no short-term task. Cannon,

who evaluated the site's conditions for the city in 1999, compares Biscayne Landing to Duck Lake, a former landfill on Virginia Key that Miami city officials estimate will take nearly 30 years, and more than \$45 million, to clean up. "Biscayne Landing is a gigantic project that requires a gigantic company," Cannon asserts. "I wish them the best of luck."

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

Letters

Continued from page 22

participate with your plan, it may be that the plan is not giving out new contracts or is offering substandard rates.

*Kathy Sanchez
Medi-Station Urgent Care Center
Miami Shores*

He is quick to state what a commissioner is against but fails to reveal why. González should take the time to find out the varying points of views and present them without bias. Yes, let's deal with the issues, but it is only fair to our village and respectful to our commissioners to investigate and present both sides.

*Lynn Fischer
Biscayne Park*

Gaspar: A One-Sided Columnist in a Two-Sided World

I think being a neighborhood correspondent for *Biscayne Times* would be a very interesting job, but I also think it's a position that carries a great deal of responsibility.

Gaspar González usually writes about issues that our village, Biscayne Park, is dealing with. He often divides our commissioners, referring to "the three" or "the two," parroting the viewpoints of "the two."

To my recollection, he has never expressed the viewpoints of "the three."

Being a small village, our commissioners are available. I feel it is a disservice to write about issues that Biscayne Park is dealing with without explaining both sides.

Journalism 101: Get the Name Right!

Editor's note: In last issue's cover story "Into the Fire," about Miami-Dade College's new Miami Culinary Institute, we misspelled the name of a member of the institute's Chef's Council. The correct spelling is Rudi Sodamin.

A "Community News" story in the same issue misspelled the name of Alaska Coffee Roasting Company co-owner Karen Tuvia. Not only that, we placed her business in the Publix shopping center when in fact it is part of the nearby Navarro shopping center at 13130 Biscayne Blvd.

We regret the errors.

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Time for Plan B

FIU's president backs away from opening the Arch Creek East Nature Preserve trail to traffic — for now

By **Mark Sell**
BT Contributor

Florida International University President Mark Rosenberg ran into a buzz saw November 22 before the North Miami City Council when he began to make his case for turning the Arch Creek East Nature Preserve trail back into a road linking 135th Street to FIU.

As soon as he said "135th Street," the standing-room-only crowd in North Miami's council chambers erupted into boos, catcalls, and heckles. After a three-hour public hearing, the council voted 5-0 to keep the nature trail open. So 135th Street is off the table — for now. Rosenberg had raised the issue in

early November, only to have his head handed to him at the public meeting.

Vote aside, Rosenberg maintains that FIU's expansion plans for the Biscayne Bay campus demand a second entrance. His new master plan calls for doubling the size of the 7800-student campus over the next ten years. Enrollment at the 46,000-student university — the school's main campus is in West Miami-Dade — is growing by 2000 students a year.

"I've got a year-and-a-half to solve this," he explained during a November 10 interview in the lunchroom at FIU's new and growing 60,000-square-foot downtown Brickell campus. "I need help."

What the genial Rosenberg did not appear to need was a war. He prefers



BT photo by Wendy Doscher-Smith

consensus. He is respected within the university, among his peers, and in Tallahassee, where, until recently, he was chancellor of the state university system. (But he is also no pushover, as he proved years ago as FIU provost under sharp-elbowed ex-president Modesto "Mitch" Maidique.)

Rosenberg's vision is to turn the Biscayne Bay campus into an educational village, with a possible new campus for Miami-Dade College and ever-stronger links to the adjoining David Lawrence Elementary and Alonzo and Tracy Mourning Senior High School. He envisions expanding the university's

popular Kovens Center into a destination corporate meeting facility with lodgings for attendees.

Over the next decade, the 62-year-old Rosenberg wants to double the size of the School of Journalism and Mass Communication and the School of Hospitality and Tourism, dramatically expand the School of Environmental Arts and Society (i.e., math, engineering, and the sciences), and add student housing.

If he doesn't get that second entrance soon, he has said, he'll shift his focus to the main campus nearly 25 miles away. That means encroaching onto the 86

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acres now occupied by the youth fair and forging closer ties with the more amenable and adjoining City of Sweetwater.

Not that North Miami hasn't been willing to meet Rosenberg half way. The access route preferred by residents and the city council would go through 143rd Street from Biscayne Boulevard, through Biscayne Landing, and over wetlands via a flyover. Developer Michael Swerdlow is glad to work with it, if and when he secures the land.

But Rosenberg says the 143rd Street route, as a short-term solution, is too expensive (\$25 million-plus), iffy (permitting issues over wetlands), and would take at least five years, even if Swerdlow gave North Miami \$24 million tomorrow. He adds that widening 151st Street won't do the trick, and that opening 156th Street (by the sewage treatment plant) presents environmental problems. And remember, he needs his road *now*.

What's the rush? For Rosenberg, certain considerations just won't wait: emergency access, alternate evacuation routes, two slow-speed school zones on 151st Street, traffic relief for an expanded campus, and the inevitable development

of Biscayne Landing.

"In the same way we work with Sweetwater, we want to work with the City of North Miami," Rosenberg says. "We want to be good neighbors. We want to make this a win-win for the community. Twenty-seven hundred people affiliated with FIU live in the City of North Miami. We have 300 new faculty coming on board at the Biscayne Bay campus over the next ten years, and 40 percent of them would consider living in North Miami. This is what many communities dream of."

To keep those dreams from becoming nightmares, however, Rosenberg and FIU will have some damage to repair.

The 135th Street opening issue left a scar. Residents saw FIU's plan to convert their quiet street into a thoroughfare as an assault on their fragile property values and the neighborhood's peaceful character. They have also complained that FIU waited until the last minute to reveal its intentions.

For them, opening that road (pictured here) decimates painstaking work by the Arch Creek East Neighborhood Association (ACENA), former Mayor Kevin Burns, Councilman Scott Galvin,

and Miami-Dade County Commissioner Sally Heyman to turn the old main road on the failed Munisport project into a nature trail and preserve it "in perpetuity," beginning in 2007.

Galvin, Burns, and other current and former elected officials draw invidious comparisons between FIU and two other local institutions that work at weaving themselves into the fabric of their communities: Barry University and Johnson and Wales University. "They [FIU] are in the City of North Miami, but do not participate," says Galvin, a proud FIU grad who has led the charge against his alma mater on the nature-trail issue. "They don't come to chamber luncheons. They don't do the Thanksgiving parade. It's unfortunate that they have to pick a fight with their neighbors, and that this is their introduction to the community."

Galvin believes FIU might still try to secure the preserve land through eminent domain by working in Tallahassee. Residents remain wary.

"The preserve is for everybody to come and enjoy," says Ilana Burdick, ex-president of ACENA, who is ready to lie down in front of the bulldozers. "If it's

gone, it's gone. And you can't get it back. This is brazenly stealing from the working class. We are trying to have peace and quiet. People come here because of the environment. Why do they keep looking at our street? It's our neighborhood. It's our only jewel, and they are stealing the jewel."

The residents take great pride in North Miami's only preserve, which has become a popular escape not only for residents of densely packed 135th Street, but for FIU students and other visitors on skates, bicycles, and feet. Nature lovers bring their binoculars to catch the migrating birds, the wood storks, and the manatees.

Rosenberg says he gets the message: "The issue was brought up in the appropriate public-policy forum. The vote was decisive and clear. It's time to turn the page and move on. We intend to be good neighbors. I have a mantra: When a horse is dead, dismount."

Yet the conversation about the second access road is probably far from over. Rosenberg, after all, is fond of quoting another favorite mantra: "At FIU, we're good at turning the impossible into the inevitable."

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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Vote for Me

The five candidates for Biscayne Park Commission tell us why they're right for the job

By **Gaspar González**
BT Contributor

With an election this month, I thought it would be worthwhile to turn my column over to the candidates who are running and hear what they had to say about the issues, opportunities, and challenges that are motivating them. Below are statements from incumbent commissioners Bob Anderson and Al Childress and challengers Clediner Supreme Dorvil, Noah Jacobs, and Barbara Watts. These five candidates are running to fill three seats. (Commissioner Steve Bernard declined to run for re-election.)

The statements are solely their own. Read them, consult the record (an official

register of commission votes is available at www.biscayneparkfl.gov), make up your own minds, and — please — come out and vote. Voting will take place **Tuesday, December 6**, at the Ed Burke Recreation Center, 11400 NE 9th Ct.

See you at the polls.

Bob Anderson
Print shop manager (retired)
Resident since 1978

With the support of our residents, I have worked hard to achieve many improvements for our village. Examples: increased community policing; crime rate significantly down; improved drainage for safer streets; new Public Works facility; 6th Avenue beautification; recreation center upgrades.



It's important to prepare myself with all facts on issues we face, listen to our residents, then make decisions based on what's good for our entire village in the long run, not just today. Our residents expect progress, not just talk.

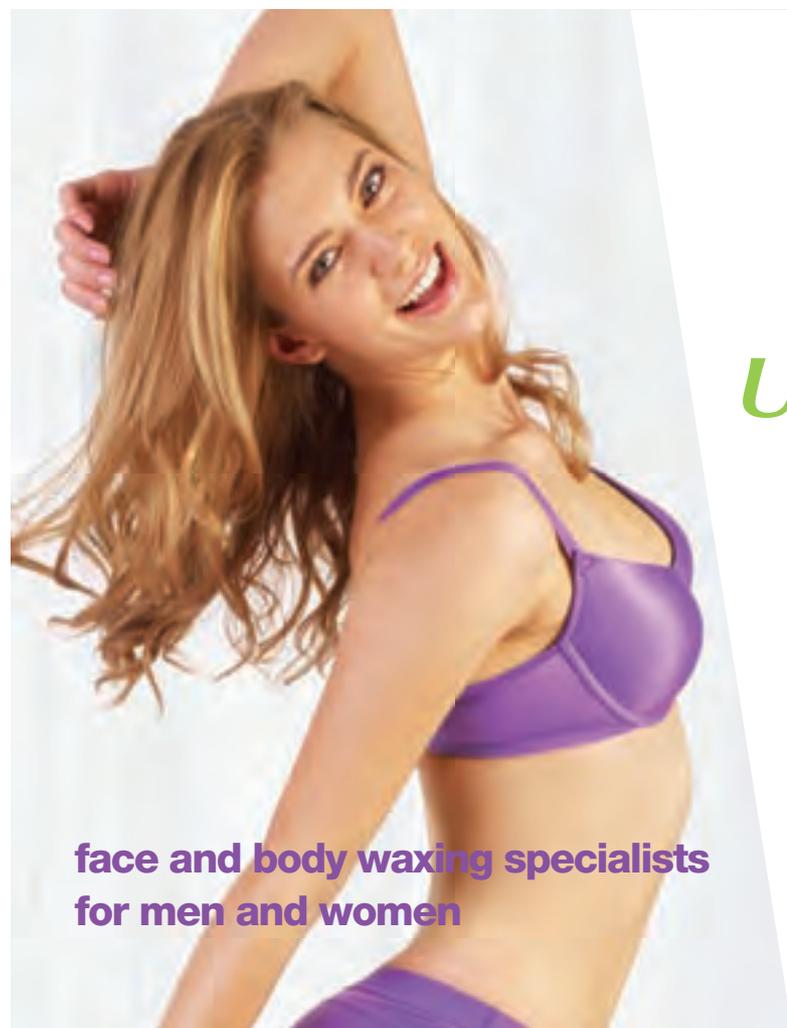
Being a commissioner means being hands-on in our community. Whether it's helping create the butterfly park, helping at holiday events, or meeting with residents to address their concerns, I am there. I am working on boundary changes that will allow all our children to attend Miami Shores Elementary. It's crucial we develop procedures to stop

abandoned properties from being an economic burden on our residents.

As I — and my fellow candidates — should know, our residents expect their commissioners to be hands-on, committed, involved. I will continue to work hard to fulfill those expectations.

Albert (Al) Penn Childress
Director, Department of Code Compliance, City of Doral
Resident since 1989

My wife, Kitty, and I have had the pleasure of living and raising our sons in Biscayne Park since 1989. We love



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the “Village of Homes” and the people who make up our wonderful community. Both my sons chose to complete their Eagle Scout projects in Biscayne Park.

Public service has always been part of our lives. Part of my service has been as the previous Special Magistrate and as the chair of the Code Enforcement Board for the village. My educational background includes an MBA degree from the University of Miami and an MPA from Florida International University.

Biscayne Park is a unique community that is blessed with an excellent, hard-working staff. I have been privileged to work with these commendable people for the past two years and seek to continue my involvement as commissioner. My focus has been to work with the staff in 1) reducing our crime rate by 60 percent this past year; 2) reducing our taxes; and 3) continuing to improve our medians and parks.

Clediner Supreme Dorvil
Medical student at Barry University
Resident since 2010

Fellow residents of Biscayne Park, I would like to take this opportunity to present to

you my perspective on possible ways we can improve our village, financially and socially. Given the opportunity to serve as your commissioner, I intend on putting forth every effort to unite our community, fight for governmental grants to help offset our taxes, maintain our elite police force, stop the bickering among our leaders, and provide more activities for our children.

My overall goal is to improve our village, allow the residents to have their opinions heard, and work for the best interest of our village. I truly believe that it starts by listening to each other’s views in order to formulate a Biscayne Park perspective. I can be reached at 305-741-4648 or csupremed@gmail.com.

It’s okay to disagree. Our different perspectives are what make us human.

Noah Jacobs
Teacher
Resident since 2004

Dear Biscayne Park Residents: A change in our government is needed. If we re-elect the current commission, the views of the residents will continue to be disregarded, to our detriment. There is currently a majority on the commission that seems to

be scared of questions from the residents of our community. I was raised to question issues and back my decisions with facts.

Since we are a village of only about 3000 residents, some think we have to accept what large entities such as utilities or surrounding municipalities tell us. Many of our elected officials, including those running for re-election, subscribe to that theory, according to their previous votes. I am running for a commission seat because I wholeheartedly disagree with that line of thinking.

When outside forces push forward an agenda that could lower our property values, I will put our residents’ interests ahead of any other interest. Biscayne Park deserves good and open government and I intend to provide it.

Please vote for me, Noah Jacobs, on December 6th.

Barbara Watts
Associate Professor, Department of Art and Art History and the Honors College, Florida International University
Resident since 1987

Biscayne Park’s origins are rooted in botanical beauty and harmonious civic

engagement. Our government should uphold this past as it looks to the future.

The commission’s current majority has made decisions that are detrimental to our village. We need new commissioners to end the commission’s partisanship and redress its mistakes. We cannot revoke the regretful FPL franchise agreement. However, we can reverse the commission’s placid acceptance of FPL’s concrete pylons that disfigure our village, lowering property values.

We should also revisit the capital improvement fee North Miami charges for repair of its water treatment plant. North Miami has used these funds for other purposes, so oversight and control are needed. Additional concerns include limitations imposed upon discourse at commission meetings and in village newsletters and expansion of our tree canopy, which will improve our environment and property values.

Good government is rooted in vision, transparency, and accountability — my goals for the commission. It also requires public involvement. As commissioner, I will seek the opinions and expertise of our residents before making decisions that affect us all.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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Veggie D-Day

It's not in her nature, but our correspondent finally raises the white flag on being the neighborhood organics lady

By Jen Karetnick
BT Contributor

December, I'm usually up to my neck in vegetables. And I'm not speaking figuratively. I mean the kale, the scallions, the squash — they're stacked in small and large waxed boxes, chin high, in the part of my driveway that passes right in front of my door.

You see, from November through April, the prepaid, community-supported agriculture deliveries would arrive fresh from the organic farm every Saturday morning. And I've been a site manager, distributing the goods to as many as 50-60 customers weekly, for

the past decade.

But this year I am not eye-to-eye with Napa cabbages and heirloom tomatoes all weekend. I am not coddling dozens of suntan-hued eggs from free-range, grain-fed chickens, and ensuring that the soft paste of the goat *fromage* from the cheese-monger doesn't liquefy in the heat. I'm not dividing up portions of avocados and garlic chives and carambolas from the shares that weren't picked up, to take to neighbors in want or kids at school in need, and filling Publix bags with rotting bunches of arugula and dandelion greens for pet hamsters and guinea pigs.



That's because I've done something I rarely do: I quit.

Admitting that I've had enough doesn't come naturally to me. Neither does saying no. I was raised by the children of Jewish immigrants who equate any kind of physical or intellectual work with the realization of dreams. Taking on responsibility, and then asking for more of it, is a creed passed down from the

generations, one I've lived by since I was old enough to rake the leaves from my neighbors' suburban New Jersey lawns and shovel their driveways free from snow for a couple of bucks.

Overachievement is an ethos that has also made my life, at times, an unmanageable mess.

As an example, here's how I spent two years in California while getting

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my first graduate degree: In the morning, I'd drive to University of California, Irvine, to teach an undergraduate writing class. Then I'd work the lunch shift at a nearby Italian restaurant. Still in uniform, I'd run back to campus for my seminar. After that, I'd change into another uniform and wait tables at a British pub. At midnight, I'd drive home to craft poems, grade papers, and wash aprons before starting the whole thing over the next day. Master's degree and marriage certificate in hand the same week, I was an exhausted 24-year-old.

It's probably no surprise, then, that I not only volunteered to be a site host for a burgeoning vegetable cooperative while I was researching a story about it one year, but that I also agreed to drive down and pick up the goods myself. At the time, my daughter was three and my son was one, and I would strap them, both screaming, into their car seats, promising strawberry milkshakes on the way back from the Redland.

That first year, the greens and other goods were packed into enormous coolers that barely fit into the back of my SUV. That was one drawback. Another

was that most folks weren't familiar with various types of produce, even with something as common (to me, anyway) as bok choy. In other cases, shareholders would just leave what they didn't want, or take an extra portion of something they liked or recognized. As a result, confusion reigned, and I had a six-month supply of French breakfast radishes.

Over the years, the packing and delivery process was refined to the point that everything was placed into the size box you purchased at the beginning of the season. A newsletter was produced. All people had to do was arrive each Saturday and pick up. They walked to the front of my driveway, left the flattened box from the previous week on top of the neat pile, and took the new one.

The main problem was, members wouldn't come pick up their stuff during designated hours, which were from 11:00 a.m. till 7:00 p.m. That was about as long as I could bear the dogs barking their heads off at each visitor, and as long as my very tolerant neighbors wanted cars clogging up the swales.

But no matter how many times I would leave a note outside or send an

e-mail, I still had shareholders sneaking in at 10:00 or 11:00 p.m. on Saturday nights, scaring the kids and their babysitter while my husband and I were out for the evening. Or I would come home from errands on Sunday, and there would be somebody parked in my driveway "for just a minute."

They didn't get the point that I might not want to see strangers on this one day of the week, or that my home was not a store, open for business at their convenience. More than once, I heard, "But I paid for it." More than once, backed up by the organizers of the farm share, I retorted, "If it's that valuable to you, get it on Saturday." One year a man showed up on a Wednesday night, asking for his vegetables. He assumed I'd store them for him so he could get them when he felt like it. It was Christmas Eve. Another year, a woman showed up on New Year's Eve.

Others believed my home was actually like a farm. Granted, Mango House is something of an orchard. But that doesn't mean you're allowed to run your dogs on my lawn. Two women used to drive over to my house with their large dogs in the car, then release them in my

yard while they got their box. When I opened the door to ask them to leave the animals at home, they assured me that the dogs were harmless. My intrepid papillon chose that moment to squeeze out between my legs and, in an instant, the dog fight was on. I had to pull one of the dog's jaws off his throat.

Bathroom requests, okay. I've had little kids; I get it. But accusations of deliberately hiding eggs? People leaving their empty boxes all over the driveway?

It took ten years, but I'd had enough. And while it may go against my personal grain to abandon a project I've had a hand in creating, I feel good about admitting it.

Besides, at the moment, I'm only a full-time educator, a full-time freelance writer and author, a soccer and volleyball mom, a physician's wife, a board member of a couple of arts organizations, renewing my teaching license with night classes, and starting my Ph.D. in expressive arts therapy.

I'm sure I'll find some other activity to replace it.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com



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Updating the Menu

A year of openings, closings, and questions

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

Where did the year go? Was it just a moment ago that January rolled in and we were embarking on 2011? I know they say that, as you get older, time goes faster, but this is ridiculous. So as we come to the end of yet another year, let's see what's come, gone, and gone down in Aventura.

I believe that what brings Aventurans together is their love of the city, as well as food, shopping, and politics. For the sake of avoiding argument, I will forego the political angle in this month's column and focus on the less contentious subjects.

