

BISCAYNE

May 2012

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Volume 10 Issue 3

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Times

Becoming PAMM

The bumpy road from Miami Art Museum to
Pérez Art Museum Miami



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Acqualina, Sunny Isles Beach Wonderful high floor residence, 3bd/3ba, gourmet kitchen, Snaidero cabinetry, master w/ large terrace, ocean, city & Intracoastal views, endless amenities. Fully Furnished. Motivated Seller. \$1.875M



Bay Harbor Islands Wide waterfront double lot, 150' of protected waterfront. High ceilings, open & spacious, wide water views. 5600±sf on a 26,250 sf lot. For the true boatsman. \$4.75M

opendoor

by Bonnie & Ilene



Bal Harbour Village Great opportunity! Build your dream home in guard gated community. 20,500 sf lot on the wide waterway with waterfront pool and dock. \$4.5M



Bay Harbor Islands Wide Bay Award winning architect Barry Sugarman's home. Featured in HGTV, Florida Design, Casa & Estilo & more. 4/2.5, Open floor plan. Magnificent views. \$2.975M



Sans Souci Estates 2 story California style waterfront in 24hr gated community. Great floor plan, 3650sf/appraisal. 4/3.5, heated pool & spa, new wood deck & dock. \$899K



Hamptons South, Aventura 3000sf, designer finished, upgraded 2bd unit, media room, marble & wood floors, ocean, Intracoastal, lake & golf course views. \$849K



Bay Harbor Islands 4 story corner townhouse. 3bd/4ba, private elevator, huge rooftop terrace, top of the line kitchen and baths, 2 car garage. \$795K



Quayside Completely renovated townhouse, over 3700 SF on the trendy Biscayne corridor. Downtown & Bay views, gated & secure community. \$649K



Jockey Club III Fantastic 3/2.5 unit with updated kitchen w/ stainless steel appl., crown moldings, washer & dryer in unit. Wrap around balcony with water views. \$250K



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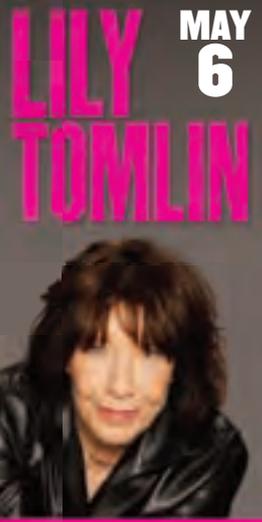
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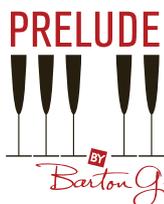
MAY 2012

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

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	
 <p>DEATH & HARRY HOUDINI APRIL 26 - MAY 20</p>			<p>2 Death and Harry Houdini 7:30 PM  Florida Grand Opera: Roméo & Juliette 8 PM  The final production of the season will be Gounod's <i>Roméo & Juliette</i>, not seen at FGO since 2004.</p>	<p>3 Death and Harry Houdini 7:30 PM  "A thrilling ride!" <i>Time Out Chicago</i></p> 	<p>4 Death and Harry Houdini 7:30 PM  "A helluva party! Dennis Watkins is simply magnificent as Houdini." <i>Chicago Sun-Times</i></p>	<p>5 Death and Harry Houdini 7:30 PM  "Ingeniously written and directed!" <i>Chicago Sun-Times</i> FGO: Roméo & Juliette 8 PM  Jorge Villamizar & Friends 8 PM </p>	
<p>6 Death and Harry Houdini 4 PM  Lily Tomlin 7:30 PM  Join the Tony, Emmy and Grammy Award-winning actress and comedienne for an unforgettable night of fun and laughter!</p>	 <p>Disney's THE LION KING BROADWAY'S LANDMARK MUSICAL MAY 15 - JUNE 10</p>		<p>9 Death and Harry Houdini 7:30 PM  "Magic of the very highest order!" <i>Chicago Tribune</i></p>	<p>10 Death and Harry Houdini 7:30 PM  Bold, visually stunning, and highly entertaining—a roller coaster ride through the life of the great Harry Houdini!</p>	<p>11 Death and Harry Houdini 7:30 PM  Miami Symphony Orchestra: The 3 Great B's 8 PM  A tribute to three of the greatest composers: Bach, Beethoven and Brahms.</p>	<p>12 Death and Harry Houdini 7:30 PM  "Leaves its audience utterly spellbound." <i>Centerstage</i></p>	
<p>13 Death and Harry Houdini 4 PM  "Soars on Dennis Watkins' brilliance as a genuine magician and fearless stuntman." <i>Chicago Sun-Times</i></p>			<p>15 Disney's The Lion King 8 PM  "There is simply nothing else like it." <i>The New York Times</i></p>	<p>16 Death and Harry Houdini 7:30 PM  Disney's The Lion King 8 PM  Experience the phenomenon!</p>	<p>17 Death and Harry Houdini 7:30 PM  Disney's The Lion King 8 PM  Lang Lang in Recital 8 PM </p>	<p>18 Death and Harry Houdini 7:30 PM  Disney's The Lion King 8 PM  Miami's most eagerly awaited stage production ever will leap onto the stage!</p>	<p>19 Disney's The Lion King 2 & 8 PM  Visually stunning, technically astounding and with a musical score like none other! Death and Harry Houdini 7:30 PM </p>
<p>20 Disney's The Lion King 1 & 6:30 PM  Tony® Award-winning Broadway sensation that <i>Newsweek</i> calls "a landmark event in entertainment." Death and Harry Houdini 4 PM </p>	 <p>LILY TOMLIN MAY 6</p>		<p>22 Disney's The Lion King 8 PM  Marvel at the breathtaking spectacle of animals brought to life by a cast of more than 40 actors!</p>	<p>23 Disney's The Lion King 8 PM  Wonder at the inspiration of award-winning director Julie Taymor, who created visuals for this unforgettable show.</p>	<p>24 Piano Slam: Volume 4 7:30 PM  A classical/hip hop mash-up featuring voices of Miami's youth, international and local artists! Disney's The Lion King 8 PM </p>	<p>25 Disney's The Lion King 8 PM  Ayikodans 8 PM  "Moved people to exultation, standing ovations!" <i>Arbust, Miami</i></p>	<p>26 Disney's The Lion King 2 & 8 PM  Ayikodans 2 & 8 PM  Back with the world premiere of a new piece after three sold out performances last year!</p>
<p>27 Disney's The Lion King 1 & 6:30 PM  Take your place in the "Circle of Life"!</p>			<p>29 Disney's The Lion King 8 PM  "A jaw-dropping magnificent spectacle." <i>Newsday</i></p>	<p>30 Disney's The Lion King 8 PM  "[Director Julie] Taymor has introduced a whole new vocabulary of images to the Broadway blockbuster." <i>The New York Times</i></p>	<p>31 Disney's The Lion King 8 PM  "Awe-inspiring!" <i>Time Magazine</i></p>		

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BISCAYNE *Times*

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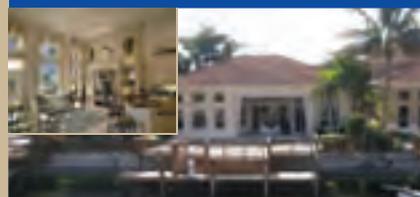
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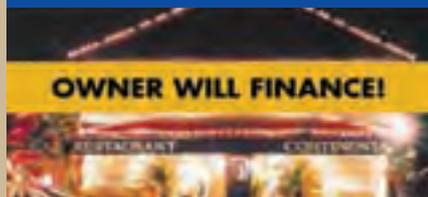
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2260 Tequesta Lane | Miami

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Open kitchen with custom cabinets, S/S appliances, and chef-quality hood. Baths with marble flooring/walls and custom designer tiling. Large home perfect for entertaining. A must see.



CITE ON THE BAY

2000 North Bayshore Drive #520 | Miami

1,303 SQ. FT. | 2 BD / 2 BA | OFFERED @ \$375K

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1051 NE 89 ST	6	5 / 1	1939	6,125	\$1,795,000	\$1,690,000
1350 NE 101 ST	3	4 / 0	1953	2,823	\$1,495,000	\$1,292,50
1066 NE 94 ST	5	4	1939	4,071	\$1,059,000	\$900,000
510 NE 56 ST	4	4 / 0	1934	3,021	\$899,000	\$815,000
531 PIGEON PLUM LN	4	3 / 0	1957	3,977	\$885,000	\$925,000
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550 N ISLAND DR	7	6 / 1	1995	6,634	\$3,150,000	\$2,500,000
546 GOLDEN BEACH DR	6	5 / 1	1955	5,141	\$2,195,000	\$1,400,000
3720 NE 201 ST	5	5 / 1	1997	3,929	\$1,500,000	\$1,280,000
18920 N BAY RD	3	2 / 1	1950	2,298	\$1,499,999	\$1,050,000
475 CENTER ISLAND DR	3	2 / 0	1959	2,249	\$1,350,000	\$1,150,000
16421 NE 34 AV	3	3 / 0	1992	3,518	\$1,199,000	\$1,095,000
20825 NE 32 PL	4	4 / 1	2000	3,286	\$985,000	\$918,000
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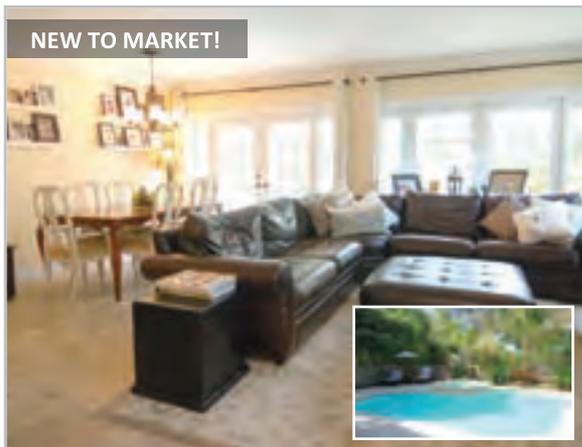
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Commentary: LETTERS

America Speaks Out

I was quoted in Erik Bojnansky's cover story "Like a Rocket" (April 2012) with regard to a new Walmart in Midtown.

First I want to clarify that, while I was elected in 2005 to be the spokeswoman for the Wynwood Historical Homeowners Association, I am not a current resident of Wynwood. The reason they wanted someone to speak for them is that a lot of them are afraid.

The article suggested I said Wynwood residents "demand" that a Walmart open in our community. I did not say that. What I actually said was that the homeowners and residents want and need a Walmart in the community.

The article also said I passed around a petition. In fact it was the homeowners and residents who collected hundreds of signatures in support of opening a Walmart in Midtown.

Also I would like to say that the Wynwood Historical Homeowners Association invites growth in the community, and we like the art events in Wynwood, but we want to be included when decisions are made and do not want to be forgotten. That's the reason we formed the association in the first place.

America Medina
Miami

Did You Hear the One About My Son and Dizzy Gillespie?

I was amazed to read Anne Tschida's story "Multi-Dimensional Man." She captured the essence of an extremely complicated subject on 3-D photography and work by Mark Diamond, the first holographer in the State of Florida (and my son). It's a difficult subject to write about, but she did a marvelous job. Congratulations!

I want to add a cute incident that happened when jazz great Dizzy Gillespie saw his 3-D holographic portrait for the first time. (He sat for several hours as Mark made it.) The portrait was displayed in the lobby of the Gusman just before his concert there.

He ran around it three times, like a kid, saying, "Wow, that's me! Look at that!"

His delight and amazement was childlike and very sweet, and the audience thoroughly enjoyed his spontaneous reaction. It's now hanging in several European museums, and also was displayed prominently in the window of the famous club Fat Tuesday's in New York City. Anne did a great job.

Hindi Diamond, vice president
South Florida International Press Club

Thanks for a Multi-Dimensional Gift

I've known Mark Diamond for years. He is indeed a complex, "multi-dimensional" guy, though very direct.

Anne Tschida managed to create a living portrait and provide a wonderful tour of his career, which always seems like it's just getting started!

Thanks to her for this gift.

George Fishman
Miami Shores

Jack, Here You Go: "MiMo Biscayne: Like a Rocket!"

Regarding Erik Bojnansky's article "There's a Reason They Call It Boulevard of Dreams" (April 2012): It's so nice to see even more new construction along our lovely MiMo Biscayne Corridor. Congratulations and best wishes to our Argentine investors, Javier Rabinovich and Mariano Karner.

It's interesting to see that, much like Ocean Drive's experience, it's out-of-town investors who have a vision of what can and will be. I hope Javier and Mariano manage to purchase and restore the Vagabond Motel as well.

I sure do wish that others would catch a more "positive" vibe. I note that, once again, Nancy Liebman [president of the MiMo Biscayne Association] took the opportunity to continue promoting her doom-and-gloom outlook for the Boulevard's future. She thinks it would be a shame if Javier and Mariano's project fails, and that "the historic district has a lot of impediments to it," and that "not having water pipes in place is a travesty for the future development in the historic MiMo area."

Now I ask you, does this sound like an association seeking to promote development?

Why not say, "This is an excellent opportunity for Javier Rabinovich and Mariano Karner and other developers to take advantage of the affordable prices." Or how about: "Let's work with the government — the city, county, state — to defray some of the costs."

A more positive stance just might encourage others to invest.

As for me, I'm looking forward to the day that the front page of the *BT* reads, "MiMo Biscayne: Like a Rocket!"

Jack Spirk
Shorecrest

Continued on page 22



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Commentary: LETTERS

Letters

Continued from page 20

Dear Biscayne Times: Not Everyone in Biscayne Park Thinks of You as Litter

I love seeing on my lawn the blue plastic bag that holds each new issue of *Biscayne Times*. I look forward to receiving it and I enjoy reading all the articles.

Of course, being a resident of Biscayne Park, I am definitely interested in articles written by our very own neighborhood correspondent, Gaspar González. In his “Too Cool for School” column (April 2012), Gaspar once again hits the nail on the head when describing the closed-mindedness of some of the older residents of our quaint village. (Please note that this writer is about two years away from being eligible for Medicare.)

It shows that some of those who have been living the longest in our village are opposed to change. It was one of the many reasons why I resigned from serving on one of the boards to which I was appointed. I just couldn't see spending one more night a month with people who were obviously not going to be sensitive to the growing needs of many of our residents.

It was clear that these few people were not going to be sensitive in the least to families who were concerned about the safety of their children while they were busy traveling and working in order to put food on the table and clothe their families. The concerned residents just wanted an ordinance in place so they could construct fences around their homes, so that people off the streets couldn't just walk up to their front doors when the man or woman of the house was not present.

The dismissive answer from some of the members of this board was simply: “If you're concerned about safety, put an alarm system in your home”.

That was the extent of their concern for others in the neighborhood. It took more than a year to pass an ordinance on fences in our village. And the glaring point of all of this is that it's always the same few who are opposed to any change, and instead of being sensitive to the needs of the whole, instead of opening their minds and hearts to create a better environment for the good of most, they're more concerned with continuing with their negativity.

It's disheartening, to say the least, that instead of being willing to listen to a proposal for a charter school, of weighing the pros and the cons, some people are ready to attack and point a finger. We

all need to do a better job of being receptive and a better job of listening before rushing to judgment.

I would bet that it's the same few people who are now soliciting signatures in an effort to silence the writers contributing to *Biscayne Times*, the same few who want to stop the distribution of this incredibly wonderful new magazine in our village.

They call it “litter.” I call it one of the most refreshing forms of literature in Miami.

Biscayne Times is open, informative, and full of opinions, but of course that's way too advanced for the obtuse among us — too advanced for the “fungus among us.”

*Carmen De Bernardi
Biscayne Park*

Editor's note: For more on the subject of the *BT* as litter, please see Gaspar González's column this issue, page 58.

Requiem for Electronic Music

I couldn't agree more with Christian Cipriani's take on the Winter Music Conference and the Ultra Music Festival (“Up from the Underground,” April 2012).

I just turned 31, so I was technically 30 when WMC/Ultra 2012 happened. After five years of attending, this year it just didn't feel the same, and so I didn't get WMC tickets.

I started checking out the blogs, Facebook, and the like, and it was all full of people who didn't know anything about the electronic, underground, drum-and-bass movement. No one cared about the lineup, about the production, or the music. It was all about getting f***ed up and what to wear.

But anyhow, I rushed back home from work on that Friday to get to Ultra and watch it live. That's when it hit me. Ultra was this massive, wanna-be-so-cool crowd. Yikes!

DJs at Ultra didn't have to work that hard at all. Those like me and Christian, who used to ask more from the DJs, were not there. The kind of people who pushed the music forward, the real people who enjoy creative electronic music were long gone — getting busy in something else.

Maybe we have just grown and we're having a hard time letting go. Whatever it is, I'm just glad to know I wasn't the only one who felt the change and missed the good old times.

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Eat, Drink, and Be Thankful

This new Publix is exactly what we needed

By Christian Cipriani
BT Contributor

Three years ago I wrote a cover story for the *BT* called “Dirt & Dreams” (July 2009), in which I laid out suggestions for what to do with all the vacant lots in Edgewater, a legacy of the housing boom gone bust. For a big hunk of dusty land on the west side of Biscayne Boulevard and NE 17th Street, I didn’t have an idea, I had a decree. On that parcel we *must* have a classy supermarket.

This year my fanciful proclamation became a reality. To hell with Starbucks. The opening of the new Publix on the Boulevard at NE 17th Street makes a bigger statement about the future of this neighborhood than any coffeehouse could. It says, “We have arrived.”

Obtaining food is such a basic human need, and for years I fulfilled it begrudgingly, slogging a ramshackle cart through the dim aisles of the Baypoint Publix at NE 48th Street. This is the Publix that earned 2.5 stars out of 5 on Google, along with comments like “worst,” “rudest,” “nightmare,” “cramped,” “not helpful,” “horrid.”

I guess you could say I take grocery shopping seriously. When I was a student, the one thing that made me feel

truly broke was not being able to afford good food. When I got my first real job, I promised myself I’d never skimp on food again — and if the experience of stocking up can be pleasant, all the better.

But the Baypoint Publix might as well be the set of a reality show about how humans act under duress. You fight viciously for a parking space and dodge bewildered vagrants just to get to the door, and from there it gets worse.

Its defining feature is the staff, who rank among the slowest, rudest, least helpful people I’ve ever met. Just trying to order a sandwich is a soul-sucking experience.

Until recently this was the only option for people living between Edgewater and the Upper Eastside. Sure, if you’re up in the 70s, you can justify heading north to Miami Shores, but most of us had to settle for Baypoint — like a bad relationship that’s impossible to escape.

So believe it when I say that I watched like a fenced bull as my new Publix rose from the ground. When I finally saw “Grand Opening” signs, I charged the foyer and stared in amazement. It was as if Mr. Publix himself had read my diary: There, adjacent to my new grocery store, was a liquor store. Not a typical Biscayne liquor store, where you slide money through



BT photo by Christian Cipriani

a two-inch gap in the bulletproof glass, but a bright new liquor store with an uncaged cashier.

Things only got better from there. I selected my cart. No squeaky joints, no rogue wheel orbiting out of control. My cart rolled forward with the quiet confidence of a luxury car. Inside was a high-ceilinged, freshly lit paradise of specialty cheeses, fine wines, lovely prepared foods, fresh organic produce — even a café.