I want to begin with my favorite: food. On the restaurant front, there were plenty of places that came and went. Loehmann's Plaza had a bunch of changes, as Ruby Tuesday and Einstein Bros. Bagels left, making room for Pei Wei and Chipotle. On the flip side, Heavy Burger came into the troubled space that was the Ivy (then Bar Rosso). And while its sign still hauntingly hangs upon the building, Avenue 29, Aventura's answer to nightlife, failed miserably, leaving Justin's Bar and Lounge the only nightspot in town.

The healthy rivalry of Mo's Bagels versus Bagel Cove Restaurant and Deli will get another competitor quite soon. Opening directly across the street from



Mo's is New York Bagel Deli and, from what I could find, the guy behind the dough is Irwin Silbowitz.

This past April, Chef Allen's closed its doors after more than 25 years in the neighborhood.

Unbelievably (sort of), this closure came on the heels of the restaurant's recent renovation, an attempt to make it a bit younger and hipper. Guess not. Instead Chef Allen is going after the travel set with Burger Bar in the



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In Chef Allen's old space is a family-style Italian eatery called Luca Bella. Open for about a month now, the restaurant offers southern Italian food and what would appear to be warm service. Additionally, the Venture, the building closest to the heart of "downtown" Aventura, hosts three of my favorite places: Tropical Smoothie, Fuji Hana, and Mr. Chef's Fine Chinese Cuisine.

At Tropical Smoothie, try the chicken salad sandwich — you'll crave it every day — and the smoothies, which are healthy and delicious. Fuji Hana has excellent sushi and sashimi, a bit overpriced but worth it. And Mr. Chef's is simply the only Chinese food in town. (How the restaurant got that name, I'm still not sure, but as long as the chef keeps making shrimp and lobster sauce the way he does, it's all good.)

This past year saw the beginning — and the beginning of the end — of the soft-serve yogurt craze. Naturally, there is the 800-pound gorilla, Yogurtland, located in Gulfstream Park, but here in Aventura we kept it small, quaint, and

expensive. Tutti Frutti, nestled comfortably next door to my favorite Starbucks, charges guests 48 cents per ounce for the privilege of selecting the exact amount of each of its eight flavors, pulling the lever, and then heaping on various wet and dry toppings.

In my opinion, it *does* have the best selection of wet toppings around — the hot marshmallow is the pinnacle of indulgence — but that doesn't justify the price, considering Yogurtland costs about 33 cents per ounce. Tutti Frutti does make it worth our while to keep going back, however: After spending \$40, which happens before you know it since wet toppings are heavy and price is determined by weight, you get ten percent off. That's a whole \$4.

If we expand our culinary horizons to include North Miami Beach, we must make note of the Intracoastal Mall. It's so close to Aventura that, on some level, folks in Aventura think it kind of belongs to us. Not sure why — there's no real reason — I just think we do.

Anyway, the story there is Duffy's, the sports bar and grill that took over the space that was Water Club, the

super-mess of an eatery that was supposed to be the be-all and end-all but instead ended up plain awful.

I feel bad saying this as the consulting chefs, Frank Randazzo and Andrea Curto-Randazzo, are nice people. They hit a home run with Talula on Miami Beach, but this one, not so much.

Back to Duffy's. It turned a huge, empty space into a place filled with people, indoors and out. We all know how much I (don't) love chains, but sometimes you have to cave a bit. This one works. On the other hand, one of NMB's most authentic and beloved Japanese eateries, Yakko-san, moved from its former location on West Dixie Highway to its big-time new digs in the Intracoastal Mall. Where the old location had a distinct hole-in-the-wall vibe, the new space is sleek and modern. The food is still good, but the experience has lost some of its charm. I don't eat there nearly as often as I used to.

What was a shock was the untimely death of Miami Prime Bar and Grill. One day, everything was fine. The next day, I read about its demise. I couldn't believe it, so I drove by. Closed up tight.

Really? How could this be? It seemed to do well, and I really liked it for lunch, dinner, or just to grab a beer. It was warm, casual, and inviting, the way a neighborhood place should be. I wish I knew what happened, but it seems unlikely I'll ever get the whole truth.

As far as shopping goes, nothing too monumental happened in 2011, except for the fact that Filene's Basement, one of the most successful bargain stores *ever* to come to Aventura, is closing. Seriously? We have a Loehmann's that does well, a couple of Marshalls, So-Mi (which moved and then got a new "face," although that was the plaza owner's choice, not the shop's), and even a vintage shop called The Rabbit Hole that is making it. So what happened, Filene? Who pulled the plug on you? And if no one was shopping there, why could I never find a parking spot?

Whatever the case, there will be more casualties to come and new endeavors to fill old spaces. I'll be there to get the scoop on them as they open their doors in my neighborhood.

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Drill, Baby, Drill!

Dental issues can put a hole in your holidays

By Wendy Doscher-Smith
BT Contributor

It's holiday time and what do we Mi-amiams all ponder when the holidays are here? What kinds of thoughts occupy our non-artificially warm heads?

Why, that's easy! "Oh, s**t. Another year gone and I still have not a) published my Great American Novel; b) Does anyone even read Great American Novels anymore?; c) No. The Great American Novel has been replaced by a blog lamenting the loss of the Great American Novel."

No? Okay, maybe that is something only I think about. There's always the fact that the holidays rank up there

as one of the times of the year with the highest suicide rates. So much to celebrate! So much joy! So little... rope, pills, blades, ammo. Fa la la!

No? Okay, I know everyone thinks about food. Those lavish spreads featuring all kinds of factory-farmed (read: tortured) birds and pigs, the very same creatures that appear so happy in childrens' elementary school construction-paper cutouts and crude Crayola drawings. You know, the ones that adorn the doors of proud parents' refrigerators and freezers, while the carcasses of the slaughtered inside slowly develop a thin crust of postmortem frostbite. Oh, no? That doesn't rank as a top concern?

Hmmm.



BT photo by Wendy Doscher-Smith

Okay. Here's one. Dental surgery. I know that tops everyone's holiday checklist! In case you have never tried it, I highly recommend scheduling a copious amount of dental surgery during a pre-holiday block when you think you will have enough time to recuperate — but then you don't because some stupid complication arises, making you feel about as wonderful as the penned-up animals destined to be holiday meals.

Look, I'm no stranger to dental procedures. And I am no stranger to dental procedures gone horribly wrong. Right about now, I would also like to interject that I am very picky about my dental specialists. No, I do not patronize — nor have I ever patronized — one of those Calle Ocho creeps you hear about on Channel 7 news.

And I have seen dentists, endodontists, and oral surgeons all over

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Miami-Dade. And I'm going to tell you, with the results I get, I'm starting to wonder if I should just head to Calle Ocho for a great deal. You know, save some money for stocking stuffers?

I'm not sure where to start with the dental woes. I'll err on the safe side and begin with birth. My cheap parents — yes, it always starts there; aren't you glad you sacrificed everything to have kids? — opted out of sealants when I was a kid. It was a scam, my dad said.

So my teeth went unprotected. Maybe this is the time to mention I never even *saw* a dentist until I was 12 years old or so. Is that normal? Maybe in Eastern Europe. But here? Didn't think so.

To be fair, genetics played a role in my slowly going-to-pot mouth, too, as a few dentists have pointed out that my teeth are shaped for trouble. They're all slanted the wrong way; decay loves that.

Then I had braces for five years. At least my father gave in to my begging for those. My mother just told me the gaps in my teeth made me look like Lauren Hutton and, as such, were an asset. Oh, yes, she went there. The braces corrected the jack-o'-lantern look, but eroded my molars. Oops!

When those puppies came off, I don't know how many cavities a frowning dentist filled. I was maybe 16. From that point on, it was all just an expensive matter of time measured in fluoride-dipped misery before, one by one, my teeth took their revenge.

I was in college when I had my first experience with a catty dentist. For all of you who think that competitiveness among medical professionals is restricted to the cosmetology industry, think again. Dentists love to drill ya open and cluck their tongues in disgust. Apparently I've had many dentists over the years do half-assed jobs and just cement me back on up!

Examples:

"Oh, dear. Who did this? Why, they left an entire chunk of metal behind in there!"

"This is one of the sloppiest-looking crowns I've ever seen."

"Why is there a gap in this filling? No wonder you have a problem there!"

Yup. Inevitably, every new oral professional who enters my mouth has an opinion. I just sit there, numb, bloody gauze shoved in my cheeks so I look like some kind of half-run-over,

roadkill chipmunk, shrugging.

I have never been able to keep up with all the work done on my mouth. Certain moments and facts stick out, though. Like the time I had a Nazi dentist rape my mouth. This one was based in South Miami and, while using equipment from 1952, decided to make an impression.

When the cold water hit my tooth, which needed a root canal (teeth that require root canals are extremely sensitive to hot and cold), and I tried to move it, he clamped his hand down on my jaw to keep it there. Hmmm.

Then there was the Coral Gables-based endodontist who gleefully scraped some nasty puss out of said infected socket and, while I was stuck in the chair, proceeded to hold it under my nose and urge me to "Smell it! Smell that infection! That's the culprit."

Ah, memories. Which brings me back to the present. This time I needed an extraction. My rear, right molar finally raised the surrender flag. After the procedure was done, my jaw started aching. This pain came in waves and, at full swell, felt like someone had decided to chisel a dolphin-shaped ice sculpture

out of my jaw. After beating my jaw with a meat tenderizer. For hours.

My North Miami-based dentist confirmed my fears: dry socket.

Dry socket occurs at the extraction site when your gum does not form a blood clot over the hole in your jaw, thus leaving your mouth innards, including bone and nerve, open to anything: hot, cold, food particles. As far as pain goes, it ranks. I mean, there is natural childbirth, getting a Prince Albert, watching Fox News, and dry socket.

Here is another condition that affects only a small percentage of the population. (And, well, I guess that's me!) I was given more Vicodin and antibiotics, plus an oral antibiotic that I had to shoot down onto my exposed bone twice daily via a syringe-like instrument. That's fun.

While my mouth is finally, slowly, healing, I have learned my lesson: No involved dental work after September. Oh, and, in the spirit of giving, be kind to the dentist. After all, guess which profession proudly boasts the highest suicide rates, and not just during the holidays?

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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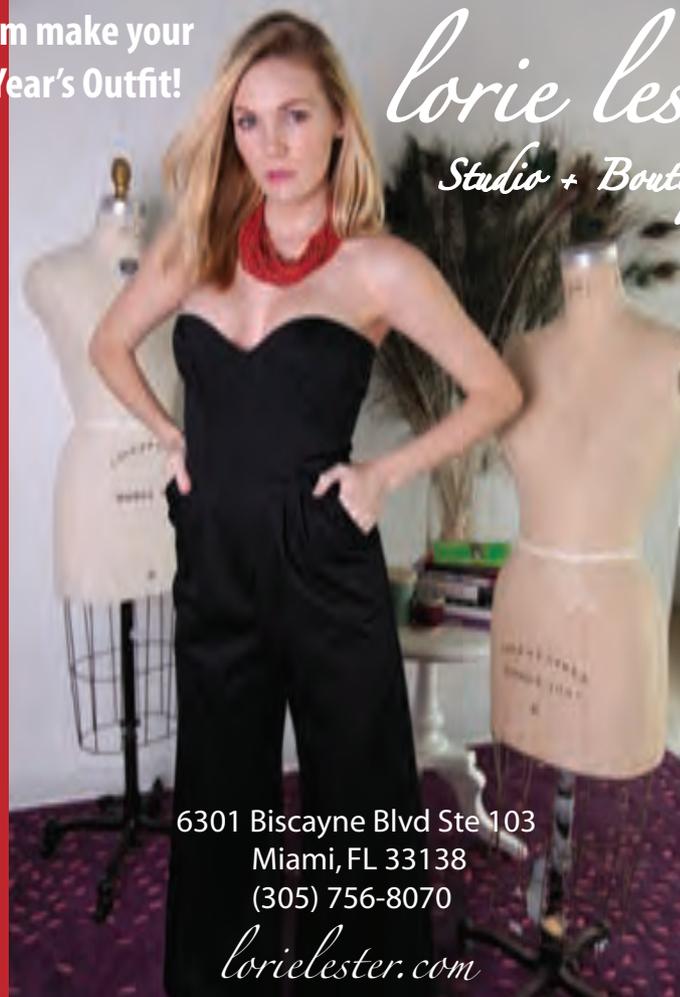
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Howdie Ya Do?

The traffic stop of a Miami cop by a Florida Highway Patrol trooper raises questions about professional courtesy — and more

By Frank Rollason
BT Contributor

As most people who don't live under a rock are aware by now, there was a much-publicized traffic stop of a Miami police officer by a Florida Highway Patrol trooper back on October 11.

It seems that Officer Fausto Lopez was hurrying back to Miami — and an off-duty job — from somewhere north of Hollywood. Actually, “hurrying” is an understatement, considering that Trooper Donna Watts clocked Lopez going at more than 120 miles per hour on the Florida Turnpike. Yes, you read that correctly: 120 mph in a 70 mph

zone. I think 120 should be looked upon as *flying*, not hurrying.

As the story has unfolded, the phenomenon of so-called “professional courtesy” between police agencies has become a topic of conversation. Several years ago I was traveling with a police officer friend in his private car, headed northbound on the turnpike. He was booking it at about 90 mph.

All of a sudden, he slowed dramatically, pulled off to the shoulder of the road, and stopped. I thought there might be something wrong with the car — until a FHP trooper pulled in behind us. His first words to my friend were: “You must be a cop.” To which my friend replied, “Yes, I saw you behind the bushes



and there was no sense in making you chase me — I knew you had me cold.” The trooper chuckled, thanked my friend for pulling over, chided him for speeding on “his road,” then asked him to slow it down. And that was that. Professional courtesy.

This case, however, has a different tone. Here, we apparently have a FHP trooper on routine patrol going with the flow of traffic when a marked police car leaves her in the dust. Let's give the officer in the speeding vehicle the benefit of the doubt and put his speed at 100 mph,



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which brings us back to a basic algebra problem: If car X is traveling at 100 mph and car Y is traveling at 70, how long will it take car Y to catch up to car X? Well, duh, the answer is never. Instead, the question is how much *faster* than car X must car Y travel to catch up with car X, and is car Y placing more people in harm's way by pursuing car X?

Regardless of the mathematical answer, Trooper Watts made the decision that the marked police vehicle was, in fact, endangering other drivers and decided to initiate pursuit. Now, we have all traveled the turnpike and most of us have had a lead foot now and then and, when we do, we keep an eagle eye out for the howdies.

"Howdies," you ask? What means that? Well, years ago, FHP troopers born and raised in North Florida would be assigned to South Florida and, when these country boys would pull over a car, their initial words were usually "Howdy, sir" or "Howdy, ma'am." Therefore they came to be known as howdies.

But I digress. The point is, how could a Miami police officer, knowing he was speeding, unknowingly pass a

marked FHP car and not instinctively take his foot off the gas? One has to assume that he saw the car and just did not give a damn. Keep in mind he was hurrying because he was going to be late for an off-duty assignment — his words, not mine.

We all know the outcome of the chase. The trooper finally caught up with the cop and the cop continued to ignore the trooper. I guess, at some point, it became painfully obvious to the speeding officer that this trooper was not going to extend the proper "professional courtesy" and pulled over.

In my opinion, the trooper acted in a safe and prudent manner by pulling her weapon and ordering the occupant out of the car. Since the offending driver had ignored her lights and siren, the trooper could not be sure that he was an actual officer. The arrest video shows that the trooper's gun was quickly holstered and the speeding driver cuffed, which, to me, makes sense. At that point, she still did not really know what she was dealing with.

In retrospect, we now know we had a Miami officer speeding at 120 mph *not*

for the purpose of preventing a crime or rushing to the aid of an injured motorist, mind you, but to avoid being late for an off-duty assignment. No wonder the trooper was pissed! This guy not only put his life and other drivers' lives in danger, but that of the trooper, who was just doing her job.

So what happens? The speeding cop lawyers up, instead of manning up and taking his lumps for the dumb-ass decision to speed recklessly down the highway. The acting Miami police chief goes on TV and states that he does not know what his officer was thinking and that he obviously made a stupid mistake. Now his lawyer says the officer was not driving recklessly and was merely trying to get out of the trooper's way by speeding up, to sort of clear her path.

As I recall, the driver's handbook that we all studied before we could obtain our driver's license states that, when an emergency vehicle with warning lights and siren approaches from the rear, you are to slow down and pull over to the right in order to allow the emergency vehicle to pass. I don't recall the passage that says, "Or you can put the

pedal to the metal and haul ass, provided you stay a safe distance in front of the emergency vehicle."

In the meantime, blog postings from some of the officers at both agencies are showing an alarming disregard for "professional courtesy." There have been sophomoric comments regarding the attractiveness, or lack thereof, of the female trooper, as well as some disturbing warnings about what might happen if the FHP stops the "wrong" Miami police car.

That's a lot of manufactured B.S. for an incident that, fortunately, resulted in little more than an adrenalin rush for the trooper and a misdemeanor traffic ticket for the officer.

The officer should apologize to the trooper, his own police department, and the residents of the City of Miami. Then go to court, plead guilty, and pay the fine. Like the rest of us would have to do. Or maybe the judge will allow him to go to traffic school — that should be punishment enough!

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com



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Off the Basel Path 2011

Some recommended stops on the mad dash through Miami's art week

By Melissa Wallen
BT Contributor

With so many events vying for our attention during Art Basel week, it can be overwhelming to sift through them and find the most exciting and interesting. Here are a few that could have great potential.

Converging Harmonies

If you find yourself in Miami International Airport on your way to or from Art Basel Miami Beach, take a moment to look around. The western wall of the pedestrian walkway has been reimagined; its previously solid wall is now a series of interconnected panels of colored glass.

This elaborate installation, titled *Harmonic Convergence* by Christopher Janney, replaces an earlier installation from the artist commissioned by Miami International Airport in 1997.

A trained musician, Janney has long explored the relationship between architecture, light, and sound, creating what he has described as "synesthetic art." While basking in the illuminating glow at MIA, you can hear the sounds of singing birds, the low rumble of thunder, and the aggravated chirp of tree frogs. The brilliant light and sound show is a

soothing subtropical abstraction: This is what it feels like to arrive in South Florida, ready for both the circus and the swamp.

During Basel, you can catch Janney's exhibition "Architecture of Air" at the Moore Building in the Design District. The program will include a concert and



Entrance Romance (It Felt like a Kiss), 2010, Ryan McGinley, "Art Video."

panel discussion focusing on space, time, and aesthetics. The discussion will begin at 3:00 p.m. on December 3, and will be followed by a screening of Janney's *What Is a Heart?*. A live performance featuring the Persuasions and L.A.-based Y LUV begins at 9:00 p.m.

"Architecture of Air" by Christopher Janney Through December 4
The Moore Building
4040 NE 2nd Ave., Miami
305-572-0866



Converging Harmonies, 2011, Chris Janney, Miami International Airport.

Art in the Great Outdoors

Art Basel's "Art Video" programming will utilize the New World Center's 7000-square-foot projection wall. You can relax outdoors for free at SoundScape Park, the high-tech, 2.5-acre green space facing Frank Gehry's spectacular new building, home of the New World Symphony. Over the course of three nights, six different screenings will take place, each with a theme borrowed from art theory. Some familiar themes: landscapes, Americana, and the "painterly." Artists featured in the programming Tracy Emin, Dara Friedman, Martha Rosler, Cory Arcangel, Laurel Nakadate, Christian Jankowski, and Ryan McGinley.

"Art Video"
Wednesday, November 30; Friday, December 2; and Saturday, December 3 at 8:00 p.m.
SoundScape Park at New World Center
500 17th St., Miami Beach

General Practice

If you're looking to crawl under the radar and rage a bit, check out General Practice, an alternative, artist-run space located in

the Buena Vista residential neighborhood west of the Design District. "Drown," a noise/drone show organized by artist and curator Carlos Rigau, will offer local and visiting artists a cool spot to experiment and create on their own terms, a welcome respite from stuffy gallery decorum. It's going to get heavy, so BYOB and be ready for the waves of pummeling sound. Participating bands and noisemakers include Viking Funeral, Slashpine, Stagg, Holly Hunt, the Ice Machine and Swift, Balls-carf, M.B.Evans, and possibly a surprise appearance by the Miami P.D.

"Drown"
Thursday, December 1, 10:30 p.m. to 2:00 a.m.
General Practice
3930 NW 2nd Ave., Miami

Funner Projects at de la Cruz

Amped up on a steady diet of MacGyver episodes and trouble, co-founders Justin Long and Robert "Meatball" Lorie of Funner Projects see the week of Basel fit to fill with blissful anarchy. This maverick duo has set out to do something extraordinary: Have fun.



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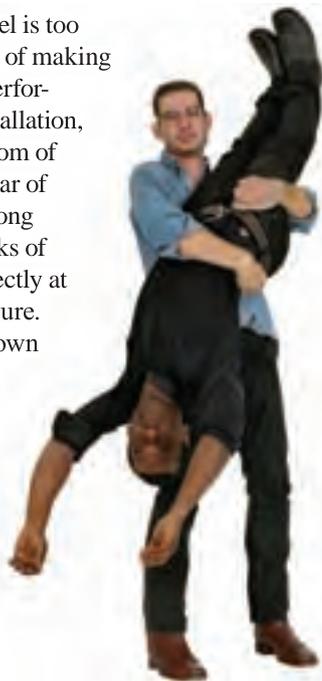
Located in the Miami Design District
4030 N. Miami Ave., Miami, FL 33137

It's a concept these artists feel is too often undermined in the process of making art. Long and Lorie will stage performances accompanying their installation, *Maintain Right*, in the project room of the de la Cruz Collection. The star of this installation is their 14-foot-long crossbow, which will shoot planks of wood through the air, aimed directly at the outline of a simply drawn figure. The figure will begin to break down upon being pummeled, creating an abstraction of what was once purely figurative. During Basel, Long and Lorie will brandish their machetes every hour on the hour from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., hoping to instill a sense of devilish glee that only dangerous situations can arouse.

"Maintain Right" by Funner Projects, with Justin H. Long and Robert Lorie Through March 10 De La Cruz Collection Contemporary Art Space 23 NE 41st St., Miami 305-576-6112

Wynwood Walls

Miami has become a Mecca for graffiti artists, and the Wynwood Walls, a constantly evolving outdoor exhibition area, highlights some of the best. Property owner Tony Goldman and curator Jeffrey Deitch Projects have managed the project since 2009, commissioning artists from all over the world. This year the walls will feature seven new murals, as well as 16 new works on the "Wynwood Doors" adjacent to the compound. Expect work from Retna, How & Nosh, Roa, b., The Date Farmers, Saner, Sego, Liqen, Neuzz, Faile, Vhils and Interesni



Photographs with an Audience (Miami) Topsy Turvey 2011, Clifford Owens, Gallery Diet.

Kazki, and an expansion of Kenny Scharf's wall. These new creations join existing works from Nunca, Shepard Fairey, Aiko, Ryan McGinness, Stelios Faitakis, and avaf. Admission is free. *Wynwood Walls NW 2nd Avenue between 25th and 26th Street, Miami*

Gallery Diet

They say that if you're having trouble with stage fright, it's helpful to imagine everyone in the room naked. While for some, this advice may result in an even more uncomfortable situation, whoever told Clifford Owens this had no idea how far it would take him. Currently a professor at Yale, Owens has been busy preparing for his solo show, "Anthology" at PS1 MoMA, as well a book regarding his work.



Roa at Wynwood Walls.

In the midst of preparations, Owens took a week here in Miami, where he took the opportunity to get to know the locals up close and at times full frontal.

Shying away from the label "performance artist," Owens orchestrates happenings, which invite participants to become completely engaged in the work, in an honest and challenging abandonment of inhibitions. He'll be showing a series of photographs at Gallery Diet, which are subtle works, reflective of the unexpected ease this group of near strangers found together during Owens's stay here in October. You'll see some familiar Miami faces.

"Photographs with an Audience Miami" by Clifford Owens Through December 22 Gallery Diet 174 NW 23rd St., Miami 305-571-2288

Material Witnesses

Lately it may feel like Our House West of Wynwood (OHWO) has taken the party with them to New York and L.A., but now they've returned to show some of the hippest young American artists at their Miami base in their new exhibition "It Ain't Fair:

Materialism." Artists will explore the philosophy behind materialism, allowing the materials at work to amplify their own significance. The exhibition brings together an all-star cast: Daniel Arsham, Justin Beal, Anna Betzeze, Ashley Bickerton, Scott Campbell, Peter Coffin, Dan Colen, N. Dash, Sam Falls, Michael Genovese, Luis Gispert, Angel Otero, José Parlá, Sara Rahbar, Ryan Reggiani, Bert Rodriguez, Amanda Ross-Ho, Aurel Schmidt, David Benjamin Sherry, Lucien Smith, Agathe Snow, Jessica Stockholder, Nick van Woert, and Aaron Young.

An opening reception on December 1, from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. will feature a performance by New York-based artist and poet Michael David Quattlebaum, Jr. *"It Ain't Fair: Materialism" December 1 through 4 OHWOW 100 NW 7th Ave., Miami 305-633-9345*

Tom Tom Magazine and Needless Records

No Basel experience is complete without great music. Behind every worthy band is a great rhythm section, and this year *Tom Tom Magazine* and *Needless Records* want to show their appreciation for the ladies who keep the beat. The festivities will take place at Churchill's Pub, showcasing an array of local and visiting bands with female drummers. Valerie George of *Nam Jun Psyche* will VJ music videos in between sets. Tickets at the door cost \$7, or buy presales for \$5 here: <http://tomtommagneedlessrecords.eventbrite.com>.

"Tom Tom Art Basel" December 3, 5:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m. Churchill's Pub 5501 NE 2nd Ave., Miami 305-757-1807

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Aqua Hotel
1530 Collins Ave., Miami Beach
206-399-5506
www.aquaartmiami.com
Through December 4
Hours: December 1 through 3, 11 a.m. to 8 p.m.
December 4, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Admission: \$10

ART ASIA

Midtown Miami
NE 1st Avenue at 30th Street
212-268-6148
www.artasiafair.com
Through December 4
Hours: December 1 through 3, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.
December 4, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Admission: \$20

ART BASEL

Miami Beach Convention Center
1901 Convention Center Dr.
305-674-1292
www.artbaselmiamibeach.com
Through December 4
Hours: December 1 through 3, noon to 8 p.m.
December 4, noon to 4 p.m.
Admission: \$23-\$85

ART MIAMI

Midtown Miami
NE 1st Avenue at 31st Street
520-529-1108
www.art-miami.com
Through December 4
Hours: December 1 through 3, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.
December 4, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Admission: \$15

ART NOW FAIR

Catalina Hotel
1732 Collins Ave., Miami Beach
347-957-2743
www.artnowfair.com
Through December 4
Hours: December 1, 11 a.m. to 10 p.m.
December 2 and 3, 11 a.m. to 8 p.m.
December 4, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Admission: Free
Reception December 1, 6 to 10 p.m.

ARTS FOR A BETTER WORLD

Surfcomber Hotel
1717 Collins Ave., Miami Beach
305-438-9200
www.artsforabetterworld.com
Through December 4
Hours: 11 a.m. to 10 p.m.
Admission: \$10

BURST PROJECT ART FAIR

Art Deco Welcome Center
1001 Ocean Dr., Miami Beach
305-895-9652
www.burstartfair.org
Through December 5
Hours: December 1, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.
December 2 through 4, 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.
December 5, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Admission: \$10 donation

DESIGN MIAMI

Miami Beach Convention Center
Meridian Avenue and 19th Street
305-572-0866
www.designmiami.com
Through December 4
Hours: Through December 3,
noon to 8 p.m.
December 4, noon to 6 p.m.
Admission: \$25

FOUNTAIN MIAMI

2505 N. Miami Ave., Miami
917-650-3760
www.fountainartfair.com
Through December 4
Hours: noon to 7 p.m.
Admission: \$10
Reception December 2, 7 p.m.
to midnight

INK MIAMI ART FAIR

Dorchester Hotel
1850 Collins Ave., Miami Beach
212-674-6095
www.inkartfair.com
Through December 4
Hours: December 1 through 3, 10
a.m. to 7 p.m.
December 4, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Admission: Free

NADA ART FAIR

Deauville Beach Resort
6701 Collins Ave., Miami Beach
212-594-0883
www.newartdealers.org
Through December 4
Hours: December 1, 2 to 8 p.m.
December 2 and 3, 11 a.m. to 8 p.m.
December 4, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Admission: Free

POOL ART FAIR

Sadigo Court Hotel
334 20th St., Miami Beach
212-604-0519, www.poolartfair.com
December 2 through 4
Hours: 3 to 10 p.m.
Admission: Free
Reception December 2, 5 to 10:30 p.m.

PULSE MIAMI

The Ice Palace
1400 N. Miami Ave., Miami
212-255-2327
www.pulse-art.com
Through December 4
Hours: December 1, 1 to 7 p.m.
December 2 and 3, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.
December 4, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Admission: \$15

RED DOT MIAMI

Midtown Miami
3011 NE 1st Ave., Miami
917-273-8621, www.reddotfair.com
Through December 4
Hours: December 1 through 3, 11 a.m. to 8 p.m.
December 4, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Admission: \$15

SCOPE MIAMI

Midtown Miami
NE 1st Avenue at 30th Street
212-268-1522
www.scope-art.com



Shelter Serra, *Dozen Roses*, cast resin, 2011, at Primary Flight.

Through December 4
Hours: Through December 3, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.
December 4, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Admission: \$20

SCULPT MIAMI

46 NW 36th St., Miami
305-448-2060
www.sculptmiami.com
Through December 4
Hours: 11 a.m. to 8 p.m.
Admission: Free

SEVEN

2637 N. Miami Ave., Miami
973-452-3283
www.seven-miami.com
Through December 4
Hours: December 1 through 3, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.
December 4, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Admission: Free

VERGE ART MIAMI BEACH

Greenview Hotel
1671 Washington Ave., Miami Beach
312-612-2270
www.vergeartfair.com
Through December 4
Hours: December 1 and 2, noon to 8 p.m.
December 3, noon to 7 p.m.
December 4, noon to 6 p.m.
Admission: \$10
Reception December 1, 7 p.m. to midnight

ZONES ART FAIR MIAMI

47 NE 25th St., Miami
305-303-8852
www.zonesartfair.com
Through December 3
Hours: December 1 and 2, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

December 3, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.
Admission: Free
Reception December 3, 8 to 10 p.m.

GALLERIES

101/EXHIBIT

101 NE 40th St., Miami
305-573-2101
www.101exhibit.com
December 2 through February 8:
"Undertow" by Jason Shawn Alexander
Reception December 1, 6 to 9 p.m.

12345 W. DIXIE STUDIO AND GALLERY

12345 West Dixie Hwy., North Miami
305-895-2553
www.dixieimageworks.com
Through January 31:
"Resurrection II" with Paul Morris and Randy Burman
Reception December 12, 1 to 4 p.m.

ABBA FINE ART

233 NW 36th St., Miami
305-576-4278
www.abbafineart.com
Ongoing:
"Nature's Pulse" by Debra Holt
Reception December 3, 10 a.m. to noon

ACND GALLERY OF ART

4949 NE 2nd Ave., Miami
305-751-8367
www.acnd.net
Through January 21:
"Faces of China" by Tom Salyer

ALBERTO LINERO GALLERY

2294 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-587-0172
www.albertolinerogallery.com
December 1 through January 4:
"Caleidoscopio" with Pedro Sandoval, Santiago Betancur, Dario, Luis Jimenez, Paola Restrepo, Dana Miliik, Adriana Carvalho, David Zalben, Brededa, Moleiro, and Romgo
Reception December 3, 7 to 11 p.m.

ALEJANDRA VON HARTZ FINE ARTS

2630 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-438-0220
www.alejandravonhartz.net
Through January 28:
"The Eyes, Sometimes" by Karina Peisajovich

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ART FUSION

1 NE 40th St., Miami
305-573-5730
www.artfusiongallery.com
Through December 21:
"Fusion VIII — Synesthesia" with various artists
Reception December 3, 7 to 11 p.m.

ARTSEEN GALLERY

2215 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-237-3559
http://artseenspace.wordpress.com/
December 1 through 4:
"Hotbed Miami 2011" with various artists
"A Piece of Me" with various artists



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Reception December 3, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.

BAKEHOUSE ART COMPLEX

561 NW 32nd St., Miami

305-576-2828

www.bacfl.org

Through January 20:

"Woman to Woman" with Julie Davidow, Carol Prusa, Vickie Pierre, Sara Stites, Samantha Salzinger, Francie Bishop Good, Felice Grodin, Michelle Weinberg, Elizabeth Cerejido, and Mia Leonin

"Small Works Show" with various artists

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180 NE 39th St., #210, Miami

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Through January 1:

"Mary, Richard, Clouds and Dirt" by Richard Haley

Performance by Mary Elizabeth Anderson,

December 4, 8 p.m.

BERNICE STEINBAUM GALLERY

3550 N. Miami Ave., Miami

305-573-2700

www.bernicesteinbaumgallery.com

Through January 7:

"A Critique of Established Attitudes Towards Aging & Beauty" by Aurora Molina

"New Work" by Peter Sarkisian

"Fleeced" by Holly Lynton

BLACK SQUARE GALLERY

2248 NW 1st Pl., Miami

786-999-9735

www.blacksquaregallery.com

Through December 31:

"Dream Catcher II" with Emilio Garcia, Zhanna Kadyrova, Pablo Lehmann, Taro Hattori, and SYN

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BORINQUEN ART GALLERY

100 NE 38th St., Miami

305-491-1526

www.borinquenhealth.org

Ongoing:

"Group Show" with H-Allen Benowitz, François Gracia, Clarice de Souza, David Tupper, Sharon Dash, and Hector Maldonado, and "Creatos Aetas" by Kourtney Eugene Brown

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BUENA VISTA BUILDING

189 NE 39 St. #120, Miami

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Through December 4:

"Inventory 02: Soul Does Matter" with Jacob Brillhart, Chen Chen/Kai Williams, Paul Clemence, Paul Kopkau,

Lemon Yellow, LMNOQ, Berge Malikian, Mr.O, Ernesto Oroza/Gean Moreno, Luis Pons, and Michelle Weinberg

Reception December 1, 7 to 10 p.m.

BUTTER GALLERY

305-303-6254

www.buttergallery.com

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305-754-2093

www.susannacaldwell.com

Ongoing:

"Seductive Assemblages and Wood Sculpture" by Susanna Caldwell

CAROL JAZZAR CONTEMPORARY ART

158 NW 91st St., Miami Shores

305-490-6906

www.cjazzart.com

By appointment: carol@cjazzart.com

December 1 through January 27: "You Are Here Forever" curated by Omar Lopez-Chahoud

Reception December 2, 10 p.m. to 2 a.m.

CARIDI GALLERY

758 NE 125th St., North Miami

786-202-5554

www.caridigallery.com

Ongoing:

"Group Show" with Vanessa Baumgartner, Adriano Nicot, Ramon Muñoz, and Monica Atucha

Through January 5:

Danny Esquenazi

CENTER FOR VISUAL COMMUNICATION

541 NW 27th St., Miami

305-571-1415

www.visual.org

Through December 17:

"Beyond the Daily Life" by Guerra de la Paz

CHAREST-WEINBERG GALLERY

250 NW 23rd St., Miami

305-292-0411

www.charestweinberg.com

Through February 29:

"Black Sculpture" by Fernando Mastrangelo

CHRISTOPHER MIRO GALLERY

71 E. Flagler St., Miami

305-741-0058

www.christophermirogallery.com

Call gallery for exhibition information

CITY LOFT ART

2200 Biscayne Blvd., Miami

www.cityloftart.com

Call gallery for exhibition information

CS GALLERY

787 NE 125th St., North Miami

305-308-6561

www.chirinossanchez.com

Call gallery for exhibition information

CURATOR'S VOICE ART PROJECTS

2509 NW 2nd Ave., Miami

786-357-0568

www.curatorsvoiceartprojects.com

Call gallery for exhibition information



TYPOE, *Black Sea*, plastic, spray paint caps, and resin, 2011, at Spinello Projects.

DANIEL AZOULAY GALLERY

Shops at Midtown Miami

Store # 120 Buena Vista Blvd., Miami

305-576-1977

www.danielazolaygallery.com

Call gallery for exhibition information

DAVID CASTILLO GALLERY

2234 NW 2nd Ave., Miami

305-573-8110

www.davidcastillogallery.com

Through December 31:

"Don't Get High on Your Own Supply" with various artists

DIANA LOWENSTEIN FINE ARTS

2043 N Miami Ave., Miami

305-576-1804

www.dfinearts.com

Through February 4:

"Thoughts, Meditations, Acts" by Xawery Wolski

DIASPORA VIBE GALLERY

3938 N. Miami Ave., Miami

305 573-4046

www.diasporavibe.net

December 1 through 4:

"We the Artists" with various artists

DIMENSIONS VARIABLE

171 NE 38th St., Miami

305-607-5527

www.dimensionsvariable.net

dv@dimensionsvariable.net

Through December 23:

"Duets" by Domingo Castillo

DINA MITRANI GALLERY

2620 NW 2nd Ave., Miami

786-486-7248

www.dinamitrani.com

Through January 20:

"Minimally Baroque" curated by Chuck Ramirez and Patricia Ruiz-Healy

Reception December 1, 9 a.m. to noon

DORSCH GALLERY

151 NW 24th St., Miami

305-576-1278

www.dorschgallery.com

Through January 21:

"Full Salute" by Mette Tommerup

"Modern Trance" by Martin Murphy

DOT FIFTYONE ART SPACE

51 NW 36th St., Miami

305-573-9994

www.dotfiftyone.com

Through January 10:

"Poetics of Expansion: Nine Views of Contemporary Argentine Photography" with Juan Sebastian Bruno, Bruno Dubner, Marcelo Grosman, Ignacio Isparrá, Cecilia Lenardón, Jorge Miño, Oligatega, Guillermo Ueno, and Alejandra Urresti

EDGE ZONES CONTEMPORARY ART

47 NE 25th St., Miami

305-303-8852

www.edgezones.org

Call gallery for exhibition information

ELITE ART EDITIONS

2732 NW 2nd Ave., Miami

754-422-5942

www.elitearteditions.com

December 3 through 20:

"Art Basel Season" with Ana Sanz, Anica, Diana Albadan, Marisa Leicach, Fabiana Peña, Francisco Ceron, Mauro Arbiza, and Jerome Valbuena

Reception December 3, 6 to 10 p.m.

ETRA FINE ART

50 NE 40th St., Miami

305-438-4383

www.etrart.com

December 1 through 31:

"Highlights for 2012" with various artists

FLAGLER ART SPACE

172 W. Flagler St., Miami

www.flaglerartspace.com

Through December 4:

"¿Porque, Cazador?" with Annie Blazejack, Leo Castañeda, Reinier Gamboa, David Olivera, Ramon Lopez, Nicole Serize, and Juan Travieso

FREDRIC SNITZER GALLERY

2247 NW 1st Pl., Miami

305-448-8976

www.snitzer.com

Through December 17:

"Change" by Cristina Lei Rodriguez

GALERIE HELENE LAMARQUE

125 NW 23rd St., Miami

305-582-6067

www.galeriehelenelamarque.com

Through January 20:

"Recent Works" by Claude Viallat

"New Sculpture" by ORLAN

Reception December 3, 7 to 9 p.m.

GALERIE SCHUSTER MIAMI

2085 NW 2nd Ave., Miami

786-266-2445

www.gallerieschuster.com

December 3 through 23

The Photography of Menno Aden

Reception December 3, 7 to 10 p.m.

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THE GALLERY AT MIAMI COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL
601 NE 107th St., Miami Shores
305-610-3921
Through January 15:
"Wondering" by London Tsai

GALLERY 212
2407 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
786-431-1957
www.gallery212miami.com
December 1 through January 2:
"Art Basel Miami 2011 Exhibition" with Michael Perez, John Pate, John Pate N., Sean Murdock, Jonathan Dvoretz, and Henry Souto, featuring José Yossi, Mariella Sosa, and Matt Stock

GALLERY DIET
174 NW 23rd St., Miami
305-571-2288
www.gallerydiet.com
Through December 22:
"Photographs with an Audience Miami" by Clifford Owens

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

GARY NADER FINE ART
62 NE 27th St., Miami
305-576-0256
www.garynader.com
Call gallery for exhibition information

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

HARDCORE ARTS CONTEMPORARY SPACE
3326 N. Miami Ave., Miami
www.hardcoreartcontemporary.com
info@hardcoreartmiami.com
Through February 4:
"Down & Under" with Consuelo Castañeda, Gaston Ugalde, and Milton Becerra
Reception December 3, 7 to 10 p.m.

HAROLD GOLEN GALLERY
2294 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-989-3359
www.haroldgolengallery.com
Call gallery for exhibition information

ICON ART
147 NW 36th St, Miami
(305) 576-4266
www.iconartimages.com
December 1 through 4:
"Icons of Entertainment and Sports" with Erika King, Gary Longordo, Bill Toma, Kirk Maggio, Debbie Samson, Alan Maltz, Roberto Rabanne, Donna Wayman, Robert Holton, and Valdimir Gorsky

IDEOBOX ARTSPACE
2417 N. Miami Ave., Miami
305-576-9878
www.ideobox.com
Through February 26:
"Astilla en el Ojo" by Rodrigo Echeverri Calero

JG PLATFORM GALLERY
282 NW 25th St., Miami
Space Lighting Studio

305-573-0208
www.jgplatform.com
Through December 4:
"Addictive" with Ferdie Pacheco, Luisita Pacheco, Adam Rush, Sergik, and Richard Kurtz
Reception December 2, 7 to 10 p.m.