But more than anything, I noticed the smiling staff. They looked proud and energetic, and four times I was stopped and offered help. I passed one couple and heard the man say to his wife: “Isn’t this place something?”

It sure is, friend.

While standing before a row of glistening fruit tarts, I knew that I would never again set foot in Baypoint. We’re through, I thought. I’ve left you for good, and I’m now happily lost in a new romance with a Publix that just treats me better.

Over by the carrots, I bumped into an old friend and told him I what I was writing about. He was a little puzzled by

my enthusiasm, but as I made my case, he came around. Turns out he worked at a grocery store as a kid. I told him not to let the flashbacks haunt him. Keep an open mind. This place is special.

For 40 minutes I toured the market’s generously proportioned aisles, and was greeted with more smiles when I reached the register. Even the kid bagging my groceries said, “How are you, sir?” Amazing. It was always a small miracle if the staff at Baypoint made eye contact.

Back at home, I got a call from a friend and told him where I’d been. “I just went there, too,” he replied. “Isn’t it awesome?”

I’ve now heard the new Publix described as “awesome” by at least a dozen people, which for me is proof that three years ago I was right when I pointed to that empty parcel and said, “If you build it, they will come.”

I finished unpacking my bags and realized I’d forgotten the skirt steak. I smiled, wondering if I’d forgotten on purpose. I grabbed my keys and headed out for the second of many enjoyable visits.

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BizBuzz

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

By Pamela Robin Brandt
BT Contributor

May means Mother's Day in the USA — or at least it has since 1914, when President Woodrow Wilson made the second Sunday in May an official national holiday honoring the women who traditionally spent the rest of the year raising the kids, shopping, cooking, cleaning, more cleaning, and otherwise keeping home and hearth together. It has become the most popular day for sales of flowers and greeting cards, for long-distance phone calls, and, of course, for dining out.

Actually, we feel the president should have proclaimed *all* of May as Mother's Month. And it appears that many BT advertisers agree, offering deals and special happenings that will make mom happy all month long.

"Mother's Day is every day" are magic words throughout May at **Herval Furniture's** two showrooms (1730 Biscayne Blvd., 305-377-1221; or the company's glittering new space at 2650 NE 189th St., 305-935-4545). Speak those words for a 10% discount off Herval's striking stock of modern furniture — sofas and sectionals, wall units, dining tables, beds, patio sets, and much more to furnish your home inside and outside.

If what you need is the house to furnish, call new advertiser **Dennis Esposito** (305-651-6161), managing partner of **Century 21/King Realty**, for a personal consultation. After 50 years in South Florida, it should be no surprise that this brokerage and development firm has millions of listings to search on its website [www.Century21KingRealty](http://www.Century21KingRealty.com) — sales, rentals, foreclosures, short sales, whatever you're seeking. And Esposito has a huge market of international, as well as local, clients.

These days, sadly, many homeowners are less concerned with finding a new dwelling than with losing the one they have to foreclosure. But the attorneys at new advertiser **Civil Justice Advocates** (954-677-8888) can help fight the banks. And you'll need professional help from lawyers familiar with the sneaky tricks of banks and Wall Street trusts to manage your foreclosure defense with positive results — meaning negotiating a modification you can live with, or walking away with the least amount of damage. As the massive Do's and Don'ts list in this issue's ad makes clear, the truth isn't enough, even accompanied by overwhelming evidence. Fortunately, one "Don't" you needn't worry about is that your legal litigation will bankrupt you before the banks do. CJA says that attorneys in this field are more



reasonably priced than average rents or mortgage payments. The Miami office is at 620 NE 76th St.

To give mom the gift of beauty, **Hannah & Her Scissors** (611 NE 86th St., 305-772-8426) is an obvious choice. Take mom for a makeover — a grrrls' day out with haircut and color, mani/pedi, the works — or give her a gift certificate for the same. And if you'd like to bring home a gift, aside from your improved selves, Hannah has just installed a new boutique in the salon, selling candles, jewelry, watches, and handmade trinkets, plus her own unique and stylish art (paintings and photos) on upholstery, chairs, canvas, and more.

Then there's the gift of relaxation, offered by the spa at Aventura's **Turnberry Isle Resort** (19999 W. Country Club Dr., 305-933-6930). For all of May, a special Mom Rocks package (massage, facial, glass of wine, and access to the state-of-the-art fitness center and Cascata pool) offers a full-day disconnect from her usual chores — all for \$199.

Feeling in need of something more encompassing — like a total body transformation? Our friends at **Bikram Yoga Central Miami** (5084 Biscayne Blvd. #101-A, 305-231-3171) suggest a juice cleanse designed to increase metabolism

Continued on page 28

<p>10901 N. Bayshore Dr.</p>  <p>\$699,000</p>	<p>900 NE 100 Street</p>  <p>\$649,500</p>	<p>559 NE 68 Street</p>  <p>\$139,500</p>	<p>645 NE 92 Street</p>  <p>\$1,095 Mo.</p>	 <p>DUFFY REALTY www.duffyrealty.com</p> <hr/> <p>Patrick L. Duffy 305-904-4803</p>
<p>Million dollar views from this Key West style 2/2 home on wide bay. Great out-door entertainment area. Storm shutters. Den/Office. Must see!</p>	<p>Updated 3/3 on 3 lots. Overlooks golf course. Gourmet eat-in kitchen. Family room. Wood floors. Fireplace. New roof. Garage. A rare find!</p>	<p>Unique 2 story duplex half a Block west of Biscayne Blvd. 2/1 up + 2/1 down. Updated elec. Large fenced yard. Don't miss this one!</p>	<p>Beautiful walk-up 2nd floor condo with 2 beds + 1 bath. Wood Floors. Cent A./C. Washer/dryer Inside unit. Great location. No pets.</p>	



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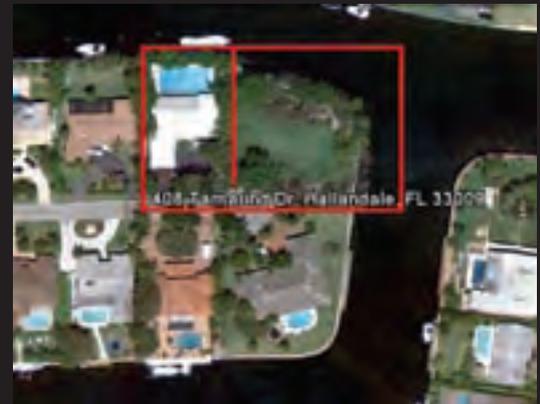
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BizBuzz

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and detoxify blood, lymphatic system, and numerous organs; as well as clear up your skin and lose weight. Learn more about this multi-dimensional experience at Bikram's free lecture, Saturday, May 12, from 12:30-1:30 p.m.

At new advertiser **Modern Furniture 2 Go** (270 NE 39th St., 305-572-1222), newlywed owners Julissa de Los Santos and Tim Broderick offer instant décor solutions for other newlyweds or anyone else who needs to furnish whole rooms or homes: 12 stylish pre-designed room packages to fit four different lifestyles: Urban Loft, Cosmo Chic, Metropolitan, and Sophisticate. The store's very affordable prices result from direct import, mainly from factories in China — common for large companies to do but rare for small ones, especially those who don't speak Mandarin.

That would be no problem for students at the **Cushman School** (592 NE 60th St., 305-757-1966), where all students, from pre-kindergarten through 8th grade, study Mandarin Chinese as part of the school's progressive and practical focus on international world views and languages. Actually, Cushman reports that as another part of the program, two dozen Chinese students and teachers were just hosted for two weeks in April. If you'd like your kids to sample Cushman creativity, see this issue's ad for info on the school's stimulating summer camp.

Looking for a fun family activity to share with the kids this month? At 8:00 p.m. on Wednesday, May 30, the **Shops at Midtown Miami** (3401 N. Miami Ave.) will be hosting another movie night at Fountain Plaza. The featured free film is Martin Scorsese's 2011 fantasy *Hugo*, which won five Oscars — all for techie stuff, but still. The film, set in 1931, follows the adventures of a movie-loving, orphaned 12-year-old clock repairman who lives in a Paris Metro station.

If mom is of an age where she could use some help with life chores, call new advertiser **Accessible Home Health Care of Aventura**. Although that's kind of stretching it for a Mother's Day connection; the company actually provides home care for all ages, from newborns to seniors, and services are both medical (private duty nurses, wound care, therapy) and nonmedical (driving/transportation, bathing and dressing, meal prep). And there's a free consult prior to service.

Strain as we might, we could find no Mother's Day reference that would work in welcoming advertiser **Dr. Rudolph (Rudy) Moise**, a congressional candidate running against incumbent Congresswoman Frederica Wilson in brand-new District 24, reapportioned by the state legislature after the 2010 census. But a movie reference is easy to find for this multitasking millionaire physician/lawyer/Air Force Reserve colonel, who is also the star of several self-financed flicks. This column doesn't do political endorsements, so we can't urge readers to vote for one candidate over another. We can, however, urge you to vote — and also to rent the DVD of Moise's 2010 action movie *Trapped: Haitian Nights*, in which he co-stars with Vivica A. Fox.

There's also no obvious mom connection to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration training offered this month at advertiser **Miami-Dade College's** Kendall campus (11011 SW 104th St., 305-237-1019 or e-mail: nced@mdc.edu) — unless mom's a working mom. The four-hour training — which covers workers' rights and responsibilities, as well as workplace ergonomics, heat illness, and fall protection — is free to all industry employees and employers from Miami-Dade, Broward, and Monroe counties. Pre-registration is required for the May 19 session (9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.). See this issue's ad for info on obtaining forms. Oh, right: And since this is South Florida, where merely learning how to avoid workplace hazards may not be a hot enough topic to attract hordes, there will also be raffles, giveaways, beverages, and lunch provided.

Now on to brunch, the favorite Mother's Day meal. Make it maximum spectacular by brunching on the expansive waterfront terrace of **Trio on the Bay** (1601 79th St. Causeway, 305-866-1234), from 10:30 a.m. on May 13. You can relax. The setting sure looks expensive, but dining is à la carte, with items starting at only \$7. Reservations are strongly suggested.

You couldn't find a more friendly and festive setting than the sparkling **Royal Bavarian Schnitzel Haus** (1085 NE 79th St., 305-754-8002), where May 13's Mother's Day specials will be served from noon till 11:00 p.m., both inside and in the backyard biergarten. And speaking of bier: chef/owner Alex Richter's famous beer-marinated BBQ ribs are now back, Friday through Sunday nights.

Continued on page 29

At **Bagels & Company** (11064 Biscayne Blvd., 305-892-2435), the coupon deals offered in this month's ad are good Monday-Friday only. But what deals! They include our all-time favorite offer: Buy a dozen bagels, get another full dozen free. Additionally, there are three specials for eat-in diners: \$2 off tabs of \$10 or more; \$5 off purchases of \$20 or more; and a buy-one-get-one free entrée twofer. Do remember to bring the ad with you.

Welcome to North Miami Beach's **Mario the Baker** (14691 Biscayne Blvd., 305-891-7641), an old favorite restaurant but a new advertiser — and in a new Biscayne Commons mall location. The menu encompasses the full range of Italian-American classics, from homemade cannelloni to cannoli: pizzas, salads, hot and cold sub sandwiches, entrées like veal or eggplant parm, and naturally, the place's famed ultra-drenched garlic rolls. And if mom wants to eat at home, just without the cooking part, Mario's delivers.

Under the new ownership of Italian chef Rocco Soprano, who many readers will recognize from Lincoln Road's Soprano Café & Restaurant, is the slightly rechristened **Racks Soprano Café & Italian Restaurant** (3993 NE 163rd St., 305-917-7225). Don't fret the loss of Racks. The coal oven that has been turning out some of Miami's most delectable pizzas remains. Take the family to this new advertiser for a Mother's Day pie, or more substantial Italian fare, on the outdoor deck fronting the Intracoastal Waterway, and get a complimentary bottle of wine per table. And drop by any day for the 4:00-8:00 p.m. happy hour.

While Mother's Day is usually a holiday where the whole family wants to get in on the act, trust us: At some point this month, a romantic dinner for two would be much appreciated. Check out the ad this month for newcomer **Jean Paul's House** (2426 NE 2nd Ave., 305-573-7373), one of this issue's additions to the *BT's* Dining Guide (page 82). Admittedly, the surrounding neighborhood is better known for Braman car dealerships than for romance. But after dark, the intimate interior is lit for love, and chef Jean Paul Desmaison's strongly Peruvian-influenced New World fusion food is even more special.

Celebrate every Saturday in May with free wine tastings at **Laurenzo's Italian Center** (16385 W. Dixie Hwy., 305-945-6381), from 1:00-5:00 p.m. Call

and ask the wine department for details about what wines will be featured at each tasting. Tip: If you didn't discover the pane di Altamura that Laurenzo's began importing from Italy (frozen, to be reheated at home) just last month, grab it in May. This DOC bread from Puglia — crunchy-crust outside, with a fine-crumbed, fermented but slightly sweet sourdough interior — is to normal Italian bread as pain Poilâne is to Wonder Bread.

Big news at **Anise Taverna** (620 NE 78th St., 305-758-2929): After almost four years, Liza and Gigi Meoli are saying goodbye to their Greek/Mediterranean restaurant. No need for tears, though. The Meolis are also saying hello to a new venture in the same space with a co-owner/partner, chef David Long: **RiverShack**. The difference is that rather than being defined by a country or culture, the cuisine will be chef-driven, "personality and passion on a plate" from Long and sous chef Alan Harst. And physically, the addition of a game room is planned. But the Meolis will still be in charge of their warm front-of-the-house hospitality. The transformation should be complete by mid-May.

Some say that taking mom out to eat is too easy, and that to truly recognize a mother's contributions, one must do a mother's work. Hence the tradition of family members making mom breakfast in bed — after which she must spend the rest of Mother's Day repairing the disaster area in the kitchen. So along with the burned bacon, half-spilled coffee, etc., put a gift certificate from **Elite Concierge Services** (786-691-0933 or www.ecmiami.com) on the morning meal tray. Just about anything mom needs done — running errands, grocery shopping, dry cleaning pick-up/drop-off, car washes and oil changes, pet care, party planning, even finding a good housecleaning service (plus, possibly, a handyman) to get the house back together after that thoughtful breakfast in bed — Elite will do it. And this month the company is offering *BT* readers 10% off hourly fees, and 15% off per-event services.

By the way: Best keep this column's contact info handy for next month. Remember, June means Father's Day.

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MAM to

The new Herzog & de Meuron building that will house the Miami Art Museum (MAM) is set to open in September 2013. It will, without doubt, be a spectacular building, a structure that will make Miami proud.

The highly regarded Swiss architectural firm is familiar with museums, having built the most visited contemporary art museum in the world, the Tate Modern in London, and the new expansion to one of this country's important museums, the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, to name a few.

Standing on the top floor of what is still a construction site, the view of Miami, of Biscayne Bay, of Miami Beach, is unparalleled. The three-story building sits in the northeast corner of what will be known as Museum Park, sharing space with the new

science museum, also under construction. It will have huge glass windows and walls, and be surrounded by raised plazas and verandas, covered by a huge canopy roof with hanging, floor-to-ceiling plants, Babylon style.

On this particular April day, the breeze from the bay is refreshing, and the genius of the design is apparent — although so transparent and open, no part of the interior will be exposed to direct sunlight, and the outdoor space will be perpetually shaded and exposed to cooling winds from the water.

Certainly the building itself will be a success. What will go inside it, and what it will be called, is not so certain. At press time — the end of April — the new museum is expected to be named the Pérez Art Museum Miami, or PAMM, when it opens a little more than a year

from now. The new name is a result of a \$35 million donation in both cash and art from long-time MAM supporter and major Miami developer Jorge Pérez, CEO of the Related Group.

The renaming hasn't been a popular move in all quarters, and seems to be yet another bump in a bumpy road for Miami-Dade County's flagship museum. As a result of the announcement of the renaming, which happened during Art Basel Miami Beach this past December, several board members resigned, and grumblings could be heard across the art world.

Collectors and artists have expressed concern about what the renaming of Miami's principal museum will mean. Will potential donors and funders back away? Was the value of Pérez's donation enough to replace a city's name?

But then, MAM has been no stranger to controversy, or to resignations. That kind of thing is what you might expect when a public institution tries to serve the interests of such a diverse and sometimes fractious community. In the broader perspective, this is an opportune time to look at where MAM has been and where it is going, as a predominantly taxpayer-supported entity that should, when it has fully matured, represent Miami.

MAM is a relatively young organization, not unlike the city in which it operates. It began as a kunsthalle, or an exhibition-only space called the Center for the Fine Arts, meaning it did not have its own art collection.

In 1996, now called the Miami Art Museum, it became a collecting



Herzog & de Meuron

PAMM

By Anne Tschida

Photos by Silvia Ros

The uproar over renaming Miami's art museum is just the latest in a history of turmoil

institution, with an emphasis on post-World War II art from the Western hemisphere. But such youthful museums usually don't have much money to purchase art, as was the case with MAM, which relied mostly on gifts.

Back then, according to former senior curator Peter Boswell, the museum had about 75 works, with some pieces by important artists such as Frank Stella and Helen Frankenthaler. It had also started to collect local work, from painters Lynne Golob Gelfman and José Bedia, for example.

Still, it was a small collection. By comparison, the Walker Art Center has more than 11,000 works in its permanent collection. Then, in 2005, MAM founded its Collector's Council. For an annual \$5000 fee, council members would

contribute to the acquisition of new works, and under the direction of MAM curators, vote on what they would be.

Around 40 people joined it. That started the wheel rolling, recalls Boswell. Once MAM looked like it was serious about collecting, bigger gifts followed, for instance the donation of 101 photographs from the Charles Cowles Collection in 2006. After that, says Boswell, major pieces by the likes of Alfredo Jarr, Sol Lewitt, Carlos Alfonso, and Fernand Leger (now on the outside wall of the museum) flowed in from collectors such as Miami Marlins owner Jeffrey Loria, developer Craig Robins, and Jorge Pérez.

While the museum could be excused for its youth, some people did have problems with its priorities. Almost from the day it became MAM, the museum wanted

a new building. The Philip Johnson-designed museum on Flagler Street in downtown Miami was deemed insufficient, too small, and unattractive by MAM's leaders. They wanted a better space, so focus and fundraising were aimed at achieving that goal. Some thought the focus should have been on the collection first, a new building second.

In 2004, Miami-Dade County voters approved a \$100 million bond issue to help build MAM a new home, with the idea that the museum would raise about \$100 million to match.

Former curator Boswell says it's a chicken-and-egg scenario: Who would want to donate significant and expensive art to a museum that was virtually incapable of displaying it? On the other hand, critics have said, what's the point of a

beautiful new building if what's inside isn't high quality?

Another problem with an emphasis on fundraising and gathering support for a new home — both privately and publicly — is that traveling exhibitions can be slighted in the process. Running a museum, and bringing in quality shows, does not come cheap.

Yet the focus remained on a bigger, better building. To that end MAM, brought in a big name from New York, the chief curator of architecture and design at the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA), Terence Riley. In 2006 he replaced Suzanne Delehanty, MAM's original director, who resigned not long after the successful campaign to win voter approval of

.....
Continued on page 32



Museum director Thom Collins says institutions everywhere have taken on donors' names.