KABE CONTEMPORARY
123 NW 23rd St., Miami
305-573-8142
www.kabecontemporary.com
Through January 15:
"Superflat Donkeys and Zooms" by Meyer Vaisman

KAVACHNINA CONTEMPORARY
46 NW 36th St., Miami
305-448-2060
www.kavachnina.com
December 3 through February 3:
"Black Collection" by Salustiano
Reception December 3, 8 to 11 p.m.

KELLEY ROY GALLERY
50 NE 29th St., Miami
305-447-3888
www.kelleyroygallery.com
Through January 28:
"Sculpture" by Albert Paley
"Inner Journey" by Heriberto Mora
"Group Show" with John Henry, Dolly Moreno, Kevin Paulsen, Neltje, Tom Seghi, Sandra Muss, Linda Lee Johnson, Antonio Ugarte, and Sebastian Spreng
Through December 4:
"V1-V3" by Mira Lehr and Yara Travieso

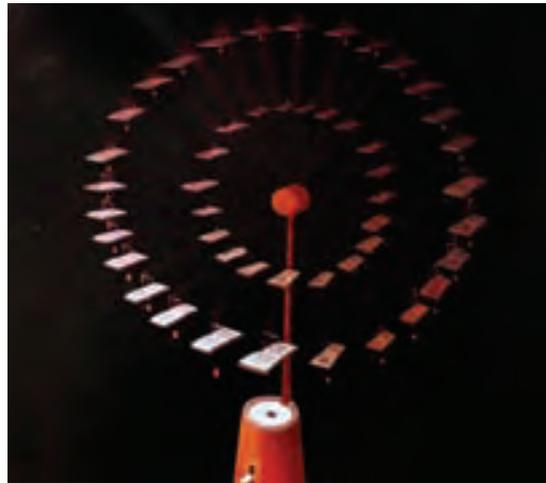
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48 NW 29th St., Miami
305-200-3047
www.kiwiartsgroup.com
Ongoing:
William John Kennedy's Fine Art Photography
Collection of Early Pop Artists

LELIA MORDOCH GALLERY
2300 N. Miami Ave., Miami
786-431-1506
www.galerieleliamordoch.com
Through February 2:
"Is Art an Antidepressant?" with various artists
Reception December 3, noon to 10 p.m.

LOCUST PROJECTS
155 NE 38th St., Miami
305-576-8570
www.locustprojects.org
Through December 31:
"Billboard Project" by Agustina Woodgate
Reception December 1, 7 to 10 p.m.
Through December 17:
"Cores and Cutouts" by Ruben Ochoa
Reception December 1, 7 to 10 p.m.

MAOR GALLERY
3030 NE 2nd Ave., Miami
305-573-9995
http://maormiami.org
Through January 31:
"On the Edge of Light" with various artists

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



Heriberto Mora, Logbook, oil on canvas, 2011, at Kelley Roy Gallery

MIAMI ART SPACE
244 NW 35th St., Miami
305-757-6000
www.miamiartspace.com
Through December 4:
"Elements" with Henrique Souza, Francisco Chediak, Cecilia Moreno-Yaghoubi, Dennis Carbee, Alvaro Daza, Pedro Diaz, and Vertical River, curated by Adriana de Moura

MIAMI-DADE COLLEGE, CENTRE GALLERY
300 NE 2nd Ave., Miami
Bldg. 1, Room 1365
305-237-3696
www.mdc.edu
Through December 16:
"Memento Mori" by Arturo Rodriguez and Alejandro Anreus

MIAMI-DADE COLLEGE, FREEDOM TOWER
600 Biscayne Blvd., Miami
305-237-7700
Through December 4:
"Selections from the Permanent Collection and Cintas Fellows Collection" with various artists
Through January 8:
"We Are the Ship: The Story of Negro League Baseball" by Kadir Nelson

MIAMI-DADE COLLEGE, GALLERY NORTH
11380 NW 27th Ave., Miami
305-237-1532
www.mdc.edu
Through December 15:
"Ralph Provisero: Maquettes and Drawings" by Ralph Provisero

MIAMI-DADE COLLEGE, HOMESTEAD ART SPACE
500 College Terr., Homestead
305-237-5000
www.mdc.edu/homestead
Call gallery for exhibition information

MIAMI-DADE COLLEGE, KENDALL GALLERY
1110 SW 104th St., Miami
305-237-2322

www.mdc.edu/kendall
Through January 15:
"Faculty Exhibition" with Jennifer Basile, Antonio Chirinos, Alberto Meza, and Yomarie Silva

MIAMI INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF ART AND DESIGN

1501 Biscayne Blvd., Miami
305-428-5700
www.artinstitutes.edu/miami
Through December 3:
"Through the Eyes of Love" with Barry Gross, Alejandro Cuadra, Ali Miranda, Janet Muller, Noah Jones, Jonathan Brooks, and Marco Gonzalez

MICHAEL PEREZ POP ART GALLERY
Shops at Midtown Miami
Store # 120 Buena Vista Blvd., Miami
516-532-3040
www.michaelperez-artist.com
Call gallery for exhibition information

THE MOORE BUILDING
4040 NE 2nd Ave., Miami
305-572-0866
www.bridgesevents.com
Through December 4:
"Architecture of the Air: The Sound and Light Environments of Christopher Janney" by Christopher Janney

MORE FUNNER PROJECTS
180 NE 39th St., Miami
786-512-4130
www.morefunnerprojects.blogspot.com
Call gallery for exhibition information

MYRA GALLERIES
177 NW 23rd St., Miami
631-704-3476
www.myragalleries.com
December 1 through January 9:
"New York-New York" by Paul Ching-Bor
"Urban Life in Cuba-Colombia" by Camila Malo
"Pop Art World with Swarovski Crystals" by Milani
Reception December 1, 6 to 9 p.m.

NEW WORLD GALLERY
New World School of the Arts
25 NE 2nd St., Miami
305-237-3597
Through December 16:
"Works of Light" with various artists

NINA TORRES FINE ART
1800 N. Bayshore Dr., Miami
305-395-3599
www.ninatortresfineart.com
Through January 28:
"International Art Exhibition" with various artists

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
Through December 17:
"Great Masters" with Jesus Soto, Carlos Cruz Diez, Alejandro Otero, Victor Lucena, Francisco Salazar, Victor Vasarely, Bernar Venet, and Carlos Cabeza

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OH-WOW

3100 NW 7th Ave., Miami
305-633-9345

www.oh-wow.com

December 1 through 4:

"It Ain't Fair: Materialism" with Daniel Arsham, Justin Beal, Anna Betbeze, Ashley Bickerton, Scott Campbell, Peter Coffin, Dan Colen, N. Dash, Sam Falls, Michael Genovese, Luis Gispert, Angel Otero, José Parlá, Sara Rahbar, Ryan Reggiani, Bert Rodriguez, Amanda Ross-Ho, Aurel Schmidt, David Benjamin Sherry, Lucien Smith, Agathe Snow, Jessica Stockholder, Nick van Woert, and Aaron Young

Reception with a performance by Michael David Quattlebaum, Jr, December 1, 6 to 9 p.m.

PANAMERICAN ART PROJECTS

2450 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-573-2400

www.panamericanart.com

Through December 5:

"Fragments" by José Manuel Fors

PAEDES FINE ARTS STUDIO

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

www.miguelparedes.com

Ongoing:

"Elements of an Artist" by Miguel Paredes

Reception December 1, 7 to 11 p.m.

PRAXIS INTERNATIONAL ART

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

www.praxis-art.com

Through December 31:

"Barbed" by Guerra de la Paz

PRIMARY PROJECTS

4141 NE 2nd Ave., Suite 104, Miami
www.primaryprojectspace.com

info@primaryflight.com

December 1 through January 31:

"Here Lies Georges Wildenstein" with Marc Bijl, Retna, Michael Vasquez, Miru Kim, Cleon Peterson, George Sanchez-Calderon, Manny Prieres, Andrew Nigon, Scott Shannon, Christina Pettersson, Shelter Serra, How & Nosm, Kenton Parker, Cole Sternberg, Edouard Nardon, and Jel Martinez

Reception December 1, 6 to 10 p.m.

THE ROTUNDA

3252 NW 1st Ave., Suite 101, Miami
www.gggexhibit.com

305-751-9641

December 1 through 4:

"Graffiti Gone Global" with Marc Fornes, Volkan Alkanoglu, and Billi Kid

Reception December 1, 6 to 9 p.m.

SAMMER GALLERY

82 NE 29th St., Miami
305-441-2005

www.artnet.com/sammerglassery.html

Through January 30:

"The Forms of Light" by Romulo Aguerre

SOHO STUDIOS

2136 NW 1st Ave., Miami
305-600-4785

www.sohostudiosmiami.com

Call gallery for exhibition information

SPINELLO PROJECTS

150 NE 42nd St., Miami

786-271-4223

www.spinelloprojects.com

Through December 4:

"Site Specific No. 1 (Family Christian Center)" with TYPOE, Agustina Woodgate, and Santiago Rubino

Reception December 1, 7 to 10 p.m.

STAR ISLAND-MAPS STUDIO

255 NW 25th St., Miami

December 3:

"Gallery Opening" by John Jonsheski

Reception December 3, 6 to 9 p.m.

STASH GALLERY

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

www.myspace.com/stashgallery

Call gallery for exhibition information

SWAMPSPACE GALLERY

3821 NE 1st Ct., Miami

http://swampspace.blogspot.com/

swampstyle@gmail.com

Through December 5:

"The Ephemera of ABMB" by Oliver Sanchez

TONY WYNN MODERN ART GALLERY

3223 NE 2nd Ave., Miami

786-536-9799

www.tonywynn.com

Ongoing:

"Patriotica" by Tony Wynn

THE LUNCH BOX GALLERY

310 NW 24th St., Miami

305-407-8131

www.thelunchboxgallery.com

December 1 through February 25:

"Isolations" with Lilly McElroy, Dana Meilijson, Rodolfo

Vanmarcke, and Missy Nuzzo

Reception December 1, 7 to 10 p.m.

UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI PROJECTS SPACE

2200 NW 2nd Ave., Miami

305-284-2542

Call gallery for exhibition information

WOLFGANG ROTH & PARTNERS FINE ART

201 NE 39th St., Miami

305-576-6960

www.wrpfineart.com

Call gallery for exhibition information

WYNWOOD WALLS

NW 2nd Avenue between 25th and 26th Street

305-573-0658

www.thewynwoodwalls.com

Ongoing:

"Wynwood Walls" with Retna, How & Nosm, Roa, b., The

Date Farmers, Saner, Segó, Liqen, Neuzz, Faile, Vhils,

Interesni Kazki, Kenny Scharf, Nunca, Shepard Fairey,

Aiko, Ryan McGinness, Stelios Faitakis, and avaf

December 4:

"Pop Up Shop" with various artists

YARD@CASALIN

55 NW 30th St., Miami

www.casalin.org

December 1 through 4:

"Rapture: The Day After" with various artists

Reception December 1, 10 a.m. to noon

YELEN ART GALLERY

250 NW 23rd St., Unit 306, Miami

954-235-4758

www.yeelenart.com

December 1 through 31:

"Possession" by Jerome Soimaud

MUSEUM & COLLECTION EXHIBITS

ARTCENTER/SOUTH FLORIDA

800 Lincoln Rd., Miami Beach

305-674-8278

www.artcentersf.org

Through January 1:

"Center of Attention" with resident artists

Reception December 2, 8 to 11 p.m.

BASS MUSEUM OF ART

2100 Collins Ave., Miami Beach

305-673-7530

www.bassmuseum.org

Through February 12:

Laurent Grasso

December 1 through March 4:

"Beauty Business" by Erwin Wurm

CIFO (Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation)

1018 N. Miami Ave., Miami

305-455-3380

www.cifo.org

Through March 4:

"Frames and Documents: Conceptualist Practices:

Selections from the Ella Fontanals-Cisneros Collection"

with various artists

Reception December 2, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

DE LA CRUZ COLLECTION CONTEMPORARY ART

SPACE

23 NE 41st St., Miami

305-576-6112

www.delacruzcollection.org

Ongoing:

"Works from the Collection of Rosa and Carlos de la

Cruz" with various artists

Through March 10:

"Maintain Right" by Finner Projects, with Justin H.

Long and Robert Lorie

FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY FROST

ART MUSEUM

10975 SW 17th St., Miami

305-348-2890

thefrost.fiu.edu

Through December 4:

"Afro-Victimize" by Tirzo Martha

Through January 8:

"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

Through February 19:

"Color on Color" with various artists

Through March 18:

"Tour de France/Florida: Contemporary Artists from

France in Florida's Private Collections"

LEGAL ART

1035 N. Miami Ave., Suite 200, Miami

www.legalartmiami.org

Through January 31:

"Four Minutes, Thirty-Three Seconds" with Augurari

Editions, Rodolfo Andaur, Hackworth Ashley, Spring

Break, Monserrat Rojas Corradi, Cat Dove, Viking

Funeral, Andrea Galvani, Jay Hines, Scott Hug,

Karlo Ibarra, Carlos Irijalba, Brookhart Jonquil, Jason

Keeling, Kristin Korolowicz, Liz Magic Laser, Nicolas

Lobo, Gean Moreno, Richard Mosse, Ernesto Oroza, Gaston Persico, Manny Prieres, Print and Paste Collective (FAU), Megan Riley, Tom Scicluna, Joaquin Segura, SOMA, Natika Soward, Lara Stein Pardo, Suzanne Stroebe, Third Streaming/Yona Baker, Cecilia Szalkowicz, TM Sisters, and Pinar Yolacan

Reception December 2, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

LOWE ART MUSEUM, UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

1301 Stanford Dr., Coral Gables

305-284-3535

www.lowemuseum.org

Through January 15:

"China: Insights" with Chen Yuan Zhong, Hua Er, Jia Yu

Chuan, Li Nan, Yang Yan Kang, Yu Haibo, and Zhang

Xinmin

Through April 22:

"Women, Windows, and the Word: Diverging

Perspectives on Islamic Art" with various artists

Through September 23:

"Sainly Blessings: A Gift of Mexican Retablos from

Joseph and Janet Shein" 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 January 1:

"Schneebett" by Enrique Martinez Celaya

"American People, Black Light: Faith Ringgold's

Paintings of the 1960s" by Faith Ringgold

Through March 18:

"Focus Gallery: Marcel Duchamp" by Marcel Duchamp,

curated by Rene Morales

MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART

770 NE 125th St., North Miami

305-893-6211

www.mocanomi.org

Through February 12:

"Pivot Points V" by Teresita Fernandez

Through February 19:

"Rolling Stop" by Mark Handforth

THE MARGULIES COLLECTION

591 NW 27th St., Miami

305-576-1051

www.margulieswarehouse.com

Through April 28:

"New Exhibitions" with various artists

THE RUBELL FAMILY COLLECTION

95 NW 29th St., Miami

305-573-6090

http://rfc.museum

Through July 27:

"American Exuberance" with various artists

Through December 4:

"Incubation" by Jennifer Rubell

Reception December 1 through 4, 9 a.m. to noon

WORLD CLASS BOXING

Debra and Dennis Scholl Collection

170 NW 23rd St., Miami

305-438-9908

www.worldclassboxing.org

Through February 11:

"Love Trips: A Triptych on Love" by Jillian Mayer

Compiled by Melissa Wallen

Send listings, jpeg images, and events information to

art@biscaynetimes.com

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It Takes a Village to Meet Santa

Two poles collide on **Friday, December 2** at the **Miami Shores Winterfest**. Kids are encouraged to bring their wish lists for Santa, before being whisked from the subtropics to the North Pole. There will be inflatable holiday figures, a children's train, and craft stations (with the obligatory face painting). Wristbands need to be purchased at the community center (9617 Park Dr.). For residents the cost is \$5; non-residents pay \$7. The fun starts at 6:30 p.m. Go to www.miamishoresvillage.com.

Chalk One Up for MiMo

The MiMo Biscayne Association is getting in on the Art Basel festivities by throwing its own free art party at Legion Park (Biscayne Boulevard at 66th Street). On **Sunday, December 4**, vendors, food trucks, performers, and artists will help create **MiMo Art in the Park**, starting at noon. The big draw will be the 1000-foot walkway covered in chalk murals, which will be created throughout the day by artists, amateurs, kids, and adults alike. It will be an action-packed day. Oh,



An Elf's Warped View of the World

David Sedaris is one of America's great humorists. His smart, poignant, often hysterical commentary is familiar to many. He really first hit the big time when National Public Radio played his reading of his experiences as an elf in a Macy's Christmas display. It would be the basis of his first book and eventually it was adapted for the stage, as *The Santaland Diaries*. The play runs at the Adrienne Arsht Center (1444 Biscayne Blvd.) starting on **Thursday, December 8 through Friday, December 23**. A production of house company Zoetic Stage, it stars Michael McKeever. Tickets are \$35. For various times, go to www.arshtcenter.org.



A New Year's Eve You'll Actually Remember

To keep it family-friendly this New Year's Eve, Bayfront Park offers up a party with lots of eye candy and activity, but without the excess alcohol. Gates open at 7:00 p.m. on **Saturday, December 31** and the DJ dance party starts at 8:00 p.m. Before midnight, the big orange ball will inch up the side of the Intercontinental Hotel, and to bring in 2012, a huge fireworks display will light up the sky. It's free, but no bottles, cans, or coolers. For more information, call 305-358-7550.

and don't forget the architecture: There will be a guided district tour starting at 12:30 p.m., leaving from the MiMo booth in the park. For more details, go to www.mimoartinthepark.com.

Setting the Night Aglow

They are sometimes called fireflies, glow worms, or lightning bugs, but whatever the moniker, their flitting and fleeting light has become harder to see in our urbanized and rarely entirely dark world. But on **Friday, December 9** at Greynolds Park (17530 W. Dixie Hwy.), they should be visible during the **Creatures of the Night Hike**, along with who knows what other animals and nocturnal residents. There is a 30-minute presentation on the nightlife of the park, and then the hike from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. Call 305-949-1741 or go to www.miamidade.gov/ecoadventures.

A Classic Take on a Classic Ballet

The Nutcracker is likely the most performed ballet of all time. Every ballet troupe puts on some version of it during the holiday season. Under the direction of Russian Vladimir Issaev, the Arts Ballet Theatre of Florida will interpret the Tchaikovsky classic in dramatic — read Russian — fashion. There will be 104 dancers, snowflakes, sugarplum fairies, and nutcrackers in all. From **Friday, December 9 through Sunday, December 11** at the Aventura Arts and Cultural Center (3385 NE 188th St.). Tickets cost \$35. For more information, call 954-462-0222.



A Taste of Historic Overtown

As high-rises and restaurants fill up downtown, an older and largely neglected community can get lost in the hubbub. That would be the historic black neighborhood of Overtown, which once was a thriving entertainment and commercial center. On **Sunday, December 10**, historian Paul George will take visitors to the famed Lyric Theater, neighborhood churches, the site of legendary clubs and hotels as part of HistoryMiami's **Overtown Walking Tour and People's Bar-B-Que**, from 10:00 a.m. till noon. The lunch destination — neighborhood staple People's — alone is worth the trip. Cost to HistoryMiami members is \$20; \$30 for nonmembers. Call 305-375-1621 or go to www.historymiami.org.

Little River's Big Celebration

It has taken a while for Miami-Dade to appreciate its unique history, but slowly it's beginning to happen. The latest example: **El Portal Little River Celebration Day**, which will run all day long on **Saturday, December 10** from 7:00 a.m. till 7:00 p.m. The organizers would like you to know that, along the Little River, there is a bird sanctuary, hence a Tropical Audubon Society bird tour at 7:00 a.m. There is also a Tequesta Indian site; take in the 3:00 p.m. canoe serenade featuring Native American songs. Get on a canoe yourself for the 1:00 p.m. wildlife guided tour. The day will top off with a family picnic. For more information, contact littleriverelportal@gmail.com.

Light Up a Life

Not only has the Christmas light extravaganza that takes place along NE 137th Terrace, just north of Enchanted Forest Park, become a South Florida tradition, it is also one of the few holiday events that has remained true to the origins of the season — it's about sharing and giving, as well as gawking. From **Friday, December 2 through Saturday, December 31**, the dazzling **Holiday Lights 2011** will be draped from trees and houses as part of Care Resource's annual HIV/AIDS benefit, to which visitors are encouraged to donate. Access is from NE 16th Avenue. For more information, call 305-576-1234 or go to www.careresource.org.