MAM to PAMM

Continued from page 33

the \$100 million bond measure. Riley was expected to shepherd the design and construction of a new building, bringing in Herzog & de Meuron, and then to oversee the museum.

The institutional enthusiasm and momentum, however, could not be sustained.

In 2008 the recession hit hard, and Miami's massive building craze came to

a grinding halt. Fundraising for a new museum suddenly become exceedingly difficult, as even deep-pocketed potential donors were suffering.

Complicating matters at every turn, especially during a period of financial stress, was the fact that the museum, a quasi-public institution, had to keep one eye on Miami-Dade County's notoriously confrontational and Balkanized politics. Reflecting the community's varied interests, MAM currently has a whopping



Photo related.com

For his name on the museum Jorge Pérez pledged \$20 million in cash and \$15 million worth of art.



MAM's construction costs are being funded by a \$100 million bond measure voters approved in 2004.

(and cumbersome) 36 trustees. Compare that with the other publicly funded contemporary art museum, MOCA, in North Miami, which has 18.

In 2009, Riley unexpectedly resigned after four years. "I can't say I've ever worked so hard or accomplished so much in such a time frame," recalls Riley, from selection of the architect, securing the land, and navigating the complex county and city legal issues and permits. By October 2009, he says, "I realized that I had done almost all I could do and that the

next big challenge was to grow the collection. I never had any doubt that an art historian would be the better person for that task." Although Riley would stay on as a consultant, it was another unexpected bump on MAM's road to maturity.

At that point, about \$30 million of the \$100 million private funds needed had been raised. Riley was followed out the museum door by trustee Ella Fontanals Cisneros, who had planned to merge some

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SUNNY ISLES BEACH

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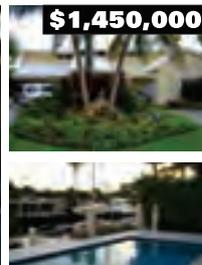
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Large updated townhouse on the water with approx 30ft boat dock. 10,000 pound boat elevator in place and included. Ocean access & no fixed bridge to Haulover Inlet.



\$1,450,000



NORTH MIAMI BEACH

EASTERN SHORES 5 BEDROOMS

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



\$189,000

NORTH MIAMI BEACH

EASTERN SHORES 2 BR 2 BTH

Remodeled corner condo with direct Intracoastal views. Kitchen with wood cabinets and granite counter tops and newer stainless appliances. Large wrap around terrace.



\$569,000

SUNNY ISLES BEACH

POINCIANA ISLAND 3 BR 2 1/2 BTH

Rare Opportunity to own on Poinciana Island with direct Intracoastal views. This 2 story unit is on Private Island just across the street from the ocean. Tennis, Gym, Pool and more.

MAM to PAMM

Continued from page 32

of her large art collection with MAM's, but took it all away when she left.

She was reported to have been increasingly upset with the emphasis on the new building at the expense, in her opinion, of developing a collection, specifically a strong Latin American collection.

Watching from the sidelines, another staunch opponent of the new museum, local art collector Martin "Marty" Margulies, predicted the new MAM in Bicentennial Park would never be built.

As he points out the huge, hurricane-proof windows that had to be shipped from Germany, MAM's latest director, Thomas "Thom" Collins, who came from New York's Neuberger Museum, sees the museum back on track. But it hasn't been smooth sailing for Collins either, in his short tenure here.

From a number of accounts, back in September it was pretty clear that the new building, getting so near to completion, would need some immediate cash to keep construction going. It



Terence Riley became director in 2006, got the new museum under way, and resigned four years later.

arrived as a gift from Jorge Pérez, who would give \$20 million in cash over a period of ten years, and \$15 million

worth of art from his collection.

It was a generous offer, even considering the fact that it came with a stipulation:

His name would have to be attached — at the front — of the museum's name. The gift was not a problem, but renaming the city's premier art museum was, and it immediately set off a storm of controversy.

"We were blind-sided" by the negativity surrounding the name change, says Collins on this crisp spring day out at the construction site, where he goes almost daily to give tours. "In the end, we will have raised more private funds than public" for the new building, he says. As of today, the museum says it has raised \$67 million in private funds and expects to raise \$53 million more, for a total of \$120 million, topping the \$100 million in public funds from the 2004 bond measure.

However, at the moment, almost all of that money is earmarked for the building and for operational costs, not for an endowment to collect. That's a concern to many. Also of concern is the perception that there has been a lack of leadership in structuring and guiding the long-term effort to collect artworks. Says art collector Rosa de la Cruz, who has donated to MAM in the past: "MAM is

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MAM to PAMM

Continued from page 34

a collecting museum with no endowment and a weak and unfocused collection.” Echoing a persistent critique, she says priorities have been somewhat skewed: “MAM should not have started the construction of this very expensive building designed by Herzog & de Meuron without first having a major collection and the private funds.”

She and husband Carlos were openly critical of the renaming of the museum, having penned a letter to the *Miami Herald* saying as much. But as Rosa de la Cruz adds, “It’s not about Pérez. That is a good donation. But this is not like the performing arts center or the science museum, which do not have to ask donors for art or funds to buy art.” She is referring to the history of naming institutions here in Miami.

We have had, for instance, multiple names associated with a certain football stadium. The Carnival Center for the Performing Arts was changed to the Adrienne Arsht Center, and the new Miami Science Museum will be named the Patricia and Phillip Frost Museum of Science when it opens (the Frosts

also have their name on FIU’s art museum), for about \$30 to \$35 million for each for those naming rights.

However, those institutions do not need gifts and donations from people who may object to their names subsumed under the Pérez title, especially if they have spent considerable money and decades collecting specific works. In fact, while we’re familiar with the Guggenheims and the Whitneys — museums named for individuals and sometimes for their founders — most city museums have the location front and center in the title, from Denver to Dallas, Los Angeles to Chicago. They may have wings, pavilions, and galleries with donor names attached, but not entire museums.

For trustee and former MAM president Mary Frank, it was too much. Frank, an art historian, and her husband Howard, chief operating officer of Carnival Corporation, resigned along with two others when the renaming was announced this past December.



Former senior curator Peter Boswell left MAM shortly after the uproar over the museum’s name change.

“I have no issue with the incredible act of generosity” of Pérez, she says.

Mary Frank had been involved with the museum and its precursor for 18 years. “It was the way it was done,” she adds. “A fait accompli, no discussion. The name was a done deal by the time it got to the board. Frank recounts that members of the board had discussed such alternatives as naming a main wing after Pérez, or even calling it something like MAM at the Pérez Building.

Frank explains that “Miami Art Museum” was an intentional, deliberately chosen name back in 1996, one that would forever link it to the community that formed it — and mostly paid for it. She says she is heartbroken about what has happened.

Thom Collins is having none of it. In today’s world, institutions everywhere have taken on donors’ names — public-private partnerships are the way of the future, he says, and to think otherwise is unrealistic. He claims that, aside from the several resignations, there have been few other repercussions, monetary or otherwise.

He suggests that people who are so upset by the renaming could have given more money, and then they could have

Continued on page 38



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BISCAYNE Times



MAM to PAMM

Continued from page 36

named it what they wanted. Some supporters have also hinted at an anti-Latin bias, although the objections of the de la Cruzes and another board member who resigned, Ruben Rodriguez, would seem to negate that notion.

In truth, the proposed name change to PAMM may have run into a combination of issues. After the economic collapse of 2008, huge, publicly funded edifices such as the performing arts center, the baseball stadium, and indeed MAM came under new scrutiny. How much would taxpayers really have to shell out for each of these? Were the true costs hidden from the public?

And if the new museum was to be a genuine public-private partnership, what should be the monetary threshold for naming rights? Here is where MAM hit another snag: Pérez would not be giving \$35 million in cash. A significant part of the gift's value — \$15 million — would come in the form of donations from his art collection, a



The new building on Biscayne Bay will use high-tech, hurricane-proof glass made in Germany.

collection that has some questions surrounding it.

Biscayne Times was not able to interview Pérez or view his collection, and so the artworks included in it largely remain a matter of speculation. Some people rather dismissively have said it is filled with mediocre pieces, heavy on the Colombian artist Fernando Botero, whose

chubby characters are not taken seriously by most collectors and art critics.

Others have claimed that, while not as big as some of the huge collections in town, it is respectable and will augment the museum's collection.

A major Latin art dealer, Gary Nader, who has a massive gallery and auction house in Wynwood, objects strenuously

to criticisms of Pérez's collection. "The media is making this an issue," he says. "Listen, no collection is complete, but Pérez has some very important pieces — Matta, Rivera, Lam. It's a fantastic collection." Any museum, he says, would welcome works from the Pérez collection.

Continued on page 40



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Photo by Chocolate Milk Photography

New chief curator Tobias Ostrander: "It's a young city, culturally coming to maturity."

MAM to PAMM

Continued from page 38

Although Miami's main art museum is about to be renamed for Pérez, neither MAM nor Pérez would say which artworks are headed for to the museum, or describe the process by which individual pieces were valued, or whether Pérez declared any works off-limits. All we know is that the museum has chosen them and that the selections will be announced later this month.

The renaming was revealed in the middle of Art Basel, which gave it more national and even international attention. After the board resignations and numerous newspaper accounts, curator Peter Boswell also left MAM — another departure that underscored the institution's stability issues. Boswell says he cannot comment on the circumstances of his departure, except to acknowledge

that a lawyer is involved.

MAM has rather quickly filled some gaps with new staff and campaigns, a necessity given that a very large new museum will open next year and that expectations for quality artwork are high. On opening day, there will be 200,000 square feet of space, both indoors and out.

Collins is clearly proud, even giddy, as he shows off these spaces currently under construction on the edge of the bay. It will be one of the greenest museums in the world, he notes, and has involved top-notch architectural and environmental consultants.

And what will be on display that festive opening day?

The inaugural exhibitions will rely heavily on the new chief curator Tobias Ostrander, who previously served as

Continued on page 42



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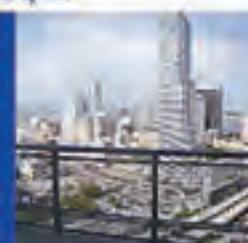


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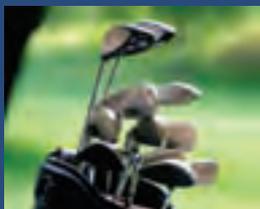
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Everyone, from critics of the new name to artists with works in the museum, wants the new MAM to succeed.

MAM to PAMM

Continued from page 40

the director of El Museo Experimental del ECO in Mexico City. He will be working on filling all the new spaces with traveling exhibitions, site-specific installations, pieces from the permanent collection, local works, and more.

Ostrander knows what a monumental task lies ahead of him, but is excited by it all. "It's a young city, culturally coming to maturity," he says. "We want to build on what is here, developing strong Latin American, Caribbean, and North American collections, but also a global one."

Eventually, in order to live up to the new building's status, Ostrander knows the museum will have to generate its own shows that will travel the globe and raise Miami's profile — something that has not happened in the past.

Everyone, from critics of the new naming to artists with works in the museum, wants the new MAM to be a success. How it will achieve that, however, remains a hotly debated subject, which is appropriate and expected for a public institution.

One lingering question remains: Is PAMM a done deal?

In an interesting and perhaps cautionary tale, another major city's

museum toyed with adding the name of a major benefactor to its title. The Tel Aviv Museum of Art, founded even before the State of Israel existed, decided to change its name in 2005, after a \$20 million donation from shipping magnet Sammy Ofer. Tami Katz-Freiman, a Miami Beach resident who will curate a show opening in Israel next month, and then the big fall show at the Bass Museum of Art, remembers the uproar that followed.

Although the mayor of Tel Aviv initially supported the name change, donors threatened not only to refuse future contributions but to take back what they had already given. The public was incensed that their museum would be named for one person. "It was a debate that hasn't really gone on here in Miami," Katz-Freiman says. "Nothing is black and white, but these things need to be openly discussed. What do we want to be? How to make a great museum?"

In the end, the Tel Aviv Museum kept its original name, and Ofer withdrew his \$20 million donation. The new wing that was to be built with that money was eventually paid for by a Los Angeles couple, Herta and Paul Amir. Their name is on the new wing, not the museum.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com



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Big Changes on the Little River

People power is building public parks and challenging private interests

By Erik Bojnansky
BT Senior Writer

It isn't easy getting up close to the Little River in Miami's Upper Eastside, at least not without trespassing. Its banks tend to be blocked by apartment buildings, waterfront homes, boating facilities, and fences. But within the last eight months, Miami officials have opened two new parks along Little River and are hatching plans to build at least one more.

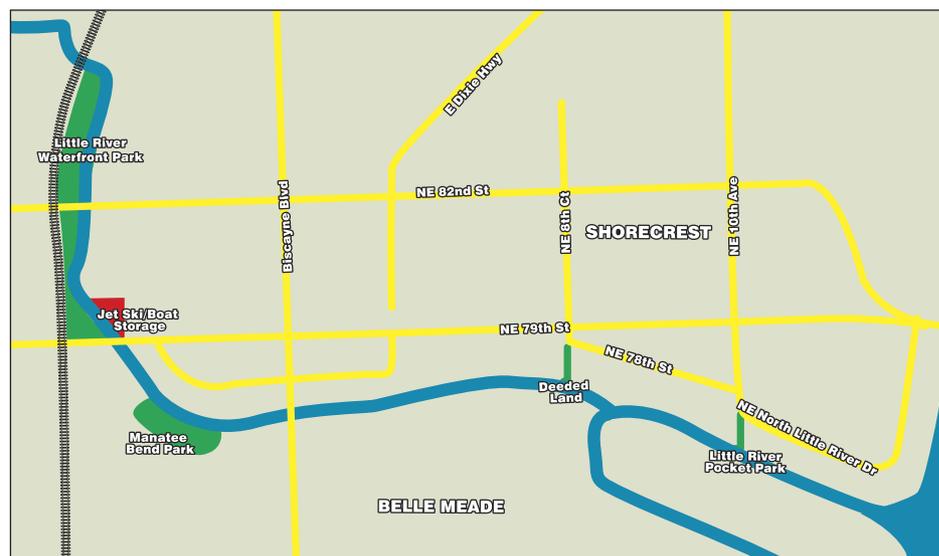
That isn't enough for some Upper Eastside activists. They are pushing for more public access to the Little River and Biscayne Bay. The Little River advocates, mainly from Shorecrest and Palm Grove, are still an informal group, but their actions have already led to the creation of Manatee Bend Park in Palm Grove, Little River Pocket Park in Shorecrest, and possibly, Little River Waterfront Park in Little Haiti.

These activists are also battling two marinas they accuse of threatening the serenity of the Little River. One is a jet ski facility that plans to open along a stretch

of the river that teems with manatees at least five months of the year. The other is Marine Max, a nationwide boat dealership and repair facility, which neighbors activists accuse of seizing publicly deeded land and trying to increase the size of their operation via a requested zoning change that will be discussed by the Miami City Commission on May 24.

"We have been a little upset," understates Jack Spirk, a Shorecrest homeowner for the past 11 years. "We're trying to create a really nice place for the future and then stuff like this happens."

Spencer Crowley, an attorney based in downtown Miami, has a more positive outlook. Crowley, who serves on the board of the Florida Inland Navigation District (FIND) — a state body that provides monetary grants for projects that promote waterfront usage — believes that when the city bought Manatee Bend this past August, the lush 1.2-acre parcel paved the way for the creation of another waterfront park, a four-acre property just 800 feet upriver from it. In addition to recreation, both parks can serve as



Map by Marcy Mock

an educational preserve for the public, Crowley notes: "There is nowhere else in the county where tourists and residents can go and regularly see endangered species, manatees, in this area."

Located on NE 77th Street Road, a block west of Biscayne Boulevard in the Palm Grove neighborhood, Manatee Bend was owned by a couple of artists for decades until Robert Gray, a former Eisenhower-era federal official, bought the land from them in 2004 for \$985,000 with the intent of building a low-rise condominium.

"When we saw that was not happening, a lot of people thought, 'Gee, this would be such a beautiful spot for a park,'" says Eileen Bottari, a director of the North Palm Grove Homeowners Association.

One of those people was Skip Van Cel, a Shorecrest resident and former publisher of *Biscayne Times*. After two months of

negotiations, Van Cel bought Manatee Bend in December 2009 for just \$285,000. He later sold it to the city for \$590,000.

"Skip had the opportunity to purchase the land and to turn it into a park," says Bottari. "He was steadfast with that. Once it became a park, it was really like an awakening. We have this natural resource right here."

For years local residents have trespassed on the future site of Little River Waterfront Park, located on the west bank of the river between 79th and 83rd streets. They have fished from it, built homeless encampments, walked across a pedestrian bridge connecting the property to the Biscayne Plaza shopping center, and, in the past, used it as a dump site. "People have been dumping

Continued on page 47

Oleta River Gets a Makeover

Volunteers get wet and muddy in the last free-running tributary flowing to Biscayne Bay

By Jim W. Harper
BT Contributor

The cost of greening Miami is falling, as demonstrated by savings at a project to restore a unique river's headwaters. An original estimate of \$850,000 for the nearly completed project will cost a total of \$300,000, according to Gary Milano, the coastal habitat restoration coordinator for

Miami-Dade County.

"We saved half a million by looking at the design and cost-effective construction methods," says Milano. He also attributes savings to the effects of a weaker economy, resulting in lower costs to hire contractors and to purchase the plants being used to restore the wetlands.

The restoration's targets are the banks of the pond and creek inside Highland Oaks Park, which is located



BT photo by Jim W. Harper

Wetlands expert Gary Milano: "This river was here before man came here."

on Ives Dairy Road (NE 203rd Street), just one-quarter mile west of Biscayne Boulevard.

This is where the Oleta River begins.

The Oleta is the only remaining river with natural, open access to Biscayne Bay. All other rivers leading into the bay have been modified, sometimes dramatically. "It's the only river without flood control," Milano explains. "This river was here before man came here." Evidence of Tequesta Indians alongside the Oleta dates to 1500 years ago.

Coordinating the restoration is the Reclamation Project, a volunteer-based effort that grew out of art. Local eco-artist Xavier Cortada started in 2006 to display installations of mangrove seeds, and a permanent exhibit of live seeds covering a wall can be seen at the Miami Science Museum.

Cortada's live seeds have been transplanted at sites across the county, but

Continued on page 46

Highland Lakes to County: We Want Out!

And if they can't become part of Aventura, they'll create their own darn city

By Erik Bojnansky
BT Senior Writer

Aventura is the Biscayne Corridor's fastest-growing city. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, its population ballooned by 42 percent over the previous decade, and now stands at nearly 36,000 residents, all of them squeezed into 3.2 square miles.

Now a group of homeowners in the unincorporated area west of Aventura hopes to add even more people to the "City of Excellence." A contingent of Sky Lake and Highland Lakes residents want Aventura to annex their neighborhoods, even though Aventura officials have already rejected the idea twice.

If the third time is the charm, though, Aventura's size would nearly double to six square miles and its population would leap to 53,800. "I think the people in my community are heavily in favor of being part of Aventura," says Kenneth Friedman, a director of the Sky Lake-Highland Lakes Homeowners Association. "Aventura is a wonderful city, and I think we could be a good contributor."