What Floats Your Boat

The first **Holiday Boat Parade and Toy Drive** was held in 1998 to draw people downtown, as it took place on Biscayne Bay in front of Bayfront Park. About 20 decorated boats motored around. This year, as evening falls on **Saturday, December 17**, about 100 boats will be parading, and in a much broader area, from South Beach over to downtown Miami, although the central viewing area will remain Bayfront Park (301 N. Biscayne Blvd.). The event is sponsored by the Miami Outboard Club, along with various city organizations, and includes a month-long toy drive. For more details on how to participate with your boat or to observe, go to www.miamioutboardclub.com.

Jazz Headliners

Pianist and UM music school dean Shelly Berg, whose trio recording *Blackbird* is receiving many five-star reviews, joins vocalist Tierney Sutton for **Meditations in Jazz**, an intimate evening of jazz standards, holiday favorites, and the premier of Berg's "Meditation" on **Saturday, December 17** at 7:30 p.m. The acoustically superb Saint Martha in the Shores (9301 Biscayne Blvd.) will highlight Berg's nuanced touch and Sutton's silky voice. Tickets are just \$10. Call 1-800-595-4849 or visit www.saintmartha.tix.com.

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

A Prickly Proposition

Some cacti bear edible fruit — just watch out for those tiny, hair-like spines called glochids

By Jeff Shimonski
BT Contributor

I've always enjoyed growing cacti and other succulents. Unfortunately our local climate is very humid and many of these species will rapidly succumb to fungal issues in our landscapes.

Some do grow well here, and I've learned not only to grow them in proper locations with excellent drainage, adequate lighting, and sometimes under cover (so they don't get wet when it rains), but also to appreciate how well they protect themselves against overenthusiastic horticulturists.

Most cacti and many other succulent plant species have spines that can cause serious flesh wounds. I've been the recipient of some nasty barbs over the years, but what I consider even worse are those cacti that have glochids instead of spines (although some insidious cactus species have both).

Glochids are usually felt before they are seen. These tiny, barbed, hair-like spines can brush off onto your skin or clothes and cause hours of aggravating pain and itching. If it looks like soft fuzz on a cactus, make sure you don't touch it.

I use duct tape to attempt to pull glochids off my skin. Don't scratch! It seems once they enter your skin, they can break off, and that is when the aggravation *really* begins. Glochids can also work through loose material (your clothes), so don't think you're protected by what you're wearing.

One cactus that grows well in South Florida is the prickly pear. There are many species in the genus *Opuntia* that are native to countries throughout North, Central, and South America. This very tough, adaptable plant can be found growing well in the most inhospitable conditions, where nothing else will grow.

The name, of course, should alert you to the possibility of spines, but some species have only glochids and, from a distance, look quite harmless. There are dozens of prickly pear species and varieties, and many of them have an edible fruit called the cactus fig. These are grown commercially in tropical and subtropical climates worldwide for their food value.

Recently I purchased some prickly pear fruit in a local Hispanic supermarket, where they are known as *pera del cactus*. In other Spanish-speaking countries, including Spain, they may be called *tuna*. When I came across these in the store, I gingerly picked them up one by one, to make sure that the glochids had been removed. (Glochids can be removed by rolling the fruit in sand or immersing it for a prolonged period in water.)

I picked some that were ripe, so that evening I took the fruit, which were about four inches long and a couple of inches thick at the center, cut off the ends, and peeled the thick "skin" off to reveal a sweet, red, juicy, jellylike substance with tiny cactus seeds imbedded inside. I then took the jelly and mashed it in a strainer to allow the red juice to drip



BT photo by Jeff Shimonski

The prickly pear cactus can have quite tasty fruit.

out into a bowl. This took about an hour.

My favorite chef, Monica, drizzled the juice over slices of brie cheese atop water wafers and then sprinkled the cheese with black lava salt. This appetizer went very well with a couple of glasses of inexpensive Pinot Noir.

Cactus figs can be used to make candy or jelly and to flavor yogurt and cereal. Try it in a smoothie or vodka-based drinks. There is also another part of this cactus that is edible: the leaves, or cactus pads. These cactus pads were apparently once consumed by sailors to avoid scurvy on long oceanic voyages. They were thus spread to tropical countries around the world.

In Mexican cuisine, they are known as *nopales* or *nopalitos* and used in dishes like *huevos con nopales* or *tacos de nopales*. I also found these in the Hispanic supermarket alongside the cactus figs.

The fleshy, oval leaf is soft and crunchy when cooked and, to me, tastes like a green pepper. It can be quite tasty with other condiments. The leaves are supposed to contain beta-carotene, iron,

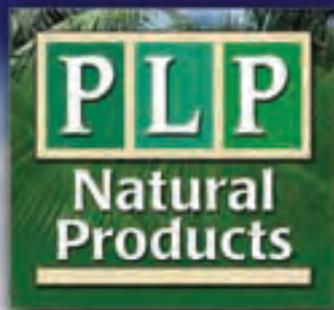
vitamin C, and calcium.

The prickly pear cactus was once cultivated on a very large scale because of an insect called cochineal, which fed off the juices of this plant. The crimson-colored dye, carmine, which is now used for cosmetics and food coloring, comes from this insect. (The next time you drink a red fruit drink, read the ingredient label. If it says carmine or cochineal is used as a food coloring, you are drinking crushed insects.)

Pretty impressive for something that will grow in a corner of your yard where nothing else will. Do not buy cactus pads if they look dried out or wrinkled, and make sure, before you cook them, that all of the glochids and spines have been removed. You definitely don't want glochids in your mouth or throat.

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.

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Out of Africa, Into Miami

Jane Goodall urges us to stop monkeying around and get serious about the environment

By **Jim W. Harper**
BT Contributor

Jane Goodall is freezing. Trapped inside the Ritz-Carlton in Coconut Grove, her tiny frame cannot stand the extreme air conditioning. “Let’s go outside,” she says, “so that we can talk in comfort.”

Dame Jane Goodall, 77 years old, a global icon, can handle extreme conditions. She spent decades living among chimpanzees in Tanzania, and her mangled thumbnail proves it. Nowadays she travels the world constantly; the day before this interview, she barely escaped the worst flood in Panama’s history.

But the Miami-style A/C is killing her. She opens her hotel room’s window for relief, but she has an even simpler solution. “If you don’t need it, turn it off,” she says.

Goodall is here to address leaders from Latin America and about 100 other attendees at a forum sponsored by the Americas Business Council Foundation. Speakers at the three-day event include Jeb Bush and Lance Armstrong, but Goodall speaks first.

So what does the chimpanzee lady say? “Oh, oh, oh, aw-aw-aw!” Her impression of how a chimpanzee says “good morning” warms the heart. Next she reveals that the world’s oldest chimp, 73-year-old Little Mama, lives up the road at Lion Country Safari in Palm Beach County.

Her second topic is overpopulation. Unlike humans, her chimpanzee family

has maintained a fairly constant number since 1960, when she first began observations. “They are not overpopulating their environment,” she says.

Humans, however, are to the point of self-destruction. “It really is scary to hear that the seven billionth child was born,” says Goodall, referring to a United Nations announcement in November.

For her, the planet faces three main problems. They are poverty, wealth, and overpopulation. The rural poor do desperate things such as cutting down forests to survive. “Surely no country has worse problems than Haiti, social and environmental,” she says.

The wealthiest populations consume resources insatiably, and that lifestyle simply cannot persist in a finite system. What’s more, the human population keeps expanding and pushing the boundaries of sustainability. “If we continue like this, what will the future be for our great-great grandchildren?” asks Goodall.

Her solution? Children. Goodall’s own foundation created a youth-inspired program in Tanzania that has spread worldwide. Roots and Shoots has clubs at two schools in north Miami-Dade — Miami Country Day and Hubert O. Sibley Elementary — and at more than 150 locations across Florida, in all 50 states, and in 120 countries, including China. Goodall’s passion for this program seems to equal that for her chimpanzee research.

Children tell her they feel their future has been compromised. Yet she finds hope in their growing concern and



Photo by Michael Neugebauer

determination to save the planet. “The most important thing is the growing awareness of young people around the world,” she says. She feels hopeful that they may be reaching a critical mass and, instead of just educating them, she calls for “informing and empowering.”

In addition to young people, Goodall names three other reasons for hope: the resilience of nature, the human brain, and the human spirit. In Africa she has seen how micro-credit can allow local businesses to grow in sustainable ways and how the education of girls is vital for stabilizing population growth. (Birth rates drop as education rises.)

“We can’t shy away from population growth,” she says. “It’s a fact.”

Even in places with explosive population growth, local people recognize the problem. Goodall tells a story about men in Africa who request vasectomies and villages that cry out for education: “When we introduced family planning, the villages said, ‘Why didn’t you come before?’”

As for the human intellect, she believes in its power, but she also advocates for a reconnection to the compassion of the human heart: “How come we’re destroying our only home? We have lost something I call wisdom.”

So what does all this mean for us in South Florida? Number one, our students need to learn the truth about the

environment. Teachers need to step up. Schools need to reach out. They can start by contacting the Environmental Education Providers of Miami-Dade County.

Second, we can use our connections to Haiti and other needy populations in our hemisphere to support the education of girls and of communities in need of family planning.

Third, we can reattach our heads to our hearts by paying greater attention to the traditions of Native Americans and to early Floridians. They knew how to live without air conditioning.

Fourth, we should switch quickly to solar energy and promote green buildings, because buildings are the biggest consumers of energy.

Don’t discount the power of even small gestures, like recycling plastic bags. “All the little things seem small, but awareness levels are rising,” says Goodall.

Today we can turn off the A/C in her honor.

Goodall holds out hope that the sun will warm her from the cranked-up air conditioning in her room. She is opening the door. Let’s follow her outside.

Send your tips and clever ideas to: goinggreen@biscaynetimes.com.

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The Call to Blog

Our columnist joins the ranks of parents sharing their experiences on the Web

By Crystal Brewre
BT Contributor

I asked a friend what she was doing with her family over the holidays. I was expecting to hear something like, “We’re hitting the *Nutcracker*,” or “Going to Santa’s Enchanted Forest,” but instead she simply said, “I have to check a couple of blogs first to see what’s up.”

The idea of blogging is so dark and mysterious to me. I know, I know... Blogging is so 2002. I just haven’t caught on to the concept. I’m not a good test audience for our generation of changing media. I still read an actual newspaper, cover to cover, every morning. There is something visceral about holding a paper and a cup of coffee that digital media will never replace.

My husband says that blogs creep him out in the same way that the people who share too much on Facebook creep him out. While I, too, could do without the habitual posts about dentist appointments, vegetable shopping, and what’s for breakfast, my fascination with parent blogs began as an endeavor to understand them for professional advantage.

Since my day job at the Adrienne Arsht Center has me constantly finding ways to show off our family programming, I thought this knowledge would be a good addition to our marketing arsenal. What exactly is a blog and why

are mommies and daddies everywhere tippity-typing away, creating them?

I figured that, since you’re most likely reading this column in your trusty print edition of the *BT*, you too might like a quick Brewre-torial on blogging.

Here are some of the questions I had at first.

Q: Why “blog”? Is it an acronym? A code?

A: It’s shorthand for “Web log.” When someone pointed that out to me, I felt like an idiot.

Q: What makes it different from just posting an article?

A: Sometimes it *is* just an article on a Website. Sometimes it’s like a diary, or a series of Facebook posts, or just a whole lotta promotional giveaways and advertisements.

There is a wide interpretation of the blogging concept. For example, there’s “Tropic of Mom,” a Miami mommy blogger who uses her blog like a captain’s log, accompanied by iPhone pictures. Her blog is made up of quick comments about her day, the kids’ birthday parties, the rain, cupcakes. Nothing transformative, but I’ll bet her mother-in-law is thrilled to be so informed.

Alternately, there’s “A Mom, a Blog, and the Life In-Between.” This Miami mom writes a deeply personal blog about raising her son and the emotions resulting from the break-up of her marriage



and her hopes about the future. The prose is sweet and melancholy, but getting through even a single posting is a commitment, as they can run more than a few screen pages.

There’s “Ask Miami Moms,” which is really just a rudimentary site with a feed of Facebook posts: “Who needs a nanny?” “Does anyone know anything about the Seaquarium workshop?” “Need help getting five-month-old to sleep through the night. Any advice?”

Momsmiami.com has a few wonderful bloggers with different takes on parenting. My favorite is Mama Sass, who has a witty take on raising her two kids. Her posts also appear as print articles, hence my knowledge of her.

My search revealed that, save for the above mentioned blogs, the majority of parent bloggers are inconsistent. Some have compelling posts, but stop in February 2009 or, say, April 2010. Did they lose interest? Did they run out of story ideas? Funding? So mysterious.

Q: Do bloggers talk *to* us or *with* us?

A: Now, this is where it gets interesting. Although interaction is not a qualification, most quality blogs encourage visitors to leave comments and even message each other via widgets.

With subject matter that involves the ways we raise our kids, readers are sure

to have opinions, and this is the perfect forum. National parent blogger Lisa Belkin built an award-winning blog for the *New York Times* with the belief that parents wanted more talk about parenting. “At first the assumption was that I would talk *to* the readers,” she writes, “but within weeks I realized it only made sense to talk *with* them — and then get out of the way and let them talk to one another.” She has written 1216 posts and, from that, garnered 52,574 comments.

Q: How do parent bloggers find the time?

A: Well, that is a whole different article, but I suspect many of these bloggers need an outlet at the end of their day. There is so much to share and, hey, write what you know, right?

With that said, I have an announcement to make: What started as a marketing research project has ended in inspiration. I am now taking “Kids and the City” interactive!

Follow my new blog on Twitter @BTKidsinthecity for more deep and not-so-deep parenting insight, #thingsourkidssay, and re-tweets of cool stuff you are sure to like. See you in the blogosphere!

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Biscayne Crime Beat

Compiled by Derek McCann

Desperate Dog Lovers on the Loose

7700 Block of NE 2nd Avenue

Sometimes our criminals completely indulge themselves without restraint. A man secured his business leaving his two ferocious guard dogs to patrol the area. The guard dogs went missing later that night after the property's padlock was broken and mystery intruders removed 45 pieces of plywood from the premises. Amazingly, there are no witnesses who saw this bountiful loot removed. There are no leads in this case, but that wood could be used to build quite a nice doghouse.

Slippery Criminals Strike Again

700 Block of NE 79th Street

Someone broke into the rear of East Side Pizza, pried open the grill, and

removed 40 gallons of used cooking oil. It is not known how the perpetrator transported the oil out of the area. While we support the recycling movement and turning used cooking oil and other waste into biofuels, we must once again acknowledge that Miami crooks will steal *anything*. Remember to flush your toilets.

Does This Count As Bilingual?

1500 Block of NE 1st Avenue

On routine prostitution patrol, an undercover officer flagged down a suspected prostitute. She offered him a "blow job," which the officer noted was "street slang for oral sex." That price was \$40. However, she had another special offer: She

could "f***" him for \$120. Officer noted that "f***ing" was street slang for sex. We appreciate the officer's translations of this little-known secret language. The lady of the night was arrested. Side note: On NE 63rd Street and Biscayne, a "f***" only costs \$60, according to another police report. We're just saying.

No Translation Necessary

NE 75th Street and NE Miami Court

In this report, the officer did not bother translating. Prostitute offered, in broken English, a "d*** suck" for \$20. Officer then gave the signal and the young lady was arrested. (Is it us, or do the prices fall the farther north one goes?)

Bathroom Bandit Relieves Woman of Her Load

401 Biscayne Blvd.

We now have to watch out for criminal slime when Mother Nature calls. The victim noticed a woman



fixing her hair in the mirror of a public restroom as she entered a stall. When the victim finished her business (the police report made sure to tell us that she urinated), the suspect busted the stall door open, aimed a "golden" gun at the victim's head, and demanded she give her "all that she had." The victim handed over \$200, her Blackberry, and other items. The suspect then left the area. Suspect is still at large. Please be aware of your surroundings. Since

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nothing appears to be sacred anymore, maybe it's better to "hold it in."

Gas Station Fashionista Sports Gun, Scowl

12300 Biscayne Blvd.

Man wearing a hood on a hot Miami day walked into a gas-station store at 1:30 in the afternoon. He calmly selected several alcoholic beverages from the cooler. The clerk asked him to remove his hood, to which the man responded, "Are you serious? Shut the f*** up and open the register!" He then produced a black revolver and ordered the clerk to hand over the money in the register. The clerk gave him the \$400 he had. The gun-wielding slime made off on foot. Johnson and Wales University cameras caught him running northbound on NE 17th Avenue. Note to store clerks and the general public: Never assume someone is just making a fashion statement. This is Miami. "Business attire" is broadly defined.

Sure It Wasn't an Angry Meter Reader?

400 Block of NE 143rd Street

Victim was away from home when she received a call from her alarm

company. She went back to her house and noticed that all the power was off. Someone had thrown a large rock through her bedroom window, removed the FPL meter from the backyard — causing the main power to shut off — then left the scene when the alarm rang. The damaged meter was found several feet away. Remarkably, it was still running. (We're joking. We kid because we love.)

Police Hope to Catch Them Red-Handed

14500 Block of NE 6th Avenue

Burglars illegally entered a vacant apartment by kicking in the wood panel that covered the air conditioning wall opening. Once inside, they stole six electrical power cords and 10 one-gallon cans of red paint. They made their exit through the same A/C opening. We're not sure what they will use the red paint for, or even what the black-market rate is for such paint. But if you see someone selling red paint out of their car (not far-fetched for North Miami), you may want to call police.

Too Fit To Quit

12500 Block of Biscayne Boulevard

Woman was strolling down the Boulevard when a gray car pulled up alongside her and the occupant grabbed her purse. The woman refused to let go of her bag even as the car began to drag her. She eventually fell to the ground. The contents of her purse scattered. A passenger in the car grabbed her wallet from the ground and the two muggers drove off. Undeterred, the victim ran after the car, and was heard to scream "You a**holes!" by a witness. Victim later claimed she chased the car all the way from Sans Souci to 125th Street. That is quite a distance. The car got away, but Miami crooks beware: Victims are getting in better shape all the time.

Vacuum Thief Makes a Clean Getaway

300 Block of NE 79th Street

Victim was upstairs eating lunch with his family when a neighbor called to inform him that his home was being burglarized. When the victim ran downstairs, he saw the subject, holding his fan and vacuum cleaner, jumping the fence. The subject ran into a neighboring establishment,

exiting a few minutes later without the items. When police questioned the business owner, he was extremely evasive and denied ever seeing the items, or knowing the subject. Rumors abound that he may be an accomplice, but no arrests have been made.

Don't Talk to Strangers — Ever

600 Block of NE 87th Street

Victim met an apparent "woman" on Biscayne Boulevard and they conversed for a few minutes. Victim went on his way. However, the "woman" followed him home, and brought some friends with her. She knocked on victim's door and the victim, thinking it was his roommate, opened it. The "woman" then jumped him and began punching him in the face. The two other subjects came in and did the same, before one went to the kitchen and took the microwave. All three immediately left after securing this item. Now the trio can really enjoy those Hot Pockets. We suggest that readers never talk to anyone on the Boulevard — after all, it is the Boulevard.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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Good Owners, Better Dogs

Being responsible, smart, and communicating clearly is the key to raising a great pooch

By Lisa Hartman
BT Contributor

I know many dogs and even more dog owners. Working in both New York (in the Hamptons) and South Florida means meeting diverse groups of people and being exposed to many different beliefs on how to raise dogs.

For starters, there seem to be more people in the north who take pride in the local flora and fauna, as well as the rules of the area. Except for the summer season, dogs are allowed to run free on beaches almost anywhere in the Hamptons, provided they are under voice control and owners pick up after them.

I must say, I have taken my own dogs to more than 20 different beaches there, as well as many state parks. Almost all stores in the Hamptons welcome dogs as well. Compare that to Miami. South Beach is extremely dog friendly, as are a few other places (such as the Bal Harbour Shops).

Most beaches, however, are not, and places and times of beaches accepting dogs are limited at best. The reason? In New York, I see people pick up after their pets constantly and even, when necessary, after other people's dogs.

There is rarely any litter of any sort to clean up on New York's beaches, and when there is, it's usually the result of out-of-town kids leaving juice cartons,



balloons, and plastic cups lying around, which locals also clean up. They want to keep wildlife safe, their beaches beautiful, and their dogs welcome on them.

Many times in South Florida, I experience the opposite: People looking the other way or pressing their iPhones tighter to their ear when their dogs are

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doing their business, conveniently “not noticing” that their pets are making a deposit in a public place, and hence, absolving themselves from having to pick it up.