Should that aspiration be denied again, there is another option: Sky Lake-Highland Lakes could incorporate as its own city.

Back in 2003, Friedman chaired the Northeast Miami-Dade Municipal Advisory Committee, or MAC, a gathering of area residents who sought to create a new city within the 2.7-square-mile unincorporated pocket east of I-95, north of North Miami Beach, west of Aventura, and south of Broward County. The proposal was just a few procedural steps away from a hearing before the Miami-Dade County Commission in 2005, when commissioners slammed on the brakes, initiating a moratorium on the creation of new cities. "We were next in line to be a city," remembers Friedman, a Highland Lakes resident.

Last month county commissioners voted to lift their moratorium, allowing the MAC to spring back to life. Says Friedman: "We're anxious to see what our next requirements are going to be."

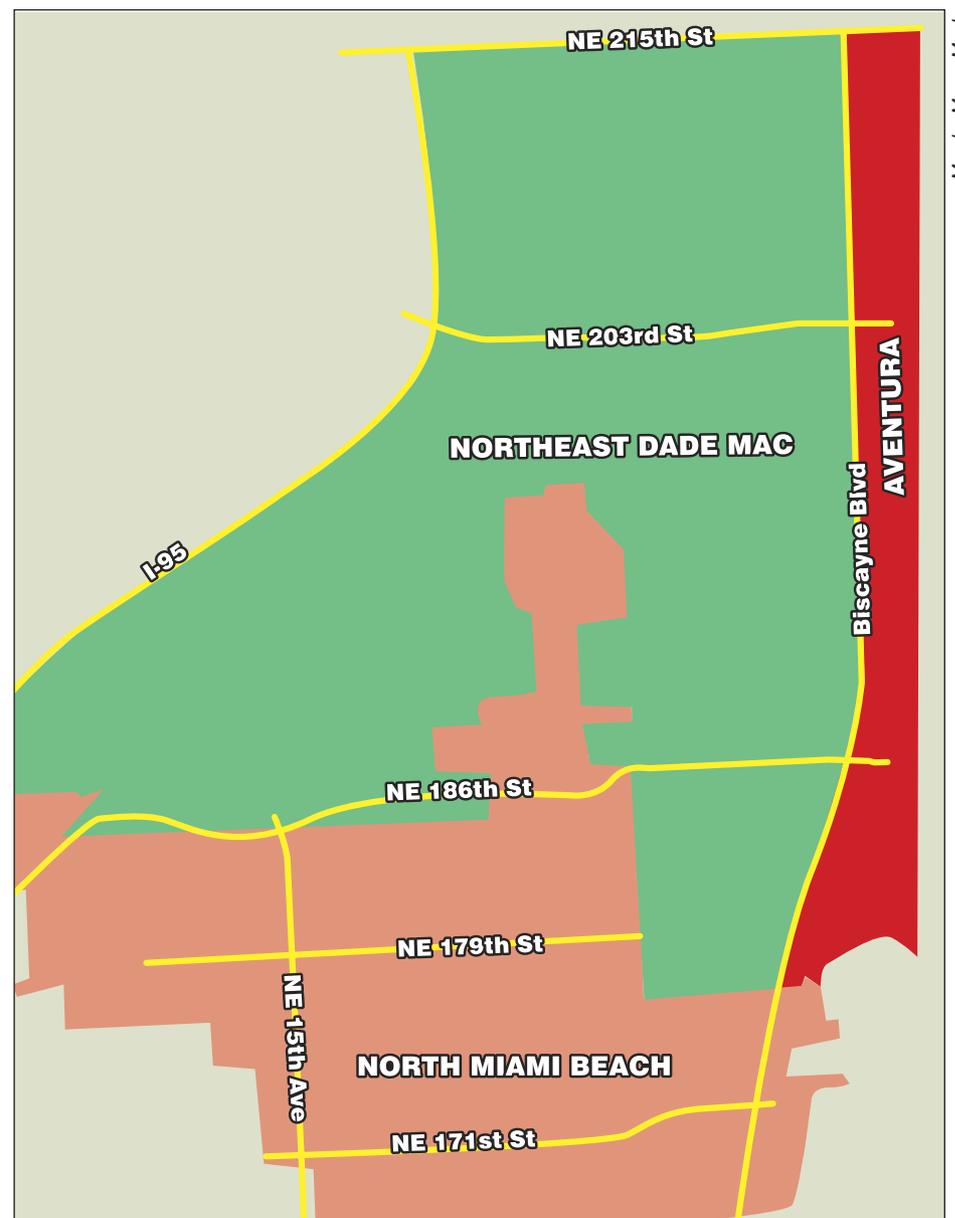
Those requirements will include such things as conducting a new financial analysis and negotiating with the county over terms of the area's incorporation, from paying fees to surrendering revenue streams. In addition, a majority of affected residents must vote to approve their own declaration of independence.

Friedman, who has sought this incorporation for 25 years, thinks the change would bring his neighbors far better services than they receive now. "County policing and county code enforcement are not up to the standards I want for our community," he explains.

Aventura, on the other hand, has shown that it is very good at delivering services. "Aventura is an affluent, progressive community that provides good parks, good services. They're just an excellent city," Friedman says. "And we share many, many things. We shop in their areas. Their kids go to our schools. We're all the same community."

Another advantage should Sky Lake and Highland Lakes join Aventura: Property-tax rates could decrease for the new residents. Property owners in unincorporated Miami-Dade pay a rate of \$2.01 per \$1000 of assessed value, while Aventura property owners pay only \$1.73 per \$1000.

Glenn Gopman, a longtime Sky Lake resident and certified public accountant who served as treasurer for the Northeast Miami-Dade MAC, says becoming part of Aventura would be like "heaven," but he doubts Aventura will go along with it. "Annexation is a political issue we have little control over," Gopman says. "If we want to control our own destiny, the only way to do that is to become our own city."



Map by Marcy Mock

Aventura city manager Eric Soroka says no one has approached his city recently about annexing the areas west of it. But should the subject arise, he says, the arrangement must be in the city's fiscal interest. "In the past, the city commission has taken the position that they would only consider annexation if it were financially feasible," he tells the *BT*.

Studies conducted by Aventura in 2004 and 2008 cast doubt on the notion that annexation would be a profitable endeavor. The first study predicted a deficit of more than \$1 million in the year following annexation, unless taxes were raised. The 2008 study suggested a revenue-neutral scenario, but that was before the state mandated cuts in property taxes a year later. The county's insistence on keeping utility taxes collected in Sky Lake and Highland Lakes "would have a substantial negative impact on the revenues that could be generated

in the area," Soroka adds.

In its second incorporation study, Aventura also left out much of unincorporated Sky Lake, an area north of Miami Gardens Drive (NE 186th Street) and south of NE 199th Street. Part of the reason for the exclusion was to allow North Miami Beach, whose city limits push north into neighborhoods around Sky Lake, to annex the rest of that area to "square off their boundaries," the 2008 study states.

North Miami Beach city manager Lyndon Bonner says his city already provides water and some police services to the unincorporated areas north of it. If asked, NMB is ready to provide that area with even more services. "There is a role for municipalities providing services, and I believe NMB's are sufficient," he says.

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Community News: BISCAYNE CORRIDOR

Oleta River

Continued from page 44

the Oleta River project does not include the salt-loving mangroves because of its freshwater habitat. In the northwest corner of Highland Oaks Park, rainwater collects in a depression, smaller in size than a city block, surrounded by oak trees and visited by Muscovy ducks, and it seeps eastward into a creek a few feet wide. On the banks of the pond and the creek (technically, the Oleta River), project volunteers are planting young cypress trees, red maples, and other native plants that grow naturally in wetlands.

An initial grant of \$50,000 to the Reclamation Project came from NOAA, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The Miami Museum of Science and Miami-Dade County's Department of Permitting, Environment, and Regulatory Affairs (formerly known as DERM) provided \$571,000 of the project's funding — \$29,000 from the museum and \$489,000 from the county.

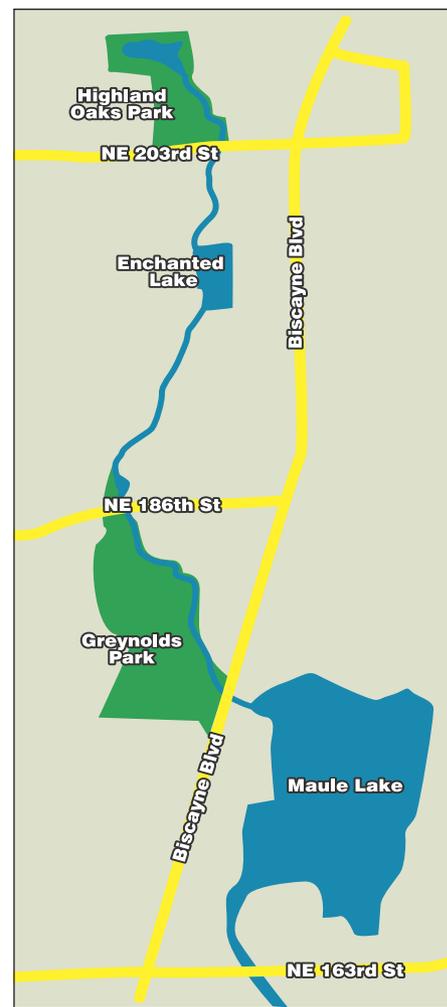
If the project is completed this summer under budget, as expected, the remaining funds will be used for

education, more plants, and monitoring of the plantings.

More than 70 volunteers gathered at Highland Oaks Park on April 7 to dig holes into the muddy banks of the pond and creek for 400-plus plants. The park is one of the few remaining natural habitats within a highly urbanized area near Aventura. Separate from the Oleta-connected pond and winding creek are two other sources of water: a wide lake surrounded by a walking path and a narrow canal with lock system that forms the park's northeastern border.

At the April 7 event, more than half of the volunteers were fifth-graders from Mater Academy in Hialeah Gardens.

"The kids are more valuable than anything," says Fernando Bretos, director of the Reclamation Project at the Miami Museum of Science and coordinator of the Oleta restoration. He notes that the students will be able to return to this spot in 30 years and appreciate that their labor transformed a damaged ecosystem. "We are the culprits," Bretos says. "We caused this problem. But this volunteer project allows people to act and to turn around and see the results."



Volunteers were called off from a planned planting on April 21 owing to rain, so the next volunteer planting is scheduled for May 12, plus a future date to be determined. Potential volunteers for both planting events and regular watering should contact the Reclamation Project at the Miami Science Museum (305-646-4200).

While these wetlands would have originally stretched toward the Everglades, today they are isolated by housing developments. Even the lake within Highland Oaks Park was created by dredging to raise the surrounding land in order to avoid flooding. Attractive ranch-style homes border the park's northern wetlands section, while its southern section, composed mostly of athletic fields, stands adjacent to a middle and elementary school and busy Ives Dairy Road.

The restored areas within the park are easy to identify by the short saplings and small plants that dot the pond and creek's shoreline, in contrast to the canopy of mature trees in other parts of the park.

Continued on page 50

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Photo by Rudy Moise for Congress

Little River

Continued from page 44

their stuff there: tires, batteries, there was even an entire toilet in the water,” says Ken Jett, who moved to Shorecrest a couple of years ago. Jett saw manatees swimming through an obstacle course of discarded shopping carts, bike frames, and other objects.

Eighteen months ago, Jett, Spirk, and other area residents took action. They informed the city and developers Edward Easton and Allen Greenwald, who have owned the land since 1983, and the parcel’s manager, Terranova, a Miami Beach-based company. Easton, Greenwald, and Terranova also own Biscayne Plaza just across the river. Says Jett: “Their side of the story was that they didn’t know they owned it.”

Spirk says the company, once informed, immediately cleaned up the property. Over time, Spirk got to know the people at Terranova and helped plant the idea of selling the land to the city. On March 22, the Miami City Commission authorized city administrators to apply for grants from FIND and a



Improvements are under way at Manatee Bend Park, purchased by the city last year for \$590,000.

city-controlled trust fund (the same sources used to buy Manatee Bend), and negotiated to purchase the land for no more than \$730,000.

As appealing as another waterfront park may be, some Upper Eastsiders worry that manatees congregating there will soon be hit by watercraft. That’s because on April 17 the city approved an application for a jet ski and boat storage facility directly across the river from the

proposed park. The new business would operate out of the former home of Ted Vernon Specialty Automobiles.

Once Little River enthusiasts found out about it, they flooded city hall e-mail accounts with complaints. They pointed out that the Little River west of Biscayne Boulevard is a “no entry zone” for motorized vessels between November 15 and April 30, when manatees are abundant. During the rest of the year, vessels

BT photo by Erik Bojarsky

can only travel at idle speed, defined by the state as the slowest possible speed necessary to navigate a boat.

Francisco Garcia, the city’s director of planning and zoning, replied to activists via e-mail that the “Miami 21” zoning code authorizes marine uses for that area. “As pertains to the concerns expressed for the safety and welfare of the manatees that frequent this area, there are regulations in place to protect them,” Garcia wrote, “and if the subject establishment abides by them, they are within their right to operate. It is not within our purview to deny an otherwise permissible use based on assumed future violations.” (José Saud, who won approval for the new business, could not be reached by deadline.)

Penalties for violating a no-entry zone could not be called devastating. George Pino, public information officer for Florida Fish and Wildlife, says a motorized vessel caught in a no-entry zone, or even accidentally hitting a manatee, is fined \$90.

Even before the jet ski operation appeared on their radar screen, Little River crusaders were riled up by Marine Max,

Continued on page 50

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Highland Lakes

Continued from page 45

But Scott Jay, a director of the Sky Lake Homeowners Association, says few homeowners want to become part of North Miami Beach, a city saddled with high employee pension costs and which charges a property tax rate of \$7.87 per \$1000 of assessed value — more than three times the county’s rate. “North Miami Beach would take this entire area in a heartbeat,” says Jay. “They approached us 25 years ago. They made us a presentation. Nobody was interested.”

Jay would rather his neighborhood become part of Aventura or of a new, yet-to-be named municipality. “Either way, we would have our own city,” says the attorney, who is also a president of a group called the Committee to Incorporate Northeast Dade. “We have only one county commissioner who really answers to our community,” he continues. “We have no say on who fills the other commission seats. Frankly, as part of unincorporated Miami-Dade, we’re the bastard child of the county.”

Aventura and the Sky Lake-Highland Lakes area once were part of the same city.



Cityhood advocates Kenneth Friedman and Glenn Gopman would prefer to become part of Aventura.

Originally known as Ojus, a Seminole word for “place of plenty,” it was founded in 1897 by pineapple farmer Albert Fitch. The Ojus settlement soon included a prison camp, a rock-mining company, farms, stores, a school, apartments, and even a movie theater. Ojus, which had slightly more than 500 residents, incorporated as a town in 1926. But

after five years of setbacks — a devastating hurricane, a series of land busts, an economic depression — Ojus went bankrupt. The state legislature dissolved it in 1936.

Dissolution, however, didn’t dissuade developers for long. Condo builders descended on the land east of Biscayne Boulevard during the 1960s, among them

Donald Soffer, who went on to develop the Turnberry Isle Resort and Country Club, Aventura Mall, and several other residential and commercial projects. (See the *BT*’s “Family & Fortune,” January 2012.) Even before Aventura incorporated in 1995, it boasted a reputation as an upscale area. By 2010 Aventura’s median household income was \$52,115 a year, according to census figures, compared with \$43,605 for the rest of the county.

Areas west of Biscayne Boulevard evolved into a collection of gated single-family subdivisions, condominium buildings, a few duplexes, parks, and a series of strip malls, some of which are nearly empty today. By 2010 the Sky Lake-Highland Lakes area (still referred to as Ojus by the U.S. Census) had a population of 18,036 people — 44 percent Hispanic, 43 percent non-Hispanic white, and 9 percent non-Hispanic black. The median household income of residents living within the unincorporated area was \$49,006 per year.

Sky Lake and Highland Lakes residents have been attracted to the area’s highly rated public schools, relatively affordable

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Community News: BISCAYNE CORRIDOR



BT photo by Jim W. Harper

The river's banks received cypress, red maples, and more.

Oleta River

Continued from page 46

The project's official name, the Oleta River Wetlands Restoration Program, is one part of a grander scheme by Miami-Dade County to restore the five-mile length of the Oleta River. This corridor winds south to Greynolds Park, under Biscayne Boulevard, and into Maule Lake, where it turns east into the 1000-acre Oleta River State Park and connects to Biscayne Bay (see map).

Gary Milano, wearing a long-sleeve white T-shirt that says "Baynanza '98," referring to the annual cleanup of Biscayne Bay in April, is the historian of such efforts in Miami-Dade. He has 32 years of experience with coastal habitat restoration in the county, noting that upwards of 40 percent of Biscayne Bay has been filled by dredging.

"I started working on restoring Oleta in 1990. This probably represents close

to the eighth phase. It takes time," he notes, adding that funding comes and goes. Standing on a wooden bridge in Highland Oaks Park, he peers into the dark waters to search for the snook that he has seen here recently. (The water gathering in the small pond where the Oleta River begins is fresh, but the river receives salt-water pulses from the tides. Some fish need that combination to complete their life cycle, such as mullet, which spawn in the ocean but live primarily in brackish or mixed waters.)

Milano's evident enthusiasm for such painstaking work has been inspirational. "He's my hero," says Bretos, who clearly enjoys working alongside him.

The plants and saplings planted in Highland Oaks will be watered by volunteers for a few months until they are established, and then future watering becomes unnecessary. "Nature takes care of the rest," says Bretos.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

Little River

Continued from page 47

which runs a boat repair and retail business on the river at 840 NE 78th St. Skip Van Cel believes Marine Max is trying to expand the size of its operation through a zoning change on part of its property from residential to commercial.

The property in question is a 16-foot-wide, 121-foot-long strip of land that was deeded to the neighborhood in 1924 by Shorecrest's original developer, the Krames-Corlett Company. It was intended to provide a "river walk," public access to the waterfront. Van Cel warns that the zoning Marine Max seeks will enable the company to build a five-story storage facility. "There was always a very clear delineation between the industrial marine uses and the residential sections along the

Little River," Van Cel says. "That delineation was the 'river walk' parcel Marine Max is trying to take away."

Lynn Summers, a lobbyist for Marine Max, says a former apartment building on the site has been used as an office for at least seven years. The zoning change will simply legalize the activity, something Summers claims Marine Max has been trying to do since purchasing the marina in 2005. "There will be no additional structures, none of this crazy stuff people have talked about like high-rise buildings or anything like that," says Summers. "There will be new fencing, there will be landscaping. Generally what Marine Max wants to do is improve the appearance from the street."

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Little River

Continued from page 47

As for the old “river walk,” Marine Max has argued that long ago it reverted to commercial use, an opinion shared by the county appraiser’s office. Marine Max has been paying property tax on the land since it was acquired. State law allows the company to take title to the property if it pays taxes on it for seven years — unless challenged in court.