This is especially true when people feel there is nobody watching them. And while both sexes are guilty of this, men down here are the worst, much less likely than women to pick up after their dogs. The same holds true for dog owners allowing their unruly dogs to bother people or other dogs in public places.

Certainly I’m not making any blanket statements. There are responsible and irresponsible dog owners everywhere. But note how an owner’s behavior influences his or her dog’s chances in life. Because New York dog owners are generally more considerate of others and the environment, their dogs are given more freedom to enjoy running on the beaches off leash, go into town, restaurants, and many other areas they choose.

This leads to more exercise options for the dog, precious opportunities for socialization, and a more stimulating life. All of this, in turn, helps owners have a better-behaved pet that is a pleasure to be around. No poop — no stepping in

anything unpleasant or that spreads disease or attracts insects — and no obnoxious behavior means nobody complains, and more doggy privileges are granted.

And so irresponsible owners’ behavior will determine their dogs’ quality of life. Do you have a pit bull or another maligned breed? Somewhere a few bad apples spoiled it for your pet, and now more of them are in shelters than can ever possibly find homes.

What’s more, your friendly and sweet red-nosed pit is probably pooch non grata in certain places — even whole towns and cities — providing her with fewer opportunities to exercise and develop social skills, and thus a vicious cycle is born.

Good dog owners are not just responsible, they also give clear communication to their dogs regarding what they want so their dogs have boundaries and know their limits. You want to meet someone, Fido? You must sit to greet them. Do you want to be free to run loose on the beach? You must come back when I call and listen to other instructions.

Good dog owners are fun and fair and teach with positive reinforcement so the

dogs want to listen, know what is expected of them, and are not afraid of coming when they’re called. They make time for their canine charge daily, and provide them with an interesting life. Training is essential, and training dogs before there is a problem is the best way to *prevent* a problem. So is building a solid relationship of mutual trust and respect.

Some of the best-behaved dogs I see in my Hamptons neighborhood belong to local workers: builders, plumbers, and landscapers. Many of them started bringing their dogs to work from the time they were pups. They are very bonded to each other and therefore the dogs generally stick close — even though all the ones I have seen were off the leash.

These dogs know “Sit,” “Stay,” and “Come.” That may be all they know, but they respond to those commands well and there is no confusion about what they’re supposed to do.

By bringing their dogs to work daily, these workers are creating highly social animals, as they get to meet many different people and other animals and are confident around noise from construction and landscaping equipment. In fact,

they are such cool customers that I was able to use two of these dogs on a modeling shoot. They did great!

On the flip side, while writing my latest book, I found myself working with dogs that don’t even know “Sit,” bark uncontrollably, and sometimes get kicked out of restaurants for yowling their heads off. (In such cases, it should be the owner’s task to remove the dog from the establishment so as to not bother other patrons.)

Better dogs are made, not born. It’s up to the human member of the team to be responsible for promoting behavior that will allow a dog to partake of beaches, restaurants, and other destinations in their town. If dog owners are unhappy with their pets’ behaviors, the only person anyone has to look after, and possibly change, is themselves.

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

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A Park in Need Is a Park Indeed

Highland Village Community Center, a resource for neighborhood kids, could use a helping hand

By **Jim W. Harper**
BT Contributor

A funny thing happened on the way to Target. Like a cartoon rabbit that makes a wrong turn at Albuquerque, or in this case at Kentucky — as in Kentucky Fried Chicken — I turned with trepidation into an enclave known as Highland Village.

Ah, Highland Village. Sounds like a quaint little town perched high atop the Swiss Alps.

But this village sits in a town with no elevation and, despite the town's name of North Miami Beach, no beach. The area is not quite a village, either. Highland Village is known, in common parlance, as a trailer park.

Now hold on a minute. I know what you're thinking. There's a park within a trailer park? Must be trashy.

Well, Highland Village's park is no Disneyland, but neither is it a toenail clipping of Satan. This park, known as the Highland Village Community Center,

is simply a homely, orphaned child who needs to be adopted. Think of *Puss in Boots* with conjunctivitis and tattered fur.

Cue the weepy Sarah McLachlan music for this adoption plea: Please, Colonel, dial 305-948-2957 now and sponsor this park. Do I have to tell you why? Let me count the whys.

Highland Village Community Center, a humble, two-room recreation building, stands in the middle of this rectangle of grass. Inside the recreation building are kids who have come home from school,



Community center recreation options include sandpit volleyball (no net) and basketball (nets).

but for some reason they congregate here instead of in their trailers.

Free programs lure the after-school crowds daily. The program for young students has one of the best acronyms I've ever come across: HYPER. It stands for Helping Youth Progress Though Education and Recreation. (Also, of course, for "hyper," as in "these kids are extremely hyper.") The program for students in kindergarten through fifth grade runs every day from 2:00 to 6:00 p.m.

When the clock strikes 6:00 on Mondays and Wednesdays, grab your pompoms and join the free cheerleading program! Sis! Boom! Bah!

Also on Wednesday at 6:00, older teenagers can join the Teen Program. I'm somewhat disappointed in that name, as I was hoping for another catchy acronym, like HORMONES. Teenagers also have Game Night every Friday from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m.

Kids have another way to congregate in the park — fishing. This unofficial program might be called CRAWL, for "Watch me crawl under the fence." In our age of hyper-security, the CRAWL method of penetrating a border has a quaint feel to it, almost like stealing goat cheese from a Swiss buffet.

The lights in the park at night, however, discourage such unruly activity. Besides, there's a much better option down the street: Jump into the woods surrounding the trailer park and anonymity is yours.

The trailer park borders the edge of the mangrove swamp that blends into the campus of Florida International University and the (still underdeveloped) Biscayne Landing. That fantasy project has not realized its grandiose plans, but a few years ago it inspired the rumor



Highland Village claim to fame: World's smallest climbing wall.

that the trailer park would become dust in its wind. Didn't happen.

Just last year the community park was upgraded with pigeon plums and other trees planted around its border. This year the neighborhood is receiving an upgrade to its sewer system. These investments indicate that both the park and the trailer park are staying put.

Inside its rectangle of fencing, most of Highland Village Community Center is open grass, and men gather here regularly for pick-up games of soccer. One edge of the park boasts a high net above the standard fencing, presumably to catch wayward soccer balls.

The park also contains two — count 'em, *two* — pairs of shuffleboard courts. One pair in the corner has fancy tarps over the "observation decks." Strangely, the courts are completely fenced in, as if to keep out the 99 percent. In addition, the courts are slightly elevated — three feet above sea level — and next to a storm-water pumping station. Like all shuffleboard courts, they maintain an air of mystery: *My dear, why are you here?*

The kiddie playground has a pastel-colored plastic kingdom, and it features the world's smallest climbing wall. Seriously, infants could crawl higher. Reaching nary a foot above the ground, the wall's climbing rocks look like wads of gum stuck on

HIGHLAND VILLAGE COMMUNITY CENTER

Park Rating

13621 NE 21st Ave.
North Miami Beach
305-948-2928
Hours: Noon-9p.m. (M-F), 5p.m. (Sat.)
Picnic tables: Yes
Barbecues: No
Picnic pavilions: No
Tennis courts: No
Athletic fields: Yes
Night lighting: Yes
Swimming pool: No
Playground: Yes

BT photos by Jim W. Harper



Two industrial-strength picnic tables with benches invite picnics — sort of.



Fenced and sheltered shuffleboard courts? Who plays shuffleboard?



The forlorn community center needs help, as well as a new roof.

the side of a paper coffee cup. This wall is one very small step for mankind.

To reduce the impact of infants re-entering the atmosphere from their ten-inch orbit, the ground here is covered by chopped-up bits of tire or some such springy material. The whole area looks like a graveyard for charcoal sticks.

Another surprise is the two industrial picnic benches in the middle of the park. Not your typical concrete ensemble,

these monsters are painted a smooth brown and look like giant Tetris pieces that could never be moved. Cockroaches and these tables will survive nuclear war.

The basketball court and the sandpit volleyball court round out the available sporting options.

A plaque on the side of the recreation building states that the park was rededicated in 1996. Next to that plaque is a yellow sign listing the park's rules,

such as "No loitering or congregating on site." Doesn't that last one sort of defeat the purpose of a community center?

Bless this park's little heart. *Pobrecito.*

It would have been easy to trash this place in "Park Patrol," but what's the point? It's not going to draw outsiders or win any awards, and it does serve the many kids living around it. Besides, it's not really trashy. I saw very little litter; it appears fairly clean.

Some caring business or person in the area should adopt this park and help fix the broken light fixtures, the roof section covered by a blue tarp, and the tortured fencing. I believe it would be appreciated.

Now, how do I get out of here? Oh yes, follow the smell of fried chicken, and keep my eye on the Target. I'm back in the lowland.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com



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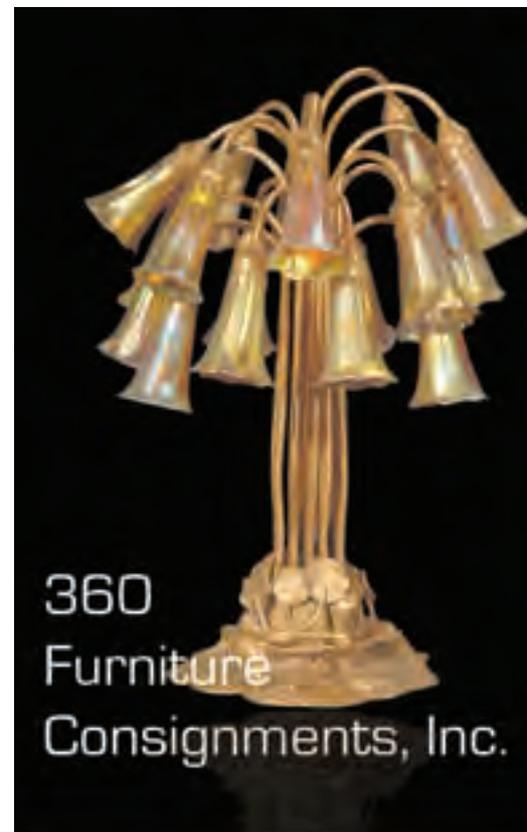
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Bubbly for the 99 Percent

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

By Bill Citara
BT Contributor

Champagne has always had this image as a one-percent thing. You know, the financial geniuses who crashed the world economy sitting around some four-star restaurant shoveling caviar onto blini while slurping buckets of Cristal. Or corporate executives celebrating their purchase of the entire U.S. government over flutes of Dom Perignon. Or our erstwhile “public servants” toasting their cushy new lobbying gigs with magnums of Veuve Clicquot.

Well, screw 'em.

This column is all about sparkling wine for the rest of us, the 99 percent. And even given our budget limitations, there's an amazing amount of really good bubbly out there. Honest. If you skip the big names and concentrate on small French and Spanish producers, you can find some quite remarkable values.

In fact, the nonvintage (NV) **NV Saint-Germain Brut** — my favorite sparkler of the tasting — is such a terrific wine for the money I'd have a hard time recommending that anyone in the 99 percent buy a more expensive “prestige” label. The rest of the wines weren't exactly chopped grapes, either. Across the board, which included wines from relatively obscure vintners like Saint-Germain and huge sparkling-wine houses like Segura Viudas, the quality-to-price ratio was impressive.

I'd be happy to let any of these wines occupy a place on my table. And not just for the holidays. At these prices

you don't have to be a one-percenter to afford the magic of bubbles.

There's no better place to start than with that Saint-Germain Brut. (Note: Total Wine tells us the label recently changed to Saint-Reine. Same bubbly, new name.) Though not technically Champagne — the winery is outside the Champagne region, in Burgundy — it seduces right from the start with aromas of green apples, citrus, and melon, the fruit underscored by hints of yeast and minerals.

All those aromas carry through to the palate, where there's a certain richness that sets it apart from more austere French sparklers and also makes it a better match with a variety of foods.

From France's Loire Valley comes the **NV François Montand Brut Rosé**. Its delicate, pale pink color belies its bright aromas and flavors of ripe strawberries and raspberries, mellowed a bit by soft Meyer lemon-orange acidity. While fruit dominates on the front of the palate, it finishes with a slight minerality, adding a needed complexity.

The only vintage sparkler of the tasting was the **Cuvée Jean Philippe 2008 Brut** from the Languedoc. You can really taste the age on this one — a bit earthy, a bit yeasty-toasty, a faint whisper of caramel. The fruit is all red and green apples, the finish is short, and the acidity is very much in the background. At our price point you don't often get a vintage bubbly, so while the earthy-toasty elements of this wine may not appeal to everyone, it does make for an interesting bunch of bubbles in the glass.

I've gotten on my horse about **Segura Viudas** before, but its **NV Brut Reserva** is so on-point I'll just have to do it again. In my humble opinion, there's no sparkling-wine house that does as good a job of turning out well-made, well-priced bubbly as this mammoth Spanish vintner. At \$10 a bottle, this is one of the best wine deals on the market. It's scented with green apples, lemon, lime, and melon, a touch of minerals, and the toasty aroma of fresh-baked bread. The bubbles are fine and persistent, the finish is long and lemony, and it has the body to play well with food.

If you *really* want to get to the value segment of the market, pick up a bottle (or a case) of the **Jaume Serra Cristalino NV Brut**. Made in the “traditional method” — fermented in the bottle — at eight bucks a pop, it's cheaper than many inferior wines made by the bulk fermentation, or charmat, process. The most notable aspect of the Cristalino is its rich, almost creamy texture, though you've also got to like its clean apple-citrus flavors and long-lasting bubbles.

A much different wine was the **Piper Sonoma NV Brut**. Though



Total Wine & More (14750 Biscayne Blvd., 305-354-3270) is where you'll find the excellent Saint-Germain/Saint-Reine and Piper Sonoma Brut, both at \$11.99. The François Montand and Segura Viudas are available at the North Miami Crown Wine and Spirits (12555 Biscayne Blvd., 305-892-9463) for \$10.95 and \$9.99, respectively. And ABC Fine Wine & Spirits (16355 Biscayne Blvd., 305-944-6525) is the source for the Cristalino Brut (\$7.99) and Cuvée Jean Philippe (\$11.99).

California wines have a reputation as being fruit-driven, this wine showed off the crisp, bracing acidity more typically seen in Old World wines. Its pinprick bubbles practically dance in your mouth, where flavors of lemon and lime, yeast, and minerals come together seamlessly. If you're a one-percenter, it would pour nicely with caviar or a stack of fore-closed mortgages.



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Dining Guide

Restaurant Listings

The Biscayne Corridor's most comprehensive restaurant guide. Total this month: 293.

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

=\$ \$10 and under
\$\$= \$20
\$\$\$= \$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. \$\$\$

Bento Sushi & Chinese
801 Brickell Bay Dr., 305-603-8904
Hidden in the Four Ambassadors Towers, this tiny spot (which specializes in sushi plus Japanese small plates, but also serves limited Chinese and Thai-inspired dishes of the mix-and-match, pick-your-protein-then-preparation sort) has been mostly an insider's secret delivery joint for Brickell residents. But it's actually a pleasant place to relax outside, enjoying a bay view and budget bento box specials that include miso soup, ginger-dressed salad, California roll, and fresh orange sections, plus two mini-entrées (the nigiri assortment sushi and lacy-battered tempura especially recommended). Bubble tea, too! \$\$\$-\$\$\$

bistro e
485 Brickell Ave., 305-503-0373
A full power lunch from a Michelin-starred chef for \$15? Sounds unbelievable, but you'll find just such a daily special (like corn/jalapeno soup, a grilled-cheese BLT, airy cheesecake, and a pint of beer) at bistro e, daytime name for Michael Psilakis' dinner-only new Aegean eatery Eos. The name change emphasizes lunchtime's wholly different, globally influenced menu. Among à la carte temptations: pork belly tacos, a Korean BBQ prawn salad, or a brislet/gruyere sandwich with dipping juice. Breakfast, too, from 6:30 a.m. \$\$-\$\$\$

Bon Fromage
500 Brickell Ave. #106, 786-329-5632
Though independently owned instead of a chain cog, this cheese and wine café/shop is like a pint-size version of Midtown Miami's Cheese Course, right down to being officially self-service. But it is staffed by accommodating employees who, unofficially, do their best to double as servers for eat-in diners. The cheese (plus charcuterie) menu of garnished platters, salads, and crusty baguette sandwiches features numerous high-quality, imported favorites, but don't miss more unusual domestic treasures like Wisconsin bread, a cooked cheese that, like halloumi, doesn't melt but tantalizingly softens when heated. \$\$

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. \$\$-\$\$

Café Bastille
248 SE 1st St., 786-425-3575
Breakfasting on a ham-egg-cheese crepe at this very French-feeling – and tasting – café is a most civilized way to start the day. Formerly breakfast and lunch only, the café is now open for dinner, too. And while the crepes (both savory and sweet) are tempting and varied enough to eat all day, dinner choices like homemade foie gras (with onion jam and Guerdande 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 flavored 40-ounce bone-in ribeye, described as "part meat, part weapon"); king crab legs that dwarf the plate; cocktail shrimp that could swallow the Loch Ness monster whole; two-fisted cocktails that would fell a T-Rex. Not for the frail. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Crazy About You
1155 Brickell Bay Dr. #101, 305-377-4442
The owners, and budget-friendly formula, are the same here

MIAMI

BRICKELL / DOWNTOWN

Banana & Leaf
234 NE 3rd St., 786-431-5548
Ever get tempted by the convenience of supermarket sushi boxes, but feel uneasy about freshness and disgruntled about sparseness of fillings? In the grab-and-go containers here, raw fish glistens and makis like a plump snow crab roll have a satisfying seafood-to-rice ratio. If you'd rather, dishes on the larger custom menu arrive almost as fast. There is also limited, tasty Southeast Asian fare. Most unbelievable: Prices beat supermarket sushi by far. \$

Hawa Jade
1331 Brickell Bay Dr., 305-905-5523
When thinking "fusion" cuisines, Japanese and Lebanese don't instantly spring to mind. But taking the medieval Spice Route connection as inspiration, the Hawa family makes the mix work at both its original Coral Gables Hawa and this new location in the Jade Residences. Golden Pockets (tofu crêpes encasing macadamias, avocado, and tuna, crab, shrimp, or Kobe-style beef) are musts. Plus there are unique combos containing makis plus substantial salads, like crunchy tuna enoki rolls with falafel salad – not the usual green garnish. Housemade desserts with a French twist are also a pleasant surprise. \$\$

MIDTOWN / WYNWOOD / DESIGN DISTRICT

Basani's
3221 NE 2nd Ave., 786-925-0911
Despite this tiny place's modern décor, the family-run ambiance and Italian-American comfort food evoke the neighborhood red-sauce joints that were our favored hangouts growing up in NJ's Sopranos territory. And low prices make it possible to hang out here frequently. Pizzas with hand-tossed crusts, not wood-oven but resembling honest bread, for less than fast food pizzeria prices? It's an offer you don't refuse. Don't refuse garlic rolls, either, or sinful zeppole (fried dough) for dessert. There's more complex fare, like chicken à la Francese, too. And they deliver. \$\$

Salad Creations
2001 Biscayne Blvd., 305-576-5333
At this fast-casual restaurant, diners can enjoy a wide variety of chef-created salads and wraps, or go the DIY route, choosing from one of four greens options; four dozen add-ons (fresh, dried, or pickled veggies and fruits, plus cheeses and slightly

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 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 restlounge 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

sinful pleasures like candied pecans or wonton strips); a protein (seafood or poultry); and two dozen dressings, ranging from classic (Thousand Island, bleu cheese) to creative contemporary (spicy Asian peanut, cucumber wasabi, blueberry pomegranate). Additionally, the place creates lovely catering platters, plus individual lunchboxes – perfect picnic or plane food. \$\$-\$\$

NORTH MIAMI BEACH

Ginza Japanese Buffet
16153 Biscayne Blvd., 305-944-2192
Highlighting the lunch and dinners spreads at this all-you-can-eat Japanese buffet are a hibachi station (where chefs custom-cook diners' choice of seafood or meat), plus many types of maki rolls and individual nigiri sushi, both featuring a larger variety of seafood than at many sushi bars – not just salmon and tuna but snapper, escolar, surf clam, snow crab, and more. But there are also steam-tabled hot Japanese and Chinese dishes; an array of cold shellfish and salads with mix-and-match sauces; and desserts. Selections vary, but value-for-money is a given. \$\$

AVENTURA/HALLANDALE

Cadillac Ranch
Village at Gulfstream Park
921 Silks Run Rd. #1615, 954-456-1031
It's hard to decide if the most fun interpretation of beef here is the weekend prime rib dinner special (with two sides and a meat hunk hefty enough for sandwiches the next day) or the mechanical bull. Party like it's 1980 at this all-American restlounge/sports bar, which includes two outdoor patios with fire pits and, sometimes, live rootsy music. If you miss out on the roast beef (it goes fast), there are burgers, steaks, meal-size salads, and classic bar bites. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