The strip of land at Marine Max is not the only waterfront property Shorecrest activists are investigating. Using records from the county’s property appraiser, Ken Jett found ten parcels around his neighborhood that did not have folio numbers indicating ownership. Half were clearly platted for public use, including the strip through Marine Max, but were taken over by private property owners. Jett recently presented his findings to Miami City Commissioner Marc Sarnoff, whose District 2 includes Shorecrest.

Sarnoff was unavailable for comment at press time, but his chief of staff, Ron Nelson, says Jett’s research was impressive: “It is an interesting thing that nobody knew about



This new pocket park does double duty: It provides public access to the river and blocks sex offenders.

until Ken found out about it.”

Just days after Sarnoff’s meeting with Jett, city workers removed a fence and vehicles from a 100-foot-long, 40-foot-wide city-owned parcel at NE 10th Avenue and Little River Drive. They also removed overgrown vegetation, installed temporary playground equipment, laid down new sod, and added benches

and other park equipment. The improved property was quickly christened Little River Pocket Park.

Perhaps not coincidentally, the new park is very close to a vacant Shorecrest lot now being used as an official “home” by a group of sex offenders. County law forbids sex offenders from living within 2500 feet of a park. Thus the Little River

Pocket Park instantly became a barrier to more sex offenders being advised by state officials to use the vacant lot as their “home” address. Ron Nelson insists that barring sex offenders was not a primary motivation. “It was just the right thing to do,” he says. “This was an area that was supposed to be public.”

In addition to the Marine Max and pocket park sites, Jett found three more public-access spots along Biscayne Bay that have been fenced off by property owners. Nelson says Jett’s presentation was sent to the city attorney and city manager’s office, though he believes the city has limited options in trying to reclaim the land.

Undeterred, the Little River advocates are plotting their next move to shut down the jet ski operation before it starts, to stop Marine Max’s zoning change, and recover all properties they deem to be public. They plan to hold a community meeting in early May as well. “We are going to pummel the area with fliers and get more people involved,” says Jett. “We will send out e-mails to as many people as we can.”

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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Community News: BISCAYNE CORRIDOR

Highland Lakes

Continued from page 48

housing prices, and proximity to I-95 and Aventura Mall, says Celia Mussman, a Realtor who lived in Highland Lakes for 20 years before moving to Aventura in 2004.

Mussman sees only modest advantages to the area joining the City of Excellence. "It holds a little bit more of a prestigious address," she says, "and they feel perhaps the tax rate might go down."

Aventura, on the other hand, has little to gain from annexing the communities to its west, Mussman contends: "It's a big area. It would require a tremendous amount of police manpower. They really don't need the tax revenue. They have Aventura Mall and very high-end condos bringing in plenty of tax dollars."

Miami-Dade County Commissioner Sally Heyman, co-sponsor of the resolution ending the moratorium on new cities, says the purpose of the new MAC study is to gather enough data for area residents to make their own decision. "My position was, let them get the information," says Heyman, a North Miami Beach resident whose district

includes Aventura, Sky Lake, and Highland Lakes.

The county, meanwhile, will revisit its own policies on the procedures for forming new cities. The tendency of affluent communities to "cherry pick" areas within their future city borders, leaving out poorer sections, is among the reasons county officials have frozen the formation of new cities several times since the 1990s.

Helen Hill, a freelance writer living in Highland Lakes, is just fine with the way things are now. "Personally, I am quite happy being part of unincorporated Miami-Dade," she writes in an e-mail to the *BT*. "We get all the services required — swift response from police and fire rescue, garbage collection, and other services." She also doubts that Sky Lake-Highland Lakes has the tax base to support a new city. "There is very little commercial property," she says. "It's mostly residential."

Not that Hill would mind Aventura annexing her neighborhood: "I think Aventura would be best for us, for services and prestige and a low tax rate."

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com



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By Frank Rollason
BT Contributor

Parking woes continue to grow in our beloved city and county. The latest boondoggle to hit the press has been the issue over parking for residents who live near the new Marlins ballpark, located on the former site of the Orange Bowl. It seems everyone was oblivious to the impact the huge increase in events — 81 home baseball games vs. six or seven home football games for the University of Miami, the Orange Bowl's last tenant — would have on these lower-income residents.

The finger-pointing went back and forth. Elected city officials were

“shocked” and “outraged” with the parking situation and called upon the Marlins to do the right thing and fund a piddling \$40,000 to prepare, maintain, and operate a couple of nearby city-owned lots for residents to use on game and event days.

The Marlins balked, of course, taking the position that this was the city's issue to resolve; after all, they contended, read your contract — the one so masterfully constructed to screw the city and its taxpayers on just about every issue that has come to light.

The upshot was that the bickering and posturing continued in the press until even the Marlins had to concede that it was giving them a black eye and agreed to foot the bill for the parking,



Photo by Robin Hill

Built without a single parking spot.

but not without a parting shot to the residents, to the effect that “they will get used to walking a couple of blocks during game days.”

Yes, we humans are an adaptable lot. And yes, the residents will get used to walking a couple of blocks. And yes, they do it in New York, as adroitly pointed out by the Marlins, so suck it up and get over it!

The issue of residential parking on baseball days, however, is only a symptom of larger parking-related issues in our communities. Back in the time of Bobby Maduro Stadium, Miami's original baseball venue, there was plenty of parking in the empty, grassy lots surrounding the ballpark. You simply drove there, parked in the lot, and walked in — no big deal.

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Even in the Dolphins' early days, if you arrived early enough at the Orange Bowl, there was plenty of inexpensive parking on the grassy lots on the south side of the stadium. And if you were a tailgater, there were the paved lots on the north side. Also we all had our favorite parking spots in the front yards of many residents who watched after our vehicles while making a few much-needed bucks. Same was true of the old Miami Arena — now demolished and temporarily being used as a park thanks to the indefatigable work of Brad Knoefler — which had available parking in the paved lots just west of the building.

Not so any longer.

As new venues are constructed, the amount of allotted parking has been drastically reduced, if it exists at all. Look at the home of the Heat, where parking is limited to the American Airlines Arena and restricted to those able and willing to pay a hefty price for the privilege of parking on-site during an event.

We mere mortals are left to fend for ourselves in the multitude of surface lots west of the arena — that have yet to be developed, so the parking is temporary

in nature, until the next Miami building boom — and are at the mercy of the lot operators for whatever the going rate may be, depending on the event or the quality of the Heat challenger of the day. (New York Knicks? Los Angeles Lakers? Chicago Bulls? Stick 'em up!)

Then we have the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts — an assembly of buildings owned by the county and constructed without a single parking space! As unbelievable as this may sound, the county took the position that parking would sort of take care of itself, as if parking facilities would fall from the heavens as construction on the center came to an end. Well, we all know they didn't, and parking is still a headache at the Arsht Center, especially if there's a Heat game that night at the nearby arena.

Those are the rules for the big fish. However, if you're a small-business operator, just try to open an enterprise without the required number of parking spaces. Zoning officials will say, "No way, José!"

Or may have a small sidewalk café struggling to survive on NE 2nd Avenue near the Design District, and then

on-street parking is suddenly stripped from you. Good luck finding someone to turn to for help.

In the MiMo Historic District, where just about any redevelopment is nonexistent, along comes a new retail building (currently under construction) on 61st Street and the Boulevard. Because of the 35-foot height restriction championed by Commissioner Marc Sarnoff within the historic district, the developers were unable to construct an additional floor, which could have provided parking. Instead they had to purchase or rent the additionally required 11 parking spaces from the owners of a nearby building that, fortunately, had spaces to spare.

This new Boulevard development has been heralded by Commissioner Sarnoff as a fine example of what can be built within his kingdom of 35-foot height limitations, but he fails to point out that the developers had to go off-site to acquire the necessary parking to make their vision a reality.

As you move farther north along the Boulevard, the opportunity for investors to build within the 35-foot height envelope diminishes greatly, as they will not have

the same opportunity to borrow additional off-site parking spaces. There aren't that many lots — especially when you take into consideration that the off-site parking must be within 1000 feet of the establishment in question. This requirement alone makes it very difficult for development to grow along the historic corridor.

And then, just recently, I read an article in the *Herald* in which the director of the Port of Miami, Bill Johnson, laid out his 25-year plan for expansion of, and improvements to, the port. Among them are to be public amenities with baywalks featuring views of downtown and the cruise ships in all their grandeur.

Please keep in mind, Mr. Johnson, that adequate parking for the public will be a necessary part of the plan, especially since any real mode of public transportation is dismally lacking.

This port director, by the way, is the same Mr. Johnson who was the county's point man for the development and construction of the Arsht Center — the very one that was built without a single parking space. Good luck to us all.

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Hood Sweet Hood

You move into a new home and discover that your neighbors are *different*, but not necessarily in a bad way

By Wendy Doscher-Smith
BT Contributor

Last July my husband and I had just moved into this neighborhood, when a child startled me. From my position, bent down in the backyard, addressing a friendly lizard, I did not see him coming.

“Hey! What’s your dog’s name?”

I abruptly ceased my conversation with my lizard friend, looked up into the sun and saw a boy of maybe ten, hanging over the wooden fence that separates his yard from mine. When I say “hanging,” I mean he did so with comfortable and confident arms casually draped down the fence. His arms appeared as if they had

grown onto the structure itself, vine-like and clingy.

I blinked and looked at the kid. The barrage of questions continued: “What’s your dog’s name? Is your dog friendly? Can I pet your dog? What kind of dog is that? Do you have other dogs? Can I come over? Why is your dog jumping up at me?”

It was then that I noticed the child was not hanging from the fence by some superhuman strength provided by the Plant Superheroes. He was standing on something. I walked over to get a better look. He had stacked a crate on top of a chair to gain height so he could see over our fence.

And so began my introduction to living in this nameless section of



BT photo by Wendy Doscher-Smith

northern, unincorporated Miami-Dade County. When I give people directions to my house, I mention landmarks such as Barry University or Miami Country Day School. Mamma Jennie’s works sometimes. Unlike South Beach and Wynwood, my neighborhood may not register on the What-Is-Miami-Now! radar, but it is still beaches and galleries away from

some more quaint types of Yawnsville.

I describe this area as “hood-esque.” I say “-esque,” because it does not qualify as the real hood, but there are hints of hood. I can walk around without fearing for my safety. There are no bars on my windows, but there is a fence with a serious lock in front of my house. I’ve yet to witness drug deals, but I’m sure



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they are happening. Probably right now.

And you should see the rims on the cars. Forget that. You should see the cars the rims are on. I love those cars! We see those cars racing up the street. They're pretty, but they're loud.

Miami Shores would have a problem with it. Biscayne Park would not tolerate it. Here? Eh, whatever. Nobody cares about the 2:00 a.m., midweek yelling and screeching arguments in the middle of the street. Or the gunshots. (Okay, the cops *did* care about that, but that was only because a drive-by shooting had occurred north of here the previous week.)

My neighborhood is also loquacious. In this predominantly Haitian neighborhood, we are the only non-Haitians on the block. You hear a lot of talk about Miami being a melting pot. It's so overused that it might serve the Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau well: "Welcome to Miami: The Human Fondue Capital!" For me, the term always conjured images of a rusty cauldron with various blistered and crispy-skinned appendages sticking up and out.

By now the residents of Miami seem to have accepted Life in the Pot.

Non-Hispanic prejudice toward Hispanics seems less prevalent. That could be owing, in part, to the fact that Cuban Americans are in the majority in Miami. Plus, scared, light-skinned bigots flew the coop, "white flight-ing" it north.

While prejudice among different Hispanic groups, aimed at each other, is raging, prejudice against Haitian people unites xenophobes from every country, including those throughout Latin America.

But I digress. Sort of. This is about my neighborhood and my immediate neighbors. Here, if anyone is in the minority and likely to be discriminated against, it's us Whiteys.

A few days before we moved in, our landlord assured us the neighbors were great. No trouble at all. The current tenants confirmed this fact. Actually, I first met the House Warming Boy that day. He wanted to play with the tenants' kids and waltzed into the front yard as we all stood talking. He asked the tenant (another Whitey) to fetch her kid. She fed him one of those lies grown-ups use when they want an insistent child to go away. "Maybe later," she said. I doubt "later" ever arrived.

We took the same route because he was relentless in his pursuit of playing with our dogs, one of which is a bit of a spaz around hyper children. Point is: He did not grasp the idea that hanging over your neighbor's fence is not appropriate, especially when it is done constantly and is uninvited. The concept of privacy and this-land-up-to-this-fence-is-your-land-and-this-land-up-to-this-fence-on-the-other-side-is-my-land escaped him.

Now, I know what's up. House Warming Boy never grasped the concept of boundaries. In this hood, there are cultural differences at work. Unlike in the burbs, where there is talk about "one community," but little action, here everyone tends to be in your face whether you like it or not. People even park their cars in the middle of the road. At night. The motto here: This land truly *is* made for you and me.

Our neighbors also spend a lot of time outdoors. But not like my husband Jeremy spends time outdoors. He usually has a very clear purpose: Reinforcing the fence so the dogs can't dig under it, grilling, mowing the lawn, and picking up dog poop. Lots of dog poop! He does this and returns indoors.

Our neighbors to the left and right of us, they go outside and sit in the front yard. And talk. That's it. No gardening or mowing or poop detail. Just talking. It's refreshing. I mean, who talks anymore? We all should communicate face-to-face, but we don't, and as a result, we are morphing into a nation of social illiterates. (Not to mention run-of-the-mill illiterates, since nobody can spell or use proper grammar anymore. Baahhhh! Give Grammy her cane...)

Our neighbors sit outside and talk loudly all day *and* all night. I'm not exaggerating. Unless we turn on the white-noise box, or the booming bass is louder than them, we fall asleep to their conversations. I am somewhat fascinated by all this sitting and talking. (Not to mention how they manage to stay awake.)

What are they talking about all this time? From what I can make out, they are discussing daily events, their friends, and relationships. No big shocker there. Except my neighbors don't care who hears about it. Which, when you think about it, is a lot like social media. Except it actually *is* social.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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Well, Shut My Mouth

A petition to combat litter in the village may be sending the wrong message

By **Gaspar González**
BT Contributor

A few weeks ago, I heard there was a petition circulating through our village designed to combat our litter problem. *Fantastic*, I thought. Finally someone was doing something about the fact that, for a small, residential community like ours, there's an awful lot of litter — paper and plastic, cans and bottles — dotting the landscape.

I know because I pick up the evidence every day. Driving in and out of the village on NE 113th Street, I almost always see a plastic water bottle or Coke can, empty cigarette packs, or even beer bottles on the median. Usually I'll stop the car, pick it up,

and take it to the nearest trash receptacle.

The litter, as we all know, comes from a variety of sources. Drivers cutting through the village who'd rather chuck their garbage out their car window than wait till they get home. Recycling that blows out of our open containers on windy days. And, yes, some residents who could stand a little more civic pride.

Anyway, I was delighted to learn someone was going to do something about it. And when I heard the petition was being circulated by Chuck Ross, husband of Commissioner Roxanna Ross and coordinator of Biscayne Park's Crime Watch program, and Dr. Fred Jonas, a member of the village foundation, I thought, "Well, this is



BT photo by Wendy Doscher-Smith

bound to be good."

Maybe Mr. Ross, building on the Crime Watch concept, was thinking of creating a Litter Watch, in which residents would be responsible for patrolling their streets for errant garbage. Or perhaps Dr. Jonas had an idea for how the foundation might be able to contribute to a cleaner

Biscayne Park. My hopes were high.

And then I saw the petition. Addressed to the "Elected Officials and Village Manager of Biscayne Park," it made only one demand, had only one idea for eliminating litter in Biscayne Park — stopping the "unsolicited distribution" of this publication.

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The petition cited concerns that the “blue log,” the nickname they’ve given to the *BT*, remains in some yards for far too long, creating an aesthetic nuisance and, worse, signaling to potential thieves that a home is abandoned or inhabited by elderly or otherwise infirm residents (i.e., easy targets).

Now, I know what some residents and regular readers of this column might be thinking. Yes, it’s true that Dr. Jonas is the most outspoken critic of this column, making it known he considers it biased in the extreme, usually against opinions he holds. And yes, it’s true that Mr. Ross is no fan of it, either, and that his wife, Commissioner Ross, has complained about it on more than one occasion. And it’s also true that, given the scope of the village’s litter problem, the *BT* would seem a rather odd place to begin — and end — the fight against stray trash.

For all those reasons, a lot of you might be inclined to jump to the conclusion that the petition isn’t really about litter at all. It’s about banning the distribution of a publication that some residents view as an irritant; a handful of people trying to tell the rest of us what we should read. And you’re going to say that’s censorship.

And you’d be right — if Mr. Ross and Dr. Jonas had come out and said that’s what they were doing. But they haven’t, so there’s no reason to believe they’re motivated by anything other than a heartfelt desire to beautify Biscayne Park. To speculate otherwise would be unfair to them.

So let me just say this: I don’t think this is an attempt to censor the *BT*. I don’t think Mr. Ross and Dr. Jonas are trying to manufacture a movement to ban the *BT* from the village just because they don’t like positions this column occasionally takes. That would be small-minded, mean-spirited, and authoritarian. It would, in fact, be censorship. And I don’t think that’s what they’re interested in promoting. Nope.

I take them at their word when they say they’re concerned only about litter and public safety. The problem, as I’ve suggested, is it will *appear* to a great many people, both in Biscayne Park and beyond, as censorship.

That’s what happened in Chicago in 2007, when that city, also citing concerns about litter, passed an ordinance banning the door-to-door distribution of flyers, restaurant menus — and free community newspapers. There was a groundswell of

opposition from residents, free-speech advocates, and civic groups that forced the city council to exempt community newspapers from the ordinance. Or, as Ron Roenigk, the publisher of Inside Publications, one of the newspaper companies affected by the ordinance, told me recently: “The politicians found out that people like their neighborhood paper more than they like their politicians.”

I suspect something like that would happen if the village tried to ban distribution of the *BT*. I’ve been to parties at *BT* publisher Jim Mullin’s house. You can’t throw a long-stem wine glass without hitting a dozen *Miami Herald* staffers, various Pulitzer Prize winners, and assorted ACLU types and First Amendment lawyers. Let me tell you, those people are *fanatics* when it comes to fighting censorship.

They don’t live in Biscayne Park, and they don’t understand our litter issue like we do. They would assume the worst. Some of them wouldn’t rest until Biscayne Park became known around South Florida as “The Village of Book Burners.” Try putting *that* on letterhead.

Another drawback: If it came to a court battle, some legal-eagle friends

would no doubt help Mr. Mullin fight the ordinance, possibly free of charge (while the village would have to pay for its legal services). Why not? The courts historically have taken the right of people to distribute and receive literature pretty seriously.

Look, I’m not trying to start trouble here. I’m trying to avoid it. To be sure, the efforts of Mr. Ross and Dr. Jonas are to be commended. There is way too much litter in Biscayne Park. It sends the wrong message about our community. Unfortunately, their petition may be doing the same — while not actually eliminating litter.

To help ease matters, Mr. Mullin tells me he’ll instruct his distributor to pick up any copies of the *BT* that remain unclaimed 48 hours after delivery, so they don’t sit outside empty houses all month. That’s a start.

Personally, I like the idea of a broader “Keep Biscayne Park Beautiful” campaign, asking residents to be more thoughtful when it comes to disposing of their trash, picking up loose litter — and bringing in the *BT* from their front lawns.

That’s something we can all get behind. Sign us up, fellas!

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com



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There When You Need Them

A lost purse confirms the rumor — there really are good people in Aventura

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

Everyone has good days and bad days. It's just a fact of life. But let's face it, some good days are better and some bad days are far worse than others. On those kinds of bad days, you just might require the kindness of strangers to get you through.

Why would I say something like this? An even better question: Is this type of kindness even feasible on the mean streets of Aventura? If we base it on the town's reputation for being a callous, unfriendly place, the odds aren't so good.

I was having a "me" day — days that come too infrequently and go by too quickly.

I'd finished two of the three legs of the "triangle of me" — mani-pedi and DSW (Designer Shoe Warehouse to the uninitiated).

Now I was moving into the third and final leg of my journey — Loehmann's — before heading home. I entered the store. It's always hit or miss. I can be in the store for hours or I can whiz through without one item calling my name. On this particular day, the designer-shoe sale racks had crept dangerously close to the front door. The energy — along with the perfect pair of "Russian Blue" (cat lovers, you know the color) L.A.M.B. (Gwen Stefani fans, you know the brand) slingbacks — drew me in. "What do you think?" I asked the lady watching the traffic at the door.

"Mmmm-hmmmm. Those are the ones," she said.

I always wonder if they tell you that you look good in something so you'll buy, or if said item really does work. Either way, one pair led to another, and an hour later I knew it was going to be a good day. I started on the clothing. One piece led to another and before I knew it, I had a wheely cart overflowing with potential. I knew I was going to be a *while* and decided to call my husband to tell him not to expect me any time soon. I went for my phone, which I keep in the front flap of my purse. It was gone.



No, not the phone — the entire bag!

I began to panic. Not an "Oh-no-please-help" type of panic, but a full-blown, heart racing, throat closing up,

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unable to breathe, my whole life is in that bag, please let it be here anxiety attack type of panic. We've all that had feeling. It's not good.

So I did what anyone else would do in that situation: I started crying. Yup. Right there in Loehmann's. And then, once I gathered myself, I began looking — everywhere.

I wish I could have said that I searched in an orderly fashion, but honestly, I was running amok. The main problem was that I really didn't remember putting it down. But apparently I did.

So the tears began to flow again. And although they were embarrassing and useless, I couldn't make them stop. Perhaps I had left my bag in the shoe department? As I tore through the aisles, I noticed two older gentlemen staring at me. Not leering or judging, but genuinely trying to see if they could guess what was wrong. Instead of keeping the intrigue alive, I spilled it immediately. "I lost a big purple Longchamp pocketbook. If you see it, please let me know."

"Where'd you leave it?" they asked, truly concerned. I know they meant

well, but questions like that make me crazy, especially when I'm already panicking. (*Really? If I knew where I left it, it wouldn't be lost!*) "I'm not sure," I squeaked, about to lose it again.

"We'll keep an eye out," one said.

"Get up," said the other, looking at his friend. "It's not gonna walk to us, is it? C'mon, we don't have anything else to do."

"Thank you," I said. "I can't believe this. I'd be so grateful if you found it."

"We'll give it a shot," he said, smiling.

I then began retracing my steps. Okay, head back to the front. A new lady was there. "I was here earlier, trying on shoes. The other lady saw me — a big purple bag," I mumbled desperately. "I lost my bag."

Within seconds, she snapped into action. "Let's get you to the check-out. They'll help you."

The manager. Of course! Tell the manager. Sheer genius.

I blankly walked toward check-out, never letting go of my clothing-filled wheely. After all, if I did find my purse, I'd finish my "day of me"

with some great buys.

Parking the wheely, I looked at the person closest to me. "I lost my purse," I told her. "Please help."

She happened to be the manager. "My name is Pat," she said. "We'll find it. Come with me. Tell me, where were you?"

She sent a team of sales people to search the floor. Like an army spreading through the aisles, they looked high and low, and about five minutes later, I heard the call: "I found it!"

One of the ladies walked toward us with my bag in hand. I lunged. Not for the purse, which was a sight for sore eyes, but to hug her. "Thank you, thank you!" I repeated. I definitely seemed crazy.

Then I turned to Pat. "Thank you." Apparently that was all I could say.

She brought me back to the check-out. "Sit for a minute," she said, patting me. "Can I get you a drink of water?"

"No. I'm fine now. Thank you again.... *Thank you.*"

It may seem overly dramatic, but I can't remember the last time I was that scared and upset. I throw *everything*

in my purse and take for granted it'll always be there. Think about it — keys, camera, phone, money, license, credit cards, medicine, papers, and much more, all wiped out with one mishap.

But that's not the point. The point is human kindness. In a city where people get a bad rap, I was embraced by everyone who heard of my plight. From the gentlemen in the shoe section, who actually applauded when my purse and I were reunited, to the team of Loehmann's associates who hunted for and found my pocketbook, they all cared enough to take action.

When I was in trouble, people were there to help me. That led me to ask, "Was it just me and my situation or would they show the same kindness to anyone?"

I wish I knew. But either way, the sincerity, the earnestness, and the concern were overwhelming. It made me feel wonderful, and really thankful. It makes me want to do the same for others. And it all took place in my mean-streets neighborhood. Just saying.

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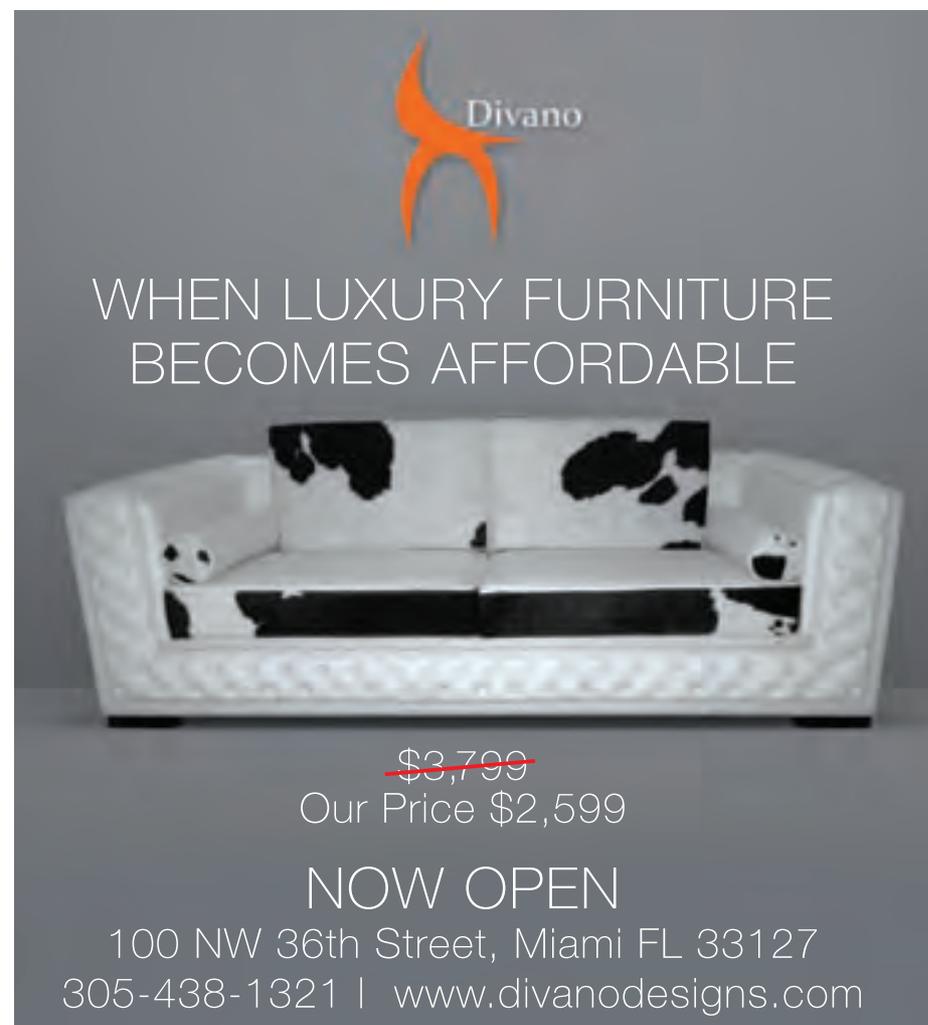
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Bread and Circuses

North Miami City Hall's Roman carnival rolls on

By **Mark Sell**
BT Contributor

White teeth gleaming, North Miami Councilman Scott Galvin flashed a predatory smile at the April 10 council meeting and asked Mayor Andre Pierre why he suddenly wanted to vote on negotiations with developer Michael Swerdlow to buy Biscayne Landing. It wasn't even on the agenda.

Pierre paused. And paused. The assembled crowd started tittering. Then Hizzoner finally answered: "You don't have to ask me that question, and I don't have to answer that question."

After a few more awkward pauses, Galvin looked at the audience and said: "It

can only get crazier at this city hall, eh?" "It's circus time!" shouted a jester in the audience.

Just another evening in Caligula's court, this time with a half-billion-dollar development on the line. With action taking place in so many rings, where to begin?

Fetch your popcorn and peanuts. Here's a rundown of recent developments.

Small businesses are bashed by the trash deal. The noncompete WastePro contract lowers sanitation rates for residents, at least for the time being, but with no guarantees. It screws businesses that use their own garbage contractors while trying to make payroll and deal with skyrocketing insurance. By privatizing waste pickup, the city gets



BT photo by Wendy Doscher-Smith

Debbie Graves of Jimmy's Place: "My rate's going to go from \$421 to \$1380."

\$900,000, drives out competition, and makes WastePro richer. Businesses and independent haulers only get poorer — and madder than hell.

"My rate's going to go from \$421 to \$1380," says Debbie Graves, who runs Jimmy's Place restaurant on NE 125th Street and has to give up her private hauler for WastePro. "Someone came in one day and said, 'We're your new

sanitation company.' I said, 'You seem like a nice kid, but I really must ask you to leave my restaurant.' We didn't even get the courtesy of a notice. This is communistic."

Then there's the water. Water utility rates are moving from the straight 5000 gallons to quarterly bills based on usage. The more you use, the higher your rate per gallon. Coin laundries that cater

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to the apartments near W. Dixie Highway and NE 6th Avenue could see their rates triple. That \$2.50 coin load may turn into a \$7.50 load, a nasty surprise for struggling families.

Swordlow's back on, and alone — for now. The Swordlow deal was ex-humed 3-2 from the near-dead under the watchful eye of lobbyist Ron Book, who has built a terrific career playing Chinese checkers with himself, representing both North Miami and Swordlow. He ducked away with Pierre from pesky WPLG reporter Bob Norman's attempted ambush interview on the garbage deal March 27, then sat in the audience with Swordlow, who has a ten-year plan to develop big-box stores, a movie theater, assisted-living facilities, and maybe condos and hotels on the 184-acre Biscayne Landing site.

Others prospective developers are in the wings. City manager Stephen Johnson says Taubco, the folks who brought you Biscayne Commons, made an offer to the city of \$14 million to carve out nine acres or so at the southeast corner of 151st Street and Biscayne Boulevard.

Johnson also told the council that the owner of the Lamborghini dealership

across the street made an offer of about \$13.5 million to build a four-story showroom on the corner. Councilman Jean Marcellus, normally the quiet one at the council meeting, says this bidding only proves how right he was all along in stonewalling Swordlow.

Amnesty! Mayor Pierre, on March 27, decided it would be a neat idea for the financially strapped city to waive occupational license fees for businesses that hadn't paid them for years, and the council went for it 3-2. Businesses that had paid those fees said they were getting the shaft, and lawyer and ex-mayoral candidate Carol Keys hand-delivered a request to the city to release the records naming those businesses. She has yet to hear back as of this April 13 writing.

Privatizing building inspectors. As midnight struck on April 11, the city council voted 3-2 to privatize building permitting and inspecting. The city in October rejected MT Causeway, a service that charged \$150,000 a year. Instead the city voted to hire C.A.P. Government, a municipal building-inspection and code-enforcement outsourcing company based in Doral, which will split fees 50-50 with the city.

There's lots of bread in this. Permitting fees for the Oaks Towers at Biscayne Landing came to \$2.7 million. Picture Swordlow's \$500 million project and you start to see real money to be had from new construction. Carol Keys, still resolutely awake, was again on the case, pointing out the huge implications and questioning the deal. What will the city sell next at the bazaar? Code enforcement, maybe?

Now he tells us. New North Miami city attorney Regine Monestime brought in Joseph Centorino, executive director of the Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics and Public Trust, on April 16 to teach council and staff Ethics 101. Of five council members, only Mayor Andre Pierre and Marie Erlange Steril asked questions. Pierre, a criminal defense and immigration lawyer, asked if it was unethical to represent clients "wrongfully accused" by the North Miami Police Department. *Of course* it's a conflict, Centorino exclaimed, especially "if you're going to be cross-examining your own police."

Free soccer for all? Pierre and his "nonprofit" North Miami Taxpayers' Soccer Club have dodged \$29,000 in unpaid fees for regular Friday night

pickup games at Ronald Book (he's everywhere) Stadium on 151st Street near Mourning High. City manager Johnson told the *Herald* that he was "looking into" the city's fee policy.

Jumping Josaphat! As in Joe Celestin. A general contractor and self-described civil engineer, the personable and connected ex-North Miami mayor, makes \$300,000 a year on the city's tab to supervise the Biscayne Landing project as he plays with the North Miami Taxpayers' Soccer Club. North Miami has been very good to him. The council voted April 10 to name the new clubhouse in Claude Pepper Park the Josaphat Celestin Community Center.

That's it for our show tonight. No time for the mayor's 43 police badges, the \$100,000 Porsche that fell from the sky, the foreclosure on his house, the \$8200 taxpayer-funded wiring of his office when he rightly suspected the Florida Department of Law Enforcement was tailing him, or ...

State Attorney Katherine Fernandez Rundle: How's that public corruption unit doing?

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com



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Deal Me In!

Our correspondent confesses to her coupon addiction

By Jen Karetnick
BT Contributor

Much to my father-in-law's delight, I've always been a couponer. He finds it amusing that a restaurant critic like myself can eat caviar and truffles on a Saturday evening, then snip penny-saving ads for creamer and toilet tissue the next morning. But I've got news for him: While I still enjoy saving an average of \$50 at the Miami Shores Publix every time I go grocery shopping — bless those “buy one, get one free” specials — I've moved on to bigger and better coupons.

Kayaking on the Oleta River. Radio frequency skin-tightening therapy in a

North Miami Beach salon. Kiteboarding lessons on Biscayne Bay. Teeth whitening at a North Miami dentist. Pedicures by the handful, or rather, the footful.

I admit it: If there's an e-mail for it and the service is in range of Miami Shores, I'm going to buy it. Why? Because my name is Jen, and I'm an addict — to a daily deal.

If you're not among the initiated, allow me to explain. A business now has the option of offering its product via “daily deal” Websites, which include LivingSocial, Gilt City, and Groupon. These sites operate by promoting mass quantities of a product, be it prix fixe specials at brasseries or pumps for bicycle tires,



at a greatly reduced price. They e-mail countless consumers with the offer and, when a certain number of buyers have agreed to the purchase, the “deal is on.”

To be sure, there are some negatives to this collective couponing method. Companies can sell more of an item or service than they expected, and become overwhelmed. Some retailers may even

go out of business before you can use your daily deal. Or the consumer might allow a deal to expire before she can get around to making an appointment for, say, a bikini wax.

(Some companies will allow you to put the purchase price toward another service or item if you forget or run out of time. For example, my experience



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generally has been that medical offices and spas will allow you to make appointments *after* the expiration date of the deal as long as you call *before* it expires.)

There's also the question of level of service. If you purchase, for instance, a LivingSocial deal for a Pilates session with a personal trainer, are you less likely to receive the attention that a full-paying customer would? In this case, I liken it to the Miami Spice effect. (Miami Spice being the \$35, three-course-meal deals that fine-dining restaurants all over town advertise during August and September.) It depends on the place of business. A bad company figures that a bargain-hunter of any stripe is a crappy, one-time customer not worth feting, and acts accordingly.

A good company understands that a cognizant customer will tip on the full price regardless of the deal, or at least is worth trying to keep around for return visits at regular prices.

And then there's the cheat. I bought a Botox deal before my daughter's batmitzvah (yeah, I *am* that old, that vain, and that cheap) and was injected with... probably saline. In addition, the doctor

was very impressed with my physique, and wound up squeezing my bare thigh — this was summer, and I was wearing shorts — and telling me what nice legs I had.

I've experienced harassment all too often in my lifetime, so this is not the only moment I've been uncomfortable when I shouldn't have to be, and unfortunately I suspect it won't be the last. But it may have been the first time a female dermatologist hit on me.

I probably should have informed my deal site. (Groupon, for instance, tells you, "If the experience using your Groupon ever lets you down, we'll make it right or return your purchase. Simple as that.") But groping aside, I wasn't aware that the Botox wasn't effective until a week or so later. With that kind of injection, you have to wait a few days for it to work. This one never did. By then, I figured I was just out of luck. So, yes, there are downsides.

On the other hand, while the brand may have to slash prices for its goods, it benefits by selling huge numbers and getting its name out there. The sites are paid a commission or upfront

promotion fee. And the consumer gets a great deal on something that ordinarily might be out of reach if purchased in a traditional fashion. In most cases, it's a win-win-win.

And boy, do I like to win. So far I've "won" everything from a \$64 case of wine, composed of California vintages that I individually priced at \$12 and up, to a series of three fractional-laser face treatments at the Pure Aesthetics Institute in the Upper Eastside, for which I paid \$269, a fee that doesn't even cover an appointment with a dermatologist the regular way. These skin therapies, which will finally remove the last of the melasma (the "mask of pregnancy") I've been fighting since the birth of my son nearly 12 years ago, would have cost me \$2250 otherwise.

My family benefits, too; particularly my husband. Not only does he get a wife who is being relaxed by massages at basement rates, he's receiving his own Maine lobster birthday dinner (live Maine lobster being just about the only item I can't find at Captain Jim's in North Miami) for a quarter of the cost.

And while I'd have loved for that to have been a surprise, my Groupon

account is linked to our joint bank card. So I'm pretty sure he's seen the expense line for GetMaineLobster.com. Oh, well. Ruining the ideal moment of crustacean revelation is a small price to pay. He'll still get to eat it.

The key to a good daily deal experience: Don't purchase services you don't really need, want, or think you'll use. Don't buy multiple deals of the same item, no matter how tempting it is, unless it's something like wine, which you can store. In the end, you'll just let those coupons expire, and the business walks away with your money because you're too disinterested or busy to do anything about it.

Temptation aside, two of the reasons I've become an addict? Ease and accessibility. All the services I wish were available in the Shores are located just down the street, in North Miami, the MiMo District, and Midtown. That said, I just saw a daily deal for a yoga studio in the Shores and, I have to confess, though I've never really done yoga, I'm tempted.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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Free-Floating Art

One-night-only exhibitions, curated by artists, are stretching boundaries

By Anne Tschida
BT Contributor

The Great Recession may have had something to do with it, but these days we've been seeing more art exhibitions popping up in temporary spaces, as opposed to permanent art galleries. Nomadic galleries are not a new phenomenon. It's just that, in the high-art era that followed the arrival of Art Basel Miami Beach in 2002, we got accustomed to seeing shows in actual galleries, most prominently in the Wynwood area. Many of those galleries are still there, but a sea change has occurred.