La Estancia Argentina
17870 Biscayne Blvd., 305-932-6477
At this market/restaurant, there's a small but quality selection of Argentine grocery staples and wines, plus a butcher counter where backyard BBQers can find everything necessary for a Parrillada party. Alternatively, grab a table and let La Estancia do the cooking – anything from tapas and elegant miga mini-tea sandwiches to hefty grilled Parrillada plates. Most irresistible, though, are the savory and sweet baked goods, especially elaborately frosted layer cakes and delicately crusted empanadas plumply stuffed with hand-cut flank steak, mushrooms in onion sauce, much more. \$\$-\$\$\$

Angus chuck/brisket/short rib blend), with choice of housemade sauce plus customizable toppings ranging from pickles to pork belly. Also available: veggie burgers, dogs, salads, Buffalo chicken sandwiches, and standard sides. Rich malts and shakes come regular or adult (spiked). \$\$

db Bistro Moderne
345 Avenue of the Americas, 305-421-8800
Just two words – "Daniel Boulud" – should be enough for foodies craving creative French/American comfort cuisine to run, not walk, to this restaurant. If they can find it. (Hint: The mysterious "Avenue of the Americas" is really Biscayne Boulevard Way. Don't ask.) Downtown's db is an absentee celeb chef outpost, but on-site kitchen wizard Jarrod Verbiak flawlessly executes dishes ranging from the original NYC db Bistro's signature foie gras/short rib/black truffle-stuffed burger to local market-driven dishes like crusted panpano 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. \$\$

Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

Dolores, But You Can Call Me Lolita

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

From the stylish setting in Miami's historic Firehouse No. 4, one would expect a mighty pricy meal. But entrées, which range from Nuevo Latino-style ginger/orange-glazed pork tenderloin to a platter of Kobe mini-burgers, all cost either \$18 or \$23. And the price includes an appetizer – no low-rent crapola, either, but treats like Serrano ham croquetas, a spinach/leek tart with Portobello mushroom sauce, or shrimp-topped eggplant timbales. The best seats are on the glam rooftop patio. \$\$\$

Elwoods Gastro Pub

188 NE 3rd Ave., 305-358-5222

Cordial English owners, classic rock music (sometimes live), and updated classic pub fare make this hangout a home. Made from scratch with artisan ingredients, traditional Brit bites like fish and chips can't be beat – thick pieces of crispy beer-battered moist cod, served with hand-cut fries and "mushy [mashed] peas," plus house-made tartar sauce and ketchup. All desserts are also made in-house, including a deliciously rich (but worth it) sticky date pudding with toffee sauce. Tie down your dental implants. They're in for a wild ride. \$\$

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

Finnegan's River

401 SW 3rd Ave., 305-285-3030

Pool tables are expected in a sports bar and grill. But an actual pool? And a Jacuzzi? This Miami River hideaway has other surprises, too, on its extensive outdoor deck, including a boat dock and a large array of umbrella tables and lounge chairs where it's easy to while away many happy hours. The menu is the same array of bar bites served by South Beach's older Finnegan's, but angus burgers are big and tasty, and zingy jalapeño-studded smoked-fish dip is a satisfying table-snack choice. \$\$

First Hong Kong Café

117 SE 2nd St., 305-808-6665

Old Hong Kong saying: If it walks, swims, crawls, or flies, it's edible. And nowhere is this truer than in this historically international trade port's "cafés" – meaning fast-food restaurants. Typical menus present hundreds of items that are local interpretations of dishes from all China, and most other nations. So believe us: At this café, whose head chef is from HK, the Indian-style curries, sambal-spiked Indonesian chow fun, even the borscht (a tomato/beef, not beet-based version of the Russian soup) are as authentic as the kung pao whatever, and as tasty. \$\$

First & First Southern Baking Company

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

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

Fratelli Milano

213 SE 1st St., 305-373-2300

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

Fresco California Bistro

1744 SW 3rd Ave., 305-858-0608

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

Garcia's Seafood Grille and Fish Market

398 NW N. River Dr., 305-375-0765

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

Giovanna 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-crust, doughy crescents – baked, not fried, so relatively guilt-free – are amply stuffed with fillings both classic (beef and chicken, either mild or spicy) and creative: the bacon cheeseburger, the pancetta/mozzarella/plum-filled Americana, and several vegetarian options. At just over two bucks apiece, they're a money-saving moveable feast. \$

Il Gabbiano

335 S. Biscayne Blvd., 305-373-0063

Its location at the mouth of the Miami River makes this ultra-upscale Italian spot (especially the outdoor terrace) the perfect power lunch/business dinner alternative to steakhouses. And the culinary experience goes way beyond the typical meat market, thanks in part to the flood of freebies that's a trademark of Manhattan's Il Mulino, originally run by Il Gabbiano's owners. The rest of the food? Pricey, 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, sound-proofed 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). \$\$\$

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? \$\$

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

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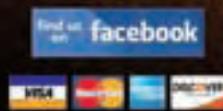
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truffle oil, proprietors Jennifer Porciello and Horatio Oliveira continue to draw a lunch crowd that returns for dinner, or perhaps just stays on through the afternoon, fueled by the Lawyer's Liquid Lunch, a vodka martini spiked with sweetened espresso. \$\$\$

La Moon 144 SW 8th St., 305-860-6209

At four in the morning, nothing quells the munchies like a Crazy Burger, a Colombian take on a trucker's burger: beef patty, bacon, ham, mozzarella, lettuce, tomato, and a fried egg, with an arepa corn pancake "bun." While this tiny place's late hours (till 6:00 a.m. Friday and Saturday) are surprising, the daytime menu is more so. In addition to Colombian classics, there's a salad Niçoise with grilled fresh tuna, seared salmon with mango salsa, and other yuppie favorites. \$\$-\$

La Provence 1064 Brickell Ave., 786-425-9003

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

La Sandwicherie 34 SW 8th St., 305-374-9852

This second location of the open-air diner that is South Beach's favorite après-club eatery (since 1988) closes earlier (midnight Sunday-Thursday, 5:00 a.m. Friday and Saturday), but the smoothies, salads, and superb Parisian sandwiches are the same: ultra-crusty baguette stuffed with evocative charcuterie and cheeses (saucisson sec, country pâté, camembert, etc.) and choice of salad veggies plus salty/tart cornichons and Sandwicherie's incomparable Dijon mustard vinaigrette. Additionally the larger branch has an interior, with a kitchen enabling hot foods (quiches and croques), plus A/C. \$\$-\$

Le Boudoir Brickell 188 SE 12th Terr., 305-372-233

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 flageolets (known as the caviar of beans), duck leg confit on a bed of mouthwatering green lentils from Le Puy, a classic moules/frites, a shared charcuterie platter with a bottle from the savvy wine list, and, of course, salade niçoise. \$\$\$-\$

Martini 28 146 SE 1st Ave., 305-577-4414

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

Miami 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 dosai (lacy rice/lentil crepes rolled around fillings ranging from traditional onion/potato to lamb masala or spicy chicken) are so addictive they oughta be illegal. \$\$\$-\$-\$

Miss Yip Chinese Café 900 Biscayne Blvd., 305-358-0088

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

Novocento 1414 Brickell Ave., 305-403-0900

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

Oceanaire Seafood Room 900 S. Miami Ave., 305-372-8862

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

Ozzi Sushi 200 SE 1st St., 786-704-8003

Since its 1958 invention, conveyor-belt sushi has been the most fun form of Japanese fast food, but problematic. Who knew how

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*Chef Susan Sadaka (left) was recently featured on CBS-Univision 41 New York for "Cooking Matters"

*Sisters in Pink joined Michelle Obama at the White House for the Launch of "Chefs Move to Schools"



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

Pasha's 1414 Brickell Ave., 305-416-5116

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

Peoples Bar-B-Que 360 NW 8th St., 305-373-8080

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

Perricone's 15 SE 10th St., 305-374-9449

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

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-blistered 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. \$\$

Prelude Adrienne Arsh Center 1300 Biscayne Blvd., 305-949-6722

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

Puntino Downtown 353 SE 2nd Ave., 305-371-9661

The first U.S. venture of a hotelier from Naples, this stylish little place is open Monday through Saturday for dinner as well as lunch. Ambiance is fashionably cool Milanese rather than effusively warm Neapolitan. The food too is mostly contemporary rather than traditional. But in true Italian style, the best stuff stays simple: an antipasto platter of imported cold cuts with crostini and housemade marinated veggies; crisp-fried calamari and shrimp; airy gnocchi with sprightly tomato sauce, pools of melted bufala mozzarella, and fresh basil. \$\$\$

Raja's Indian Cuisine 33 NE 2nd Ave., 305-539-9551

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

The River Oyster Bar 650 S. Miami Ave., 305-530-1915

This casually cool jewel is a full-service seafood spot, as evidenced by tempting menu selections like soft-shell crabs with grilled vegetables, corn relish, and remoulade. There are even a few dishes to please meat-and-potatoes diners, like short ribs with macaroni and cheese. But oyster fans will find it difficult to resist stuffing themselves silly on the unusually large selection, especially since oysters are served both raw and cooked – fire-roasted with sofrito butter, chorizo, and manchego. There's also a thoughtful wine list and numerous artisan beers on tap. \$\$\$

Rosa Mexicano 900 S. Miami Ave., 786-425-1001

This expansive indoor/outdoor space offers a dining experience that's haute in everything but price. Few entrées top \$20. The décor is both date-worthy and family-friendly – festive but not kitschy. And nonsophisticates needn't fear; though nachos aren't available, there is nothing scary about zarape de pato (roast duck between freshly made, soft corn tortillas, topped with yellow-and-habanero-pepper cream sauce), or Rosa's signature guacamole en molcajete, made tableside. A few pomegranate margaritas ensure no worries. \$\$\$

Sandwich 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 house-made, 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 Lucanica 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, complex 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/

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mustard, pan-Asian hoisin with lemongrass and ginger, tropical guava/habanero. Authenticity aside, the quality of the food is as good as much higher-priced barbecue outfits. \$\$\$

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

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

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

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



Thai Angel 152 SE 1st Ave., 305-371-9748

Inside a colorful courtyard that rather resembles Munchkinland, this downtown "insider's secret" serves serious Thai food till 9:00 p.m. daily. Tasty classics like the four curries (red, green, panang, and massaman) come custom-spiced — mild to authentically brain-searing — and are so affordable there's no guilt in splurging on superb house specials like crisp-coated duck or fresh snapper (whole or filleted) in tamarind sauce. The young chef has a heavenly hand at tofu, too, so vegetarians are very well-served. \$\$

Tobacco Road 626 S. Miami Ave., 305-374-1198

Prohibition-era speakeasy (reputedly a fave of Al Capone), gay bar, strip club. Previously all these, this gritty spot has been best known since 1982 as a venue for live music, primarily blues. But it also offers food from lunchtime to late night (on weekends till 4:00 a.m.). The kitchen is especially known for its chili, budget-priced steaks, and burgers. There's also surprisingly elegant fare, though, like a Norwegian salmon club with lemon aioli. A meat-smoker in back turns out tasty ribs. \$\$

Tre Italian Bistro 270 E. Flagler St., 305-373-3303

"Bistro" actually sounds too Old World for this cool hangout, from the owners of downtown old-timer La Loggia, but "restolounge" sounds too glitzy. Think of it as a neighborhood "bistrolounge." The food is mostly modernized Italian, with Latin and Asian accents: a prosciutto-and-fig pizza with Brazilian catupiry cheese; gnocchi served either as finger food (fried, with calamata olive/truffle aioli), or plated with orange-ginger sauce. But there are tomato-sauced meatballs with rigatoni for Grandpa Vinnie, too. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

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

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

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

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

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

Judging from the takeout window, the minimalist décor (with

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

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

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

Midtown / Wynwood / Design District

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

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

Adelita's Café 2699 Biscayne Blvd., 305-576-1262

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

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

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

on a trip to Andalucia. 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 calzones (like the blu oceano, faty 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 McLuwin', 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

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a crusty baguette, steak with from-scratch frites, salmon atop ratatouille, or many changing blackboard specials. Portions are plentiful. So is free parking. \$\$\$

Buena Vista Deli 4590 NE 2nd Ave., 305-576-3945

At this casual café/bakery, co-owned by Buena Vista Bistro's Claude Postel, the day starts in authentic French fashion, with fresh breakfast breads, chocolate almond croissants, and other delights. At lunch cornichon-garnished baguette sandwiches (containing housemade pâtés, sinfully rich pork rillettes, superb salami, and other charcuterie classics) are irresistible, and a buttery-crustied, custardy quiche plus perfectly dressed salad costs little more than a fast-food combo meal. As for Postel's homemade French sweets, if you grab the last Paris-Brest, a praline butter-cream-filled puff pastry, we may have to kill you. \$\$\$

Cafeina 297 NW 23rd St., 305-438-0792

This elegantly comfortable multi-room indoor/outdoor venue is described as an "art gallery/lounge," and some do come just for cocktails like the hefty café con leche martinis. But don't overlook chef Guily Booth's 12-item menu of very tasty tapas. The signature item is a truly jumbo-lump crab cake with no discernible 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 comfie neighborhood hangout, and chef Tom Azar (ex-Emeril's) has designed a varied menu to match. Highlights: an astonishingly thin/crunchy-crustied 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 refreshing, 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 grilled jerk chicken has been the main item here. Other favorites: savory rice and pigeon peas; eye-opening onion/vinegar-flavored escovitch fish; sweet plantains; and cabbage that redefines the vegetable. \$

Crumb on Parchment 3930 NE 2nd Ave., 305-572-9444

Though located in a difficult spot (the Melin Building's central atrium, invisible from the street), Michelle Bernstein's bakery/café packs 'em in, partly due to Bernstein's mom Martha, who makes irresistible old-school cakes: German chocolate with walnuts, lemon curd with buttercream frosting, more. Lunch fare includes inspired sandwiches like seared rare tuna with spicy Asian pickles and kimchi aioli. And for morning people, the savory chicken sausage, melted cheddar, kale, and shallot sandwich on challah will convince you that breakfast is the most important meal of the day. \$\$\$

The Daily Creative Food Co. 2001 Biscayne Blvd., 305-573-4535

While the food formula of this contemporary café is familiar – sandwiches, salads, soups, breakfast food, and pastries, plus coffee and fruit drinks – a creative concept differentiates the place. Signature sandwiches are named after national and local newspapers, including Biscayne Times, giving diners something to chat about. Sandwiches and salads can also be do-it-yourself projects, with an unusually wide choice of main ingredients, garnishes, breads, and condiments for the creatively minded. \$

Delicias Peruanas 2590 Biscayne Blvd., 305-573-4634

Seafood is the specialty at this pleasant Peruvian spot, as it was at the nearby original Delicias, run by members of the same

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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 pillow-light roast pork-stuffed buns, and possibly the world's best BLT, featuring Asian bun "toast," thick pork belly slices rather than bacon, and housemade pickles. There's \$2 beer, too. \$\$\$

The Grrrlz of Sandwich 555 NE 15th St., 2nd floor (Venetia condo) 305-374-4305

Riot Grrrl DIY spirit shines in the homemade soups, sweets, salads, and exceptionally tasty warm baguette sandwiches (like

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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-crusted 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. \$

Harry's Pizzeria 3918 N. Miami Ave., 786-275-4963

In this humble space (formerly Pizza Volante) are many key components from Michael's Genuine Food & Drink two blocks east – local/sustainable produce and artisan products; wood-oven cooking; homemade everything (including the ketchup accompanying crisp-outside, custardy-inside polenta fries, a circa 1995 Michael Schwartz signature snack from Nemo). Beautifully blistered, ultra-thin-crust pizzas range from classic Margheritas to pies with house-smoked bacon, trugole (a subtly flavorful – fruity, not funky – Alpine cheese), and other unique toppings. Rounding things out: simple but ingenious salads, ultimate zeppoles, and Florida craft beers. \$\$

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



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heat-coded sauces and dry rubs meant for custom-tossing with wings and other things (including white-meat "boneless wings," really wing-shaped chicken breast pieces), accompanied by ranch or classic blue-cheese dip and celery. It would be silly to not pair your main with garlic/herb-butter parmesan fries. There are many other items, too, including salads. But hey, celery is salad, right? \$\$\$

Jimmy's Kitchen 2700 N. Miami Ave. #5, 305-573-1505

No need to trek to South Beach for what many consider Miami's best classic Puerto Rican mofongo (fried green plantains mashed with fresh garlic, olive oil, and pork cracklings, surrounded by chicken or shrimp in zesty criollo sauce). This new location is bigger and better than the original, plus the mofongo is served every day, not just on weekends. But don't ignore the meal-size salads or high-quality sandwiches, including a pressed tripeleta containing roast pork, bacon, Black Forest ham, provolone, and caramelized onions. \$\$\$

Joey's Italian Café 2506 NW 2nd Ave., 305-438-0488

The first new restaurant in the Wynwood Café District, this stylish indoor/outdoor Italian hangout is as casually cool as one would hope – and as affordable. There's a five-buck half-serving of spaghetti al pomodoro and respectable vino for under \$30. And few can resist delicately thin, crunchy-crust pizzas like the creative Dolce e Piccante or orgasmic Carbonara. Pastas are fresh; produce is largely local; the mosaic-centered décor is minimalist but inviting. And no need to be wary of the warehouse district at night: Valet parking is free. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

La Provence 2200 Biscayne Blvd., 305-576-8002 (See Brickell / Downtown listing.)

Latin Café 2000
2501 Biscayne Blvd., 305-576-3838
The menu is similar to that at many of our town's Latin cafés, largely classic Cuban entrées and sandwiches, with a smattering of touches from elsewhere in Latin America, such as a Peruvian jalea mixta (marinated mixed seafood), or paella Valenciana from Spain, which many Miami eateries consider a Latin country. What justifies the new millennium moniker is the more modern, yuppified/yucafied ambience, encouraged by an expansive, rustic wooden deck. \$\$

Lemoni Café
4600 NE 2nd Ave., 305-571-5080
The menu here reads like your standard sandwiches/salads/starters primer. What it doesn't convey is the freshness of the ingredients and the care that goes into their use. Entrée-size salads range from an elegant spinach (goat cheese, pears, walnuts, raisins) to chunky homemade chicken salad on a bed of mixed greens. Sandwiches (cold baguette subs, hot pressed paninis, or wraps, all accompanied by side salads) include a respectable Cuban and a veggie wrap with a deceptively rich-tasting light salad cream. \$\$\$

Lime Fresh Mexican Grill Shops at Midtown Miami Buena Vista Avenue, 305-576-5463

Like its South Beach predecessor, this Lime was an instant hit, as much for being a hip new Midtown hangout as for its carefully crafted Tex-Mex food. The concept is "fast casual" rather than fast food – meaning nice enough for a night out. It also means ingredients are always fresh. Seafood tacos are about as exotic as the menu gets, but the mahi mahi for fish tacos comes from a local supplier, and salsas are housemade daily. Niceties include low-carb tortillas and many Mexican beers. \$

Limón y Sabor 3045 Biscayne Blvd., 786-431-5739

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

Lost & Found Saloon 185 NW 36th St., 305-576-1008

There's an artsy/alternative feel to this casual and friendly Wynwood eatery, which, since opening as a weekday-only breakfast and lunch joint in 2005, has grown with its neighborhood. It's now open for dinner six nights a week, serving Southwestern-style fare at rock-bottom prices. Dishes like piñon and pepita-crust salmon, chipotle-drizzled endive stuffed with lump crab, or customizable tacos average \$5-\$8. Also available: big breakfasts and salads, hearty soups, housemade pastries like lemon-crust wild berry pie, and a hip beer and wine list. \$

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

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

Mandolin Aegean Bistro 4312 NE 2nd Ave., 305-576-6066

Inside this converted 1940s home's blue-and-white dining room – or even more atmospherically, its tree-sheltered garden – diners feast on authentic rustic fare from both Greece and Turkey. Make a meal of multinational mezzes: 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 lemon wine broth is, with Mandolin's fresh-baked flatbread, almost a full meal in itself. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Mario the Baker 250 NE 25th St., 305-438-0228 (See North Miami listing)

Mercadito Midtown 3252 NE 1st Ave., 786-369-0423

Some people frequent this fashionable restolounge, festooned with graffiti-style murals designed to evoke a bustling Mexican street market, just for the dangerously smooth margaritas. But the main must-haves here are tacos, encased in a rarity: genuinely made-from-scratch corn tortillas, small but fatty-stuffed. Of 11 varieties, our favorite is the carnitas (juicy braised pork, spicy chili de arbol slaw, toasted peanuts). A close second: the hongos, intensely flavorful huitlacoche and wild mushrooms, with manchego and salsa verde – a reminder that vegetarian food need not be bland. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Michael's Genuine Food and Drink 130 NE 40th St., 305-573-5550

An instant smash hit, this truly neighborhood-oriented restaurant from chef Michael Schwartz offers down-to-earth fun food in a comfortable, casually stylish indoor/outdoor setting. Fresh, organic ingredients are emphasized, but dishes range from cutting-edge (crispy beef cheeks with whipped celeriac, celery salad, and chocolate reduction) to simple comfort food: deviled eggs, homemade potato chips with pan-fried onion dip, or a whole wood-roasted chicken. There's also a broad range of prices and portion sizes to encourage frequent visits. Michael's Genuine also features an eclectic, affordable wine list and a full bar. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Ming Yuan 3006 NW 2nd Ave., 305-576-6466

What this tiny (three booths plus counter seats) Wynwood 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. \$\$\$

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

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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-crusted 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 restorolounge 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 Mushi Mushi: 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)

Pieducks 3500 N. Miami Ave., 305-576-5550 (See Brickell / Downtown listing)

Primo's 1717 N. Bayshore Dr., 305-371-9055

The imposing, cavernous lobby of the Grand doesn't have that "do drop in" locals' hangout vibe. But this lively Italian spot is actually a great addition to the neighborhood. The pizzas alone – brick-oven specimens with toppings ranging from classic pepperoni to prosciutto/arugula – would be draw enough. But pastas also please: diners' choice of starch, with mix-and-match sauces and extras. And the price is right, with few entrées topping \$20. The capper: It's open past midnight every day but Sunday. \$\$

Primo Pizza Miami 3451 NE 1st Ave., 305-535-2555

Just a few years ago, chain pizza joints were dominant most everywhere. Today many places now offer authentic Italian or delicate designer pizzas. But a satisfying Brooklyn-style street slice? Fuhgedit. Thankfully that's the speciality of this indoor/outdoor pizzeria: big slices with chewy crusts (made from imported NY tap water) that aren't ultra-thin and crisp, but flexible enough to fold lengthwise, and medium-thick – sturdy

enough to support toppings applied with generous all-American abandon. Take-out warning: Picking up a whole pie? Better bring the SUV, not the Morris Mini.