There seems to be an appetite for shows that are curated and produced by artists, or occupying a particular space for only a short time. An example is 801 Projects. Founded by artist Angela Valella, 801 is meant to be a kind of roaming art center, promoting art and artists through lectures, workshops, and one-night-only exhibitions every month.

That concept has struck a chord, as the Design District's DACRA real estate and development company, founded by Craig Robins, has donated space for this nomadic adventure, and the Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs has ponied up financial support. Artist Odalis Valdivieso joined with Valella in 2011, and the two launched "Nightclub," a series that held



Bacardi, by Loriel Beltran.

a one-night-only event in April, called "Restage." For the next year at least, there will be 11 more such events.

"We wanted to explore all the ways of setting up and exhibiting art," says Valdivieso. "This isn't 'new,' as exhibitions like this have always taken place." A one-night-only exhibition, like going out to a nightclub, is a fleeting experience, which is perhaps why Valdivieso stresses continuity alongside novelty: "We want to redefine a space and venue, [but also] to develop common ideas and



The show called "Restage" popped up as a "Nightclub" for one night last month. Below are works from the show.



Misael Soto's Jigsaw Puzzle (A hidden massive star cluster awash with red supergiants).

curatorial practices."

In other words, each show is curated by a local artist, and reflects his or her outlook, but also presses them to exhibit

in an innovative form. "The duration of the exhibit in the venue is four hours, challenging cultural agents to work on fresher curatorial models outside of the



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commercial and institutional system,” explains Valdivieso. Art pieces will be there, and then they’ll be gone.

For that first one-night exhibit, familiar names such as Loriel Beltran and Adler Guerrier were on display, as were performance-based artist Misael Soto and A.G. Viva.

So for the second installment in the Nightclub series, artist Bhakti Baxter will curate *One Size Fits All*, set for May 11 in the Buena Vista Building in the Design District. It will feature new sculpture, loosely based on the 1975 album of the same name by Frank Zappa and the Mothers of Invention.

As Baxter describes it: “The album played a crucial role in conceiving this exhibition, serving as a model by which to select sculptural works that incorporate the same aesthetic audacity, humorous surprise, technical virtuosity, and ever-changing character of the music itself. Although the term ‘One Size Fits All’ may suggest notions of universality, it might also recall the marketing of elastic underwear.” That’s pretty clever.

Later this year, artist Gean Moreno will curate “Reboot(y) Bass Night” in August, and sound artist Gustavo Matamoros will put together “Tracklist” for September.

Two other artists of note are scheduled to curate these one-night events, artists who have expanded the boundaries of what contemporary art can be and how it can be expressed: Carlos Rigau and Ernesto Oroza.

The shows are intended to augment the Miami art scene. There will always be a place for gallery and museum shows, but the opportunity for artists — whether they are represented by a gallery locally, nationally, or not at all — to show art that might not be commercially viable, or that might be just outside the realm of what is considered acceptable



Untitled by Chris Colver.

in gallery circles, is a needed addition to any art scene.

To that end, the prospect for both curator and artist is a bit of an unknown. While curators have been assigned through March, the space itself — the “nightclub” — remains a floating venue. A gallery or museum space can be plotted out, but a nomadic space can’t. That means artists will work with a space sight unseen, installing, according to Valdivieso, art “not previously seen.” That can translate into risky — and potentially exciting — art, an element that will constitute part of the draw.

But 801 Projects also has an educational mission. As part of that effort, this month it will inaugurate a lecture series called “Modernism Rises — Art and Architecture in Cuba: The Origins (1920s-1930s).” Led by José Antonio Navarrete, the series will host lectures on May 9, 16, 23, and 30. (See Events Calendar, page 71, for more details.)

With each Nightclub show, a workshop will be held, aimed at high-school



Untitled by A.G. Viva.

students. The first one already took place, for the “Restage” exhibit.

We’ve seen the re-emergence of some artist-run spaces of late, including Adalberto Delgado’s 6th Street Container in Little Havana and the Bridge Red Studios in North Miami. While Art Basel Miami Beach has added heft to the image of Miami’s art scene, these types of initiatives, often achieved more through blood, sweat, and tears than monetary investment, are as crucial to the development and survival of a solid local art scene as any fair.

The “Nightclub” series lineup looks like this:

June: “Call Time: 7PM,” curator A.G. Viva

July: “The Mirror Ball,” curators José Antonio Navarrete and Marcos Valella

August: “Reboot(y) Bass Night,” curator Gean Moreno

September: “Tracklist,” curator Gustavo Matamoros

October: “Modern Hits,” curators Diego Singh and Odalis Valdivieso

November: “The Doorman Isn’t Here Tonight,” curators Gladys Triana and Angela Valella

December: “Marakka 2012,” curator Ernesto Oroza

January: Show title TBD, curator Carlos Rigau

February: Show title TBD, curator Amalia Caputo

March: Show title TBD, curator José Antonio Navarrete

Check out the latest “Nightclub” exhibition this month: Friday, May 11, from 7:00 to 11:00 p.m. at the Buena Vista Building, 180 NE 39th St., 2nd floor, Suite 120. The lecture series “Modernism Rises — Modern Art and Architecture in Cuba: The Origins (1920s to 1930s)” begins on Wednesday, May 9, and continues each Wednesday through May, at the same location.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com



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www.jacques-harvey.com
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Shoshanna Weinberger, *Mound of Venus*, ink on paper, 2012, at Carol Jazzar Contemporary Art.

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Reception May 12, 7 to 10 p.m.

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305-438-4383
www.etrartfineart.com
May 12 through June 8:
"Spring Group Show" with Christian Awe, Andrea Dasha Reich, David Kessler, and Antoni Amat
Reception May 12, 7 to 10 p.m.

FREDRIC SNITZER GALLERY

2247 NW 1st Pl., Miami
305-448-8976
www.snitzer.com
May 31 through June 30:
"Une Saison en Enfer (A Season in Hell)" by José Bedia
Reception May 31, 7 to 10 p.m.

GALERIE HELENE LAMARQUE

125 NW 23rd St., Miami
305-582-6067
www.galeriehelenelamarque.com
Call gallery for exhibition information

GALERIE SCHUSTER MIAMI

2085 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
786-266-2445
www.gallerieschuster.com
Through May 12:
"Mangrove Mud Womp" by Onajide Shabaka

GALLERY 212 MIAMI CONTEMPORARY ART GALLERY

2407 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
786-431-1957
www.gallery212miami.com
Through May 12:
"Eye Candy" with Michael Perez, Sean Murdock, John Pate Jr., John Pate Sr., Matt Stock, Jonathan Bevers, Jason Perez, Fred Love, and Larry Rivers

GALLERY DIET

174 NW 23rd St., Miami
305-571-2288
www.gallerydiet.com
Through May 12:
"Out of Place" by Christy Gast
May 16:
"Good Tool" by Aki Sasamoto

May 25 through July 14:

"ART BLOG ART BLOG Presents:
Leave It to Beavers" with Christy Gast, Anya Kielar, Fabienne Laserre, Ella Kruglyanskaya, Katherine Bernhardt, Letha Wilson, Denise Kupfershmidt, Holly Coulis, and Lia Lowenthal, curated by Gina Beavers
Reception May 25, 6 to 9 p.m.

GARY NADER FINE ART

62 NE 27th St., Miami
305-576-0256
www.garynader.com
Through May 31:
"The Grand Latin American Art Show" with various artists

HARDCORE ARTS CONTEMPORARY SPACE

3326 N. Miami Ave., Miami
305-576-1645
www.hardcoreartmiami.com
Through June 2:
"This Sharp World..." by Kate Kretz
"Dreams" by Carlos Cardenes
"Finding Home" by Lorie Kim
"Something Almost Being Said" by Natasha Duwin
"Untitled (Homage to Gego)" by Consuelo Castañeda

HAROLD GOLEN GALLERY

2294 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-989-3359
www.haroldgolengallery.com
Through May 5:
"Exotica in Hi-Fi" with Kirsten Easthope, Ni Satterfield, Sam Gambino, Joe Vitale, Donella Vitale, Susannah Mosher, Michelle Bickford, Ken Bernstein, John Kisse, Mookie, El Gato Gomez, Robert Jimenez, Bunny Yeager, Andrew Kaufman, and Harold Golen

IDEOBOX ARTSPACE

2417 N. Miami Ave., Miami
305-576-9878
www.ideobox.com
Call gallery for exhibition information

KABE CONTEMPORARY

123 NW 23rd St., Miami
305-573-8142
www.kabecontemporary.com
Through May 15: "New Works" by Luca Pozzi

KAVACHNINA CONTEMPORARY

46 NW 36th St., Miami
305-448-2060
www.kavachnina.com
Call gallery for exhibition information

KELLEY ROY GALLERY

50 NE 29th St., Miami
305-447-3888
www.kelleyroygallery.com
Through June 2:
"Soul Training" by Antonio Ugarte
Through May 12:
"Sculpture and Jewelry" by Linda Lee Johnson

KIWI GALLERY

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



Christy Gast, *Teufelsberg*, burlap, cotton, 2012, at Gallery Diet.

LELIA MORDOCH GALLERY

2300 N. Miami Ave., Miami
786-431-1506
www.galerieleliamordoch.com
May 12 through June 2:
"Cheers" by Jordi Prat-Pons
Reception May 12, 5 to 10 p.m.

LOCUST PROJECTS

3852 N. Miami Ave., Miami
305-576-8570
www.locustprojects.org
Meredyth Sparks: Call gallery for more information

MAOR GALLERY

3030 NE 2nd Ave., Miami
http://maormiami.org
Call gallery for exhibition information

MIAMI-DADE COLLEGE, CENTRE GALLERY

300 NE 2nd Ave., Miami
Bldg. 1, Room 1365
305-237-3696
www.mdc.edu
Call gallery for exhibition information

MIAMI-DADE COLLEGE, FREEDOM TOWER

600 Biscayne Blvd., Miami
305-237-7700
www.mdc.edu
Through May 4:
"Minimum/Maximum" with various artists
May 18 through October 5:
"Shutter: Selected Photography and Film from the CINTAS Foundation Fellows Collection" with various artists
May 24 through August 11:
"Emergence & Structure: Nature in Process" with various artists
"Embedded: A Photojournalist Captures Conflict and Resistance" with various artists

MIAMI-DADE COLLEGE, GALLERY NORTH

11380 NW 27th Ave., Miami
305-237-1532
www.mdc.edu

Through June 15:

"2012 Emerging Artists" with various artists

MIAMI-DADE COLLEGE, HOMESTEAD ART SPACE

500 College Terr., Homestead
305-237-5000
www.mdc.edu/homestead
Through June 15:
"2012 Emerging Artists" with various artists

MIAMI-DADE COLLEGE, KENDALL GALLERY

1110 SW 104th St., Miami
305-237-2322
www.mdc.edu/kendall
Call gallery for exhibition information

MICHAEL JON GALLERY

20 NE 41st St., Suite 2, Miami
305-760-9030
www.michaeljongallery.com
Through June 2:
Min Song

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

MYRA GALLERIES

177 NW 23rd St., Miami
631-704-3476
www.myragalleries.com
Through May 31:
"Myra Galleries Anniversary" with Milani, Lee Leenam, Kim Kyeong Ja, Paolo Cassara, and Jean Duffy
May 12 through May 31:
"Art Is the Message" by Javier Martin
Reception May 12, 4 to 10 p.m.

NEW WORLD GALLERY

New World School of the Arts
25 NE 2nd St., Miami
305-237-3597
Call gallery for exhibition information



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NINA TORRES FINE ART
1800 N. Bayshore Dr., Miami
305-395-3599
www.ninatorresfineart.com
Through May 26: Ivonne Torres

NORMAN LIEBMAN STUDIO
2561 N. Miami Ave., Miami
305-573-3572
www.norman-liebman-studio.com
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O. ASCANIO GALLERY
2600 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-571-9036
www.oascaniogallery.com
Call gallery for exhibition information

OM GALLERY
8650 Biscayne Blvd., Suite 21, Miami
305-458-5085
May 18 through June 1: "Hand Made Bijouterie" by Ken Harvey, Rava Design, and Studio B
Reception May 18, 5 to 10 p.m.

ONCE ARTS GALLERY
170-C NW 24th St., Miami
786-333-8404
www.oncearts.com
Ongoing: Pablo Gentile, Jaime Montana, Jaime Apraez, and Patricia Chaparro

PANAMERICAN ART PROJECTS
2450 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-573-2400
www.panamericanart.com
Through June 2:
"Abstract Art from Cuba: 1950s & 1960s" with Guido Llinas and Raul Martinez
"Project Room" with Raul Milian and Lolo Soldevilla

PAREDES FINE ARTS STUDIO
2311 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-534-2184
www.miguelparedes.com
Ongoing: "Elements of an Artist" by Miguel Paredes

PRIMARY PROJECTS
4141 NE 2nd Ave., Suite 104, Miami
www.primaryprojectspace.com
info@primaryflight.com
Through May 31:
"In the Valle de los Caidos" by Lawrence Gipe

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

STASH GALLERY
162 NE 50th Terr., Miami
305-992-7652
www.stashgallery.com
Call gallery for exhibition information

SWAMPSPACE GALLERY
150 NE 41st St., Miami
http://swampspace.blogspot.com/
swampstyle@gmail.com
Call gallery for exhibition information

TONY WYNN MODERN ART GALLERY
3223 NE 2nd Ave., Miami
786-536-9799
www.tonywynn.com
Ongoing: "Patriotica" by Tony Wynn

THE LUNCH BOX GALLERY
310 NW 24th St., Miami
305-407-8131
www.thelunchboxgallery.com
Call gallery for exhibition information

UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI ART SPACE
2200-A NW 2nd Ave., Miami
May 12 through 25:
"Conditions of Graphic Accounts" by Thomas J. Engleman

UNIX FINE ART GALLERY
2219 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-496-0621
www.unixfineart.com
Ongoing:
"Group Show" with various artists

WINE BY THE BAY
888 Biscayne Blvd., Suite 112, Miami
305-455-9791
www.winebtb.com
May 4 through 31:
"Flavors of Spain" by Antoni Amat
Reception May 4, 7 to 10 p.m.

WYNWOOD WALLS
NW 2nd Avenue between 25th and 26th streets
305-573-0658
www.thewynwoodwalls.com
Ongoing:
"Wynwood Walls" with Retna, How & Nosm, Roa, b., The Date Farmers, Saner, Segó, Liqen, Neuzz, Faile, Vhils, Interesti Kazki, Kenny Scharf, Nunca, Shepard Fairey, Aiko, Ryan McGinness, Stelios Faitakis, and avaf

YEELAN ART GALLERY
250 NW 23rd St., Unit 306, Miami
954-235-4758
www.yeelenart.com
Through May 31:
"Possession" by Jerome Soimaud

MUSEUM & COLLECTION EXHIBITS

ARTCENTER/SOUTH FLORIDA
800 Lincoln Rd., Miami Beach
305-674-8278
www.artcentersf.org
Through May 6:
"Winning Art! 11th Annual Benefit Raffle" with resident artists
Closing Reception and Raffle May 5, 7 to 10 p.m.
May 11 through June 17:
"Of Lost Time" with London Tsai and Judith Berk King

BASS MUSEUM OF ART
2100 Collins Ave., Miami Beach
305-673-7530
www.bassmuseum.org
Through August 12:
"Erasesy Page" by Jillian Mayer and Eric Schoenborn
"Charles Ledray: Bass Museum of Art" by Charles Ledray



Lawrence Gipe, *Study Painting 3 from In the Valle de los Caidos (Ceremony)*, oil on panel, 2011, at Primary Projects.

CIFO (Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation)
1018 N. Miami Ave., Miami
305-455-3890
www.cifo.org
Call gallery for exhibition information

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

FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY FROST ART MUSEUM
10975 SW 17th St., Miami
305-348-2890
thefrost.fiu.edu
Through May 6:
"Doxa" with various artists
Through May 9:
"P.S. / P.P.S." by Michael Genovese
Through July 1:
"The War We Have Not Seen" by Juan Manuel Echavarria
Through August 5:
"Sculpture" by Ursula von Rydingsvard
Through August 26:
"Miami's Vices" with various artists, curated by Annie Wharton
"Museum Studies Spring 2012 Exhibition: Jamaican Art" with various artists
May 9 through 16:
"Creative Visions" with various artists

May 16 through September 2:
"Scapes" by Lynne Golob Gelfman

LEGAL ART
1035 N. Miami Ave., Suite 200, Miami
www.legalartmiami.org
Call gallery for exhibition information

LOWE ART MUSEUM, UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI
1301 Stanford Dr., Coral Gables
305-284-3535
www.lowemuseum.org
Through June 3:
"Recent Paintings" by Darby Bannard
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 May 6:
"Restless: Recent Acquisitions from the MAM Collection" with various artists
Through June 10:
"The Record: Contemporary Art and Vinyl" with various artists

MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART

770 NE 125th St., North Miami
305-893-6211
www.mocanomi.org
Through May 6:
Rita Ackermann
May 17 through September 2:
"Song" by Ragnar Kjartansson
Reception May 17, 7 to 9 p.m.
May 24 through September 2:
"On the Road" by Ed Ruscha
Reception May 24, 7 to 9 p.m.

THE MARGULIES COLLECTION
591 NW 27th St., Miami
305-576-1051
www.margulieswarehouse.com
Call gallery for exhibition information

THE RUBELL FAMILY COLLECTION
95 NW 29th St., Miami
305-573-6090
http://rfc.museum
Through July 27:
"American Exuberance" with various artists

WORLD CLASS BOXING
Debra and Dennis Scholl Collection
170 NW 23rd St., Miami
305-438-9908
www.worldclassboxing.org
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Compiled by Melissa Wallen
Send listings, jpeg images, and events information to
art@biscaynetimes.com

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Roll With It

Proving that one can never have too much fun, Miami's **Vice City Rollers** will host their first-ever home bout — against Bradenton's Bradentucky Bombers — on Cinco de Mayo. This is the inaugural season of the women's flat track roller derby league. Expect fast-paced, full-body contact. The brawl begins at 6:30 p.m. on **Saturday, May 5**, at the Suniland Roller Hockey Rink (9300 SW 152nd St., Palmetto Bay). The adventurous might want to purchase "suicide seating" near the ring, in the hopes that one of the competitors makes an unscheduled appearance; the section is considered "high risk." Tickets cost \$10 in advance, \$12 at the door; suicide seating (for those 18 and older) is \$15. Go to www.brownpapertickets.com/event/242840.

Sleep With the Fishes

This is a two-day event where you don't go home in between. **Zzz's by the Sea — Family Campout** at the Miami Seaquarium (4400 Rickenbacker Causeway, Key Biscayne) is a way to experience both the daytime and nighttime charms of marine life. On **Saturday, May 5, and Sunday, May 6**, you can interact with the manatees, sea turtles, and dolphins, take lessons on conservation, and munch on food and snacks throughout the day. Then, when night sets in, curl up under the Miami sky. For more information call 305-361-5705 ext. 520.