Sakaya Kitchen Shops at Midtown Miami, Buena Vista Avenue 305-576-8096

This chef-driven, fast-casual Asian eatery is more an izakaya (in Japan, a pub with food) than a sakaya (sake shop). But why quibble about words with so many more intriguing things to wrap your mouth around? The concept takes on street-food favorites from all over Asia, housemade daily from quality fresh ingredients. French Culinary Institute-trained Richard Hales does change his menu, so we'd advise immediately grabbing some crispy Korean chicken wings and Chinese-inspired, open-faced roast pork buns with sweet chili sauce and homemade pickles. \$\$

Sake Room 275 NE 18th St., 305-755-0122

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

Salsa Fiesta 2929 Biscayne Blvd., 305-400-8245

The first stateside offshoot of a popular Venezuelan mini chain, this "urban Mexican grill" serves health-conscious, made-fresh-daily fare similar in concept to some fast-casual competitors. But there are indeed differences here, notably pan-Latin options: black beans as well as red; thin, delightfully crunchy tostones (available as a side or as the base for a uniquely tasty take on normal nachos). Other pluses include weekday happy hours with two-for-one beers – and free parking. \$\$\$

S & S Diner 1757 NE 2nd Ave., 305-373-4291

Some things never change, or so it seems at this classic diner. Open since 1938, people still line up on Saturday mornings, waiting for a seat at the counter and enormous breakfasts: corned beef hash or crab cakes and eggs with grits; fluffy pancakes; homemade biscuits with gravy and Georgia sausage – everything from oatmeal to eggs Benedict. The lunch menu is a roll call of the usual suspects, but most regulars ignore the menu and go for the daily blackboard specials. \$\$\$

Sra. Martinez 4000 NE 2nd Ave., 305-573-5474

No Biscayne Corridor resident needs to be told that this lively tapas bar is the second restaurant that Upper Eastside homegirl Michelle Bernstein has opened in the area. But it's no absentee celebrity-chef gig. Bernstein is hands-on at both places. Her exuberant yet firmly controlled personal touch is obvious in nearly four dozen hot and cold tapas on the menu. Items are frequently reinvented. Keepers include wild mushroom/manchego croquetas

with fig jam; white bean stew; crisp-coated artichokes with lemon/orzotto 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 LaAsian 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 restorolounge, 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, garlicy 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

Centrifuged ambience, 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

The exterior is eye-popping enough, with murals from world-famous outdoor artists, but it's the interior that grabs you. Colorful and exotic work by Shepard Fairey, Christian Awe, and other acclaimed artists makes it one of the most striking restaurant spaces anywhere. As for food, the original menu has been replaced with Spanish/Latin/Mediterranean-inspired favorites from chef Miguel Aguilar (formerly of Alma de Cuba): gazpacho or black bean soups; shredded chicken ropa vieja empanadas with cilantro crema; grilled octopus skewers with tapenade; plus fingerling potato-chorizo hash and other seasonal farm-to-table veg dishes. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

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Intermezzo
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Dessert
Chocolate Marquise with Fresh Berries

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of Mark Soyka's 55th Street Station complex was mainland Miami's sole source of open-flame-cooked pies. But the pizzas still hold up against the newbie pack, especially since exec chef Frank Crupi has upped the ante with unique-to-Miami offerings like a white (tomato-free) New Haven clam pie. Also available: salads, panini, and a tasty meatball appetizer with ricotta. There's a respectable wine and beer list, too. \$\$\$

Anise Taverna 620 NE 78th St., 305-758-2929

Since the owners of this rustic riverbank spot are the husband/wife team behind Ouzo's, it's not surprising that Greek food and festivity are the main lure for locals. But Anise's expanded menu, centering on meze (the Middle Eastern term for shareable small plates) though not neglecting Big Food like lamb shank or whole grilled fish, also includes dishes from other Mediterranean countries: Italy's spaghetti with bottarga (tuna roe); spicy Moroccan merguez sausage with fava purée; whole sardines with fennel vinaigrette, evoking Portugal. Frequent special events make for added fun. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Balans Biscayne 6789 Biscayne Blvd., 305-534-9191

It took longer than expected, but this Brit import's third Miami venue finally opened, and rather quietly – which has an upside. It's easier to get a table here (and to park, thanks to the free lot on 68th Street) than at Lincoln Road or Brickell. This, along with the venue's relatively large, open-to-the-street outdoor area, contributes to a more relaxed, neighborhood-focused vibe. The fun menu of global comfort food is the same (ranging from a creamy-centered cheese soufflé through savory Asian potstickers and, at breakfast, fluffy pecan/maple-garnished pancakes) and prepared as reliably well. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Boteco 916 NE 79th St., 305-757-7735

This strip of 79th Street is rapidly becoming a cool alt-culture enclave thanks to inviting hangouts like this rustic indoor/outdoor Brazilian restaurant and bar. Especially bustling on nights featuring live music, it's even more fun on Sundays, when the fenced backyard hosts an informal fair and the menu includes Brazil's national dish, feijoada, a savory stew of beans plus fresh and cured meats. But the everyday menu, ranging from unique, tapas-like pastes to hefty Brazilian entrées, is also appealing – and budget-priced. \$\$

Le Café 7295 Biscayne Blvd., 305-754-6551

For anyone who can't get over thinking of French food as intimidating or pretentious, this cute café with a warm welcome, and family-friendly French home cooking, is the antidote. No fancy food (or fancy prices) here, just classic comfort food like onion soup, escargot, daily fresh oysters, boeuf bourguignon (think Ultimate Pot Roast), Nicoise salad, quiche, and homemade crème brûlée. A respectable beer and wine list is a welcome addition, as is the housemade 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

Since Frankie and Priscilla Crupi took over this hot dog stand, the menu has changed significantly, with some items eliminated (any vegetarian hot dogs, salads, chichi toppings like avocado). But choices have expanded to include new dog choices (brats, Italian sausage, more) plus burgers and other classic eastern U.S. regional urban street foods: New England lobster rolls, New Orleans po'boys, Jersey shore cheese Taylors (pork roll), Baltimore crab cake sandwiches, and naturally, Philly's of all sorts – cheese steak and beyond. \$\$\$

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 Techno. Snacks match the casual chicness: sandwiches like the Renato (prosciutto, hot capicola, pepper jack cheese, red peppers, and Romano cheese dressing); an elaborate almond-garnished Chinese chicken salad; H&H bagels, the world's best, flown in from NYC. And the car cleanings are equally gentrified, especially on Wednesdays, when ladies are pampered with \$10 washes and glasses of sparkling wine while they wait. \$

Garden of Eatin' 136 NW 62nd St., 305-754-8050

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

Gourmet Station 7601 Biscayne Blvd., 305-762-7229

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

Go To Sushi 5140 Biscayne Blvd., 305-759-0914

This friendly, family-run Japanese fast-food eatery offers original surprises like the Caribbean roll (a festively green parsley-coated maki stuffed with crispy fried shrimp, avocado, sweet plantain, and spicy Mayo), or a wonderfully healthful sesame-seasoned chicken soup with spinach, rice noodles, and sizable slices of poultry. Health ensured, you can enjoy a guiltless pig-out on Fireballs: fried dumplings of chicken, cabbage, and egg, crusted with quills – really a delectable crunchy noodle mix. \$

Jimmy's East Side Diner 7201 Biscayne Blvd., 305-754-3692

Open for more than 30 years, Jimmy's respects the most important American diner tradition: breakfast at any hour. And now that the place is open for dinner, you can indulge your breakfast cravings for several more hours. There are blueberry hot cakes and pecan waffles; eggs any style, including omelets and open-face frittatas; and a full range of sides: biscuits and sausage gravy, grits, hash, hash browns, even hot oatmeal. And don't forget traditional diner entrées like meat loaf, roast turkey, liver and onions, plus burgers, salad platters, and homemade chicken soup. \$\$\$

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 restorolounge, 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 ambience, elegantly updated retro food served with style and a smile. For those feeling flush, home-style fried chicken is just like mom used to make – in her wildest dreams. \$\$\$

Metro Organic Bistro 7010 Biscayne Blvd., 305-751-8756

Big changes have come to Karma the car wash, the first being a separate new name for the revamped restaurant: Metro Organic Bistro, an all-organic fine-dining restaurant where simple preparations reveal and enhance natural flavors. An entirely new menu places emphasis on grilled organic meat and fish dishes. Try the steak frites – organic, grass-fed skirt steak with organic chimichurri and fresh-cut fries. Vegetarians will love the organic portabella focaccia. Dine either inside the architect-designed restaurant or outdoors on the patio. Beer and wine. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Michy's 6927 Biscayne Blvd. 305-759-2001

Don't even ask why Michele Bernstein, with a top-chef résumé, not to mention regular Food Network appearances, opened a homey restaurant in an emerging but far from fully gentrified neighborhood. Just be glad she did, as you dine on white almond gazpacho or impossibly creamy ham and blue cheese croquettes. Though most full entrées also come in half-size portions (at almost halved prices), the tab can add up fast. The star herself is usually in the kitchen. Parking in the rear off 69th Street. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Mi Vida Café 7244 Biscayne Blvd., 305-759-6020

At this indoor/outdoor vegetarian and raw-food vegan café, culinary-school-trained chef/owner Daniela Lagamma produces purist produce-oriented dishes that are easy to understand, like sparkling-fresh salads and smoothies, plus more technique-intensive mock meat or cheese items, based on soy proteins, that satisfy even confirmed carnivores. Particularly impressive on the regular menu: a superior Sloppy Joe made with 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. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Revalas Italian Ristorante 8601 Biscayne Blvd., 305-758-1010

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

Royal Bavarian Schnitzel Haus 1085 NE 79th St., 305-754-8002

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

Soyka 5556 NE 4th Court, 305-759-3117

Since opening in 1999, Soyka has often been credited with sparking the Upper Eastside's revival. Now the arrival of new executive and pastry chefs plus a wine-wise general manager, all Joe Allen veterans, signals a culinary revival for this neighborhood focal point. The concept is still comfort food, but a revamped menu emphasizes fresh local ingredients and from-scratch preparation. (The meatloaf gravy, for instance, now takes 24 hours to make.) Unique desserts include signature sticky date pudding, a toffee-lover's dream. And the wine list features new boutique bottles at the old affordable prices. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Sushi Siam 5582 NE 4th Ct., 305-751-7818

On the menu of sushi-bar specialties plus a small selection of Thai and Japanese cooked dishes, there are a few surprises, such as a unique lobster maki that's admittedly huge in price (\$25.95), but also in size: six ounces of crisp-fried lobster chunks, plus asparagus, avocado, lettuce, tobiko (flying fish), masago (smelt) roes, and special sauces. Thai dishes come with a choice of more than a dozen sauces, ranging from traditional red or green curries to the inventive, such as an unconventional honey sauce. \$\$\$

Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

UVA 69 6900 Biscayne Blvd., 305-754-9022

Owned and operated by brothers Michael and Sinuhé Vega, this casual outdoor/indoor Euro-café and lounge has helped to transform the Boulevard into a hip place to hang out. Lunch includes a variety of salads and elegant sandwiches like La Minuta (beer-battered mahi-mahi with cilantro aioli and caramelized onions on housemade focaccia). Dinner features a range of small plates (poached figs with Gorgonzola cheese and honey balsamic drizzle) and full entrées like sake-marinated salmon with boniato mash and Ponzu butter sauce, and crispy spinach. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Yiya's Gourmet Cuban Bakery 646 NE 79th St., 305-754-3337

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

NORTH BAY VILLAGE

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

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

The Crab House 1551 79th St. Causeway, 305-868-7085

Established in 1975, this Miami fish house was acquired by Landry's in 1996 and is now part of a chain. But the classic décor (knotty pine walls, tile floors, booths, outdoor waterfront deck) still evokes the good old days. Though the all-you-can-eat seafood/salad buffet (\$20 lunch, \$30 dinner) is a signature, freshness fanatics will be happiest sticking to à la carte favorites like the All-American fisherman's platters, or global specials like Szechuan shrimp, that change seasonally. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Japanese Market and Sushi Deli 1412 79th St. Causeway, 305-861-0143

Inside a small market that is widely considered Miami's premier source of Japanese foodstuffs, the "Sushi Deli" restaurant component is nothing more than a lunch counter. But chef Michio Kushi serves up some sushi found nowhere else in town. Example: traditional Osaka-style sushi – layers of rice, seasoned seaweed, and marinated fresh mackerel, pressed into a square box, then cut into lovely one-bite sandwich squares. While raw fish is always impeccable here, some unusual vegetarian sushi creations also tempt, as do daily entrées. \$

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, home-made pastas, made daily, remains the main draw for its large and loyal clientele. Choices range from honey, 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 created the original menu, and among his dishes still available is the filet mignon atop surprisingly pistachio-studded béarnaise sauce. Now there is a range of Mediterranean offerings as well, from grilled calamari steaks to mahi piccata. \$\$\$

NORTH BEACH

Café Prima Pasta 414 71st St., 305-867-0106

Opened in 1993 with 28 seats, this family-run landmark has now taken over the block, with an outdoor terrace and multi-roomed indoor space whose walls are full of photos of their clientele, including national and local celebs. Particularly popular are homemade pastas, sauced with Argentine-Italian indulgence rather than Italian simplicity; crabmeat raviolotti in lobster cream sauce, black squid ink linguini heaped with seafood. Though romantic enough for dates, the place is quite kid-friendly – and on the terrace, they'll even feed Fido. \$\$\$

K'Chapas 1130 Normandy Dr., 305-864-8872

Formerly the Peruvian restaurant Pachamama, this space is now both Peruvian and Venezuelan – but not fusion. The Venezuelan sisters who run the place keep dishes true to country. Most Big Food comes from Peru: fresh ceviches, classic cooked entrées. But it's the Venezuelan breakfast/snack items that keep us coming, especially signature cachapas, somewhat similar to arepas but harder to find in restaurants. These moist pancakes, made from ground corn kernels instead of just corn meal, are folded over salty white cheese for a uniquely bold balance of sweetness and savor. \$\$\$

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

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

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

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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 Miampians 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. \$\$\$

Village Café 9540 NE 2nd Ave., 305-759-2211

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

NORTH MIAMI

Los Antojos 11099 Biscayne Blvd., 305-892-1411

If it's Sunday, it must be sancocho de gallina, Colombia's national dish. If it's Saturday, it must be 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-spiced 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

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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 weekday lunch specials. But there are also delightful surprises, like grilled kawahagi (triggerfish) with seasoned Japanese mayonnaise. This intensely savory/sweet “Japanese home cooking” treat satisfies the same yen as beef jerky, except without pulling out your teeth. Accompanied by a bowl of rice, it's a superb lunch. For raw-fish fans, spicy, creamy salmon tartare (accompanied by hiyashi wakame seaweed) is a winner. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Here Comes the Sun 2188 NE 123rd St., 305-893-5711

At this friendly natural foods establishment, which serves all the expected Thai and sushi bar standards, including weekday lunch specials. But there are also delightful surprises, like grilled kawahagi (triggerfish) with seasoned Japanese mayonnaise. This intensely savory/sweet “Japanese home cooking” treat satisfies the same yen as beef jerky, except without pulling out your teeth. Accompanied by a bowl of rice, it's a superb lunch. For raw-fish fans, spicy, creamy salmon tartare (accompanied by hiyashi wakame seaweed) is a winner. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Le Griot de Madame Jean 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 tasset 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 road-house ambiance, notably the red leatherette booths, add to Mama's charm. \$-\$\$

Mario the Baker 13695 W. Dixie Highway, 305-891-7641

At this North Miami institution (opened in 1969) food is Italian-American, not Italian-Italian: spaghetti and meatballs, lasagna, eggplant parmigiana, and hot or cold subs. No imported buffalo, arugula, or other chichi stuff on the New York-style medium-thin-crust pizzas; the top topping here is the savory housemade sausage. And no one leaves without garlic rolls, awash in warm parsley oil and smashed garlic. New branches are now open in Miami's Midtown neighborhood and in North Bay Village. \$

Pastry Is Art 12591 Biscayne Blvd., 305-640-5045

Given owner Jenny Rissone's background as the Eden Roc's executive pastry chef, it's not surprising that her cakes and other sweet treats (like creamy one-bite truffle “lollipops”) look as

flawlessly sophisticated as they taste – perfect adult party fare. What the bakery's name doesn't reveal is that it's also a breakfast and lunch café, with unusual baking-oriented fare: a signature sandwich of chicken, brie, and caramelized peaches and pecans on housemade bread; quiches; pot pies; even a baked-to-order Grand Marnier soufflé. The pecan sticky buns are irresistible. \$\$

Petit Rouge 12409 Biscayne Blvd., 305-892-7676

From the mid-1990s (with Neal's Restaurant and later with Il Migliore), local chef Neal Cooper's neighborhood-oriented Italian eateries have been crowd-pleasers. While this cute 32-seat charmer is French, it's no exception, avoiding pretense and winning fans with both classic and nouvelle bistro fare: frisée salad with lardons, poached egg, and bacon vinaigrette; truite Grenobloise (trout with lemon/caper sauce); consommé with black truffles and foie gras, covered by a buttery puff pastry dome; perfect pommes frites, and equally perfect apple or lemon tarts for dessert. \$\$\$

Rice House of Kabob 14480 Biscayne Blvd., 305-944-4899

Since 2006, South Beach's original Rice House has been serving up mountainous platters of basmati rice and Greek salad topped with Persian-style marinated/char-grilled meat, poultry, seafood, or veggie kabobs – for very little money. This branch of what is now a growing chain has the same menu (which also features wraps, for lighter eaters) and the same policy of custom-cooking kabobs, so expect fresh, not fast, food. Sides of must-o-keyar and must-o-mooseer (thick yogurt dips with herbed cukes or shallots) are must-haves. \$\$

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. \$

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”

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Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

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 16721 NE 6th Ave., 305-770-0434

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

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

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

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. \$

Heelshe 1550 NE 164th St., 305-919-8393

If unusual Bangladeshi dishes like fiery pumpkin patee (cooked with onion, green pepper, and pickled mango) or Heelshe 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 Renaissa. 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 exotic like satkara, flavored with a Bangladeshi citrus reminiscent of sour orange. \$-\$\$\$

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

(See Miami Shores listing?)

Jerusalem Market and Deli 16275 Biscayne Blvd., 305-948-9080

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

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

This place makes a very good tahini sauce. In fact that alone is reason enough to visit. We prefer ours with this bright, cheery eatery's delightfully oniony falafel or a veg-garnished wrap of thin-sliced marinated beef schwarma. They also do a beautifully spiced, and reassuringly fresh-tasting, raw kibbi naye (Middle



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