London Calling

Peter London has a serious pedigree, which is why his new company based here is such an exciting addition to the dance scene. A native of Trinidad, London graduated from Juilliard and became a principal dancer with the Martha Graham Dance Company. Now the Peter London Global Dance Theater has made the Little Haiti Cultural Center (212-260 NW 59th Terr.) its home, and will present its **Spring Dance Showcase** on **Saturday, May 5**, at 7:00 p.m. (with a reception at 6:00). The show will feature Jamar Roberts, formerly of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, who (like Alvin Ailey artistic director Robert Battle) is a Miami native. Tickets range from \$50 to \$120. Go to springshowcaseplgd.eventbrite.com.

Some of That Good Lovin'

The **Greynolds Park Love-In** has become one of the more popular Miami-Dade County parks events. Why not? Now in its ninth year, the Love-In is an unabashed throwback to the fun-loving, hippy-loving 1960s. This year the headliner is Felix Cavaliere's Rascals, who had such mega-hits as *It's a Beautiful Morning* and the oh-so-era-appropriate *Groovin'*. The fun starts at 11:00 a.m. on **Sunday, May 6**, and goes to 6:30 p.m., at Greynolds Park (18501 NE 22nd Ave.). Admission is free; parking, if you need it, is \$10. Call 305-948-2891 or go to www.miamidade.gov/greynoldslovein.

Sunday in the Grove With Mom

Coconut Grove has been many things over the years — an alt-lifestyle magnet, a cocaine cowboy hangout, the site of the King Mango Strut and the Coconut Grove Arts Festival — predictably so, as the incredibly lush, quaint neighborhood is one of the oldest in Miami. Now it's also a good place to take Mom on her special day. The **Mother's Day Coconut Grove Twilight Eco Walk** from HistoryMiami goes from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. on **Sunday, May 13**. The stroll will take in the Grove's important landmarks, vegetation, and history. Tickets cost \$20 for members; \$30 for nonmembers. For more information, go to www.historymiami.org.

Flower Power

Did you know there is such a thing as an orchidist? Well, there better be when you have a fair like the annual **Redland International Orchid Festival** at the Fruit and Spice Park (24801 SW 187th Ave., Homestead). There will be more than 50 vendors from all over the world exhibiting their blooms during this three-day event. There also will be lectures and orchid-crafts. The festival will be held from **Friday, May 18, through Sunday, May 20**; hours are 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Tickets cost \$10 for the day, \$25 for a weekend pass. Go to www.redlandorchidfestival.org.

Musical Mash-Up

The best possible future for music would go something like this: Musicians who are fluent in the classical traditions, but not afraid of the cutting edge, getting together with emerging artists versed in the latest trends — and all of them learning from each other. A utopian dream? Not if you check out **Piano Slam: Volume 4** at the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts on **Thursday, May 24**. This has grown into an amazing series. A Bach and Gershwin mash-up with local DJs, poets facing off with the Thomas Armour Youth Ballet, and prominent pianists sitting down at the keys, all directed by Miami's own Teo Castellanos. It starts at 7:00 p.m. and is



A Boy and His Dog

Henry and Mudge, a musical adaptation of the popular children's book series from Cynthia Rylant, will take the stage at the Aventura Arts and Cultural Center on **Saturday, May 5** at 11:00 a.m. and again at 1:00 p.m. as part of the Broward Center's Family Fun Series. Lonely Henry is new to town and hangs out with his dog, Mudge — until a cousin steals the canine's affection. Mudge comes to his senses and tries to find his best friend by following his scent. Performed by TheatreworksUSA, the play will be accompanied by pre- and post-show activities for kids. Tickets cost \$15 in advance, with \$3 "lap" tickets for tykes younger than 12 months. Call 877-311-7469 or go to www.AventuraCenter.org.

free, but we recommend making reservations at www.arshtcenter.org.

Modernism, Arise!

Local arts org 801 Projects will present a series of lectures on **Modern Art and Architecture in Cuba: The Origins (1920s-1930s)** in the Design District throughout the month of May. A sampling: On **Wednesday, May 16**, curator and arts critic José Antonio Navarrete will talk about the famed "rumba" of Cuban artist Eduardo Abela at the Zak Gallery in Paris, circa 1928. On **Wednesday, May 30**, the series will culminate with "Architecture for a New Havana," about the history — and future — of Cuba's hundreds of Modernist structures. Tickets cost \$10; free for students. Call 305-299-6155 or e-mail 801projects@gmail.com.

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



Bike the City Beautiful

Ah, the city of Coral Gables! Designed by George Merrick back in the 1920s and packed with Mediterranean Revival-style buildings, the City Beautiful sometimes gets more grief than it should — in part because it calls itself "The City Beautiful." But you know what? It really is beautiful. Let a bike ride remind you how much. **Spring Pedals** from the Coral Gables Museum (285 Aragon Ave.) will guide you through the fountains, pools, and waterways of the Gables, including the canals that eventually pour into Biscayne Bay. The fun starts at 11:00 a.m. on **Sunday, May 20**. Tickets cost \$10. To make reservations, call 305-603-8067 or go to www.coralgablesmuseum.org.

Biscayne Crime Beat

Compiled by Derek McCann

Secure those Security Cameras

300 Block of NE 72nd Terrace

Owner secured his business and left, thinking everything was fine. After all, he had just installed security cameras. This did not stop one of Miami's hoodlums from breaking in, wrecking the place, and stealing several items. Among the items stolen? The security disk from one of the cameras. There are no leads — and no footage of the crime. Our rapidly evolving criminals are going to put the security industry out of business.

Thanks for Everything!

401 Biscayne Blvd.

Woman placed her wallet and car keys on the ground near the bandstand at

Bayside Marketplace. A person, possibly homeless, came by and began to pepper her with questions, asking directions, and acting as if he were from out of town. Like a good Miamian (mistake right there), she answered all of his questions, only to find later that he had taken her wallet and keys in the process. Helping people is way overrated.

Time to Dust Off That PMS Defense

400 Block of NE 125th Street

Three women walked into this store and began grabbing items: 72-count Huggies diapers, 18-count Kotex tampons, and a two-pack of Febreze Air Effects. They left the store without paying. They later returned and attempted to steal the

same items. After being stopped by store personnel, the women started a mini riot — punching employees at will, and even taking a store scanner and hitting someone in the head with it. The fight continued for several minutes until police came and arrested all the suspects.

Dog Days of Spring

12000 Block of N. Miami Avenue

Victim was walking her two dogs when the suspect approached and started talking to her about her pets. There's nothing wrong with that, right? In North Miami, it could be a problem. In the middle of the conversation, he grabbed a gold chain from around her neck and ran north. This strong-arm robbery happened in broad daylight. Victim told police she can identify the suspect. Guess those weren't attack dogs.

This Crime Ring a Bell?

200 Block of Biscayne Boulevard

Two hapless victims ran into an old friend on the Boulevard. The two



victims thought it a good idea to invite this person over to their apartment for a get-together. The old friend agreed, and brought three additional friends with him. Everyone engaged in lively conversation for an hour. After the foursome left, victims discovered one of their cell phones was missing from the living room and another from the bedroom. Guess there was a reason these old friends lost touch over the years.

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It's Not Stealing When They're Giving Them Away!

100 Block of NE 54th Street

Suspect ran into this Walgreens and took six polo shirts, exiting the store without paying. Attempts to chase him down were unsuccessful. This particular suspect has stolen from this store on ten previous occasions. (And they still haven't caught him?) But the most shocking detail from this blurb is that the six polo shirts are valued at only \$24! We realize Walgreens is not a high-end boutique, but that is quite a deal.

Dispute Resolution in Little Haiti

100 Block of NE 56th Street

Next time you decide to have an argument with your neighbor, try to resolve it amicably. This feud resulted in the neighbor allegedly breaking into the victim's home and stealing all of his clothes. For good measure, he kicked the television, cracking the screen. Additional damage included broken locks, shattered windows, a battered back door, and \$350 in missing cash. Crime Beat doesn't know what the dispute was about, but rest assured, the victim will not be

returning that borrowed barbecue grill to his neighbor anytime soon.

No AutoZone in Sight

300 Block of NE 125th Street

While car theft and vandalism is on the rise, some of our criminals are getting more practical. Why steal a radio when you can get something really useful for yourself? This suspect broke into the victim's trunk and stole jumper cables and a spare tire. We guess even criminals need the occasional jumpstart or tire change.

The Cycle of Crime

Biscayne Boulevard and 14th Street

Man flagged down a bus and tried to load his bike on the bike rack, but was told by the driver there wasn't enough room on the bus for him, and that he would have to wait for another bus. The would-be passenger complied and left the area. A short while later, the man returned and began to throw rocks at another bus, breaking the right side of the windshield before running away. No arrests have been made. Cyclists are obnoxious enough, with their constant cutting in and out of traffic; now they have to take their insolence to the next level!

Charles Bronson Would Be Proud

NE 125th Street and NE 11th Court

Two thugs approached a man taking a leisurely stroll on 125th Street. One thug produced a silver, six-inch knife and pointed it at the victim, stating, "You know what this is." The other man began searching the victim's pockets. However, this victim wasn't having it. As the thug searched his pockets, the victim punched him in the face, then threw him into the other man (like a wrestling move), knocking both of them to the pavement. Victim then ran from the scene. These robbery suspects apparently picked the wrong person. Hopefully they'll take the hint and try working for a living.

Victoria's Secret: Her Ex is a Perv

11800 Block of NE 19th Drive

Rear sliding door of a residence was forced open while the owner was away. Nothing was taken, save for ten women's panties. Victim immediately suspected her ex-boyfriend, who is no longer welcome in the home. With police present, the woman called her ex-boyfriend and placed him on speaker. He confessed to the crime. She has yet to press charges at this time.

Proof That Tax Breaks Lead to Trouble

500 Block of NE 125th Street

Don't you hate it when people hash out their differences in public? A couple began arguing while in line at this 7-Eleven, with the male demanding the female's IRS refund check. She refused. He then punched her in the face, took her wallet, and left the store. The man had not been arrested at press time.

Check Roger Ebert's Alibi

500 Block of NE 134th Street

Typical burglary occurred at this residence. What made it slightly different is where police found fingerprints. A DVD was removed from a shelf and left on the floor. The DVD in question? *A Thin Line Between Love and Hate*. You know, the *Fatal Attraction* spoof with Martin Lawrence as a smooth-talking ladies man who meets his match in bat-crazy Lynn Whitfield. It's not a great film, we admit that, but not worth *stealing*? Even for a rainy afternoon? C'mon.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com



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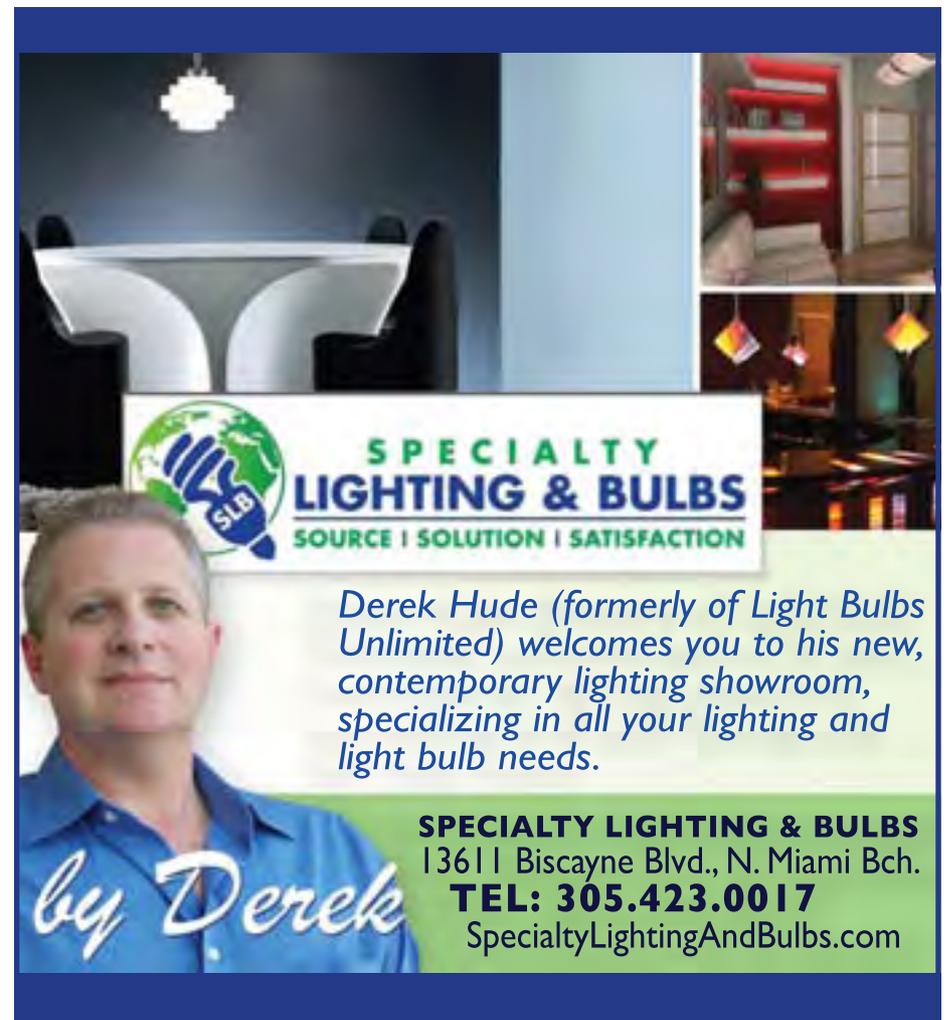
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by Derek

A Great Place to Go Barefoot

Much more than a nude beach, Haulover remains a jewel

By **Jim W. Harper**
BT Contributor

The Barefoot Mailman of local legend walked South Florida's beaches for days, treading alongside the Atlantic Ocean for miles without seeing a single soul. On his 68-mile trek from Palm Beach to Miami, with his shoes and satchel slung over his back, he came to a fork in the road at Baker's Haulover, a narrow strip of land where fishermen would "haul over" their boats back and forth from the ocean to Biscayne Bay.

From here, the Barefoot Mailman hitched a boat ride across the bay, to the Miami River. He took this watery route to deliver the mail because there were no connecting roads until 1882.

Talk about your anti-instant messaging. It took a week to deliver a letter, and at least one barefoot mailman died in the process. (Well, that part hasn't changed much, if you consider the dangers of texting and driving.) Today a historical marker near the lifeguard station at Haulover Beach memorializes these extreme beach walkers.

From the new lifeguard station, currently under construction, a 20-minute Barefoot Mailman-style walk south along the beach and around Haulover Inlet reveals another historical marker, dedicated in 2004, to remember the fishing docks of days gone by. Here is the birthplace of deep-sea recreational fishing in Florida, where many record-setting monster fish were brought to shore. Even bigger predators visited during World War II, when enemy submarines roamed the area. In 1948 this narrow isthmus between sea and bay became a park.

Today Haulover Beach Park stands as a testament to the virtues of an open shoreline, as evidenced by the absence of condominium shadows on the waterfront for three miles — 1.5 miles on the beach and roughly the same on the bay. For this reason alone, Haulover shines within the park system of Miami-Dade County, and it regularly ranks as one of the best beaches in Florida.

Haulover Beach Park has been undergoing reconstructive surgery for the past few years, and heavy work continues on the bay's marinas. Funded primarily



BT photos by Jim W. Harper

Dunes lushly landscaped with native plants lead to sweeping ocean views.

by a \$23 million bond passed in 2004, the park has thus far seen \$10 million in improvements. For example, a dog park was opened in December 2010; last year's review in this column ("The Naked Truth About Haulover," January 2011) gave it 3.5 trees.

The Building Better Communities bond also helped to pay for a stylish new dockmaster building, dedicated in June 2010. Located between the charter fishing boats and millionaires' yachts, this three-story Art Deco building has a pale aqua façade with turquoise piping. On the second story are bold silver letters that proclaim



Where else will you find restrooms that hint of cruise ships?

"Bill Bird Marina," in honor of the former county parks director. Other external highlights are portholes, two levels of viewing decks, and a lighthouse.

Inside, patrons can do their laundry.

This bustling fishing and boating section often gets overlooked by those who focus on the shock value of the park's northern section. Near the three Trump Towers in Sunny Isles, signs warn of "nude bathers ahead," and indeed, Haulover has Florida's only official nude beach. Only a skimpy wooden fence demarcates the nude beach, so do not approach it if you disapprove of skinny-dipping in daylight.

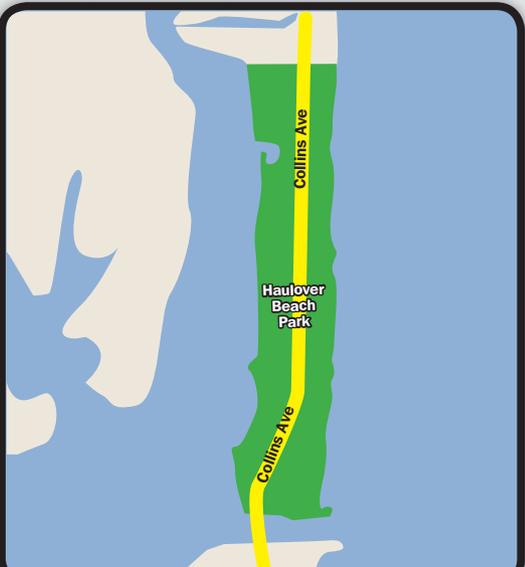
Between the crowded nude beach on the north end and active marina on the south end are wide-open and often desolate areas, including the beach. The sand close to the sidewalk may be compact enough for running. Between

the sand and sidewalk are attractive dunes that have been restored with native plants. Signs describe the dune restoration process — one that should be emulated all over the state.

A wide concrete path along the dunes parallels the 1.5 miles of beachfront and offers excellent biking and jogging. Here you can glide past the park's second-best architectural feature: the oval bathrooms. Looking like cruise ship funnels (smokestacks) planted in the ground, these four bathroom-and-shower facilities were recently upgraded and now bear bold colors and stripes.

Something longtime patrons might miss on the beach is the turtle hatchery, a sizeable cage of chain-link fencing that was removed in 2007. Sea turtles still nest on this beach every summer, says

HAULOVER BEACH PARK



Park Rating

★★★★★

10800 Collins Ave.
305-947-3525

Hours: 8:00 a.m. to sunset

Picnic tables: Yes

Barbecues: Yes

Picnic pavilions: Yes

Tennis courts: Yes

Athletic fields: Yes

Night lighting: Yes

Swimming pool: No

Playground: No

Special features:
24-hour boat ramp

Bill Ahern, a naturalist with Miami-Dade County. Instead of moving the eggs into a cage, however, the county leaves them in the ground and marks them with yellow tape. The reason for not moving them is that “mother knows best,” Ahern says. Official sea turtle nesting season began May 1.

Down at the inlet, plenty of low-tech fishers try their luck with buckets and poles on the west side of the Collins Avenue bridge, where the pelicans and cormorants play. The currents between the bay and the ocean rip at breakneck speed. These waters have reason to be angry: They were separate until 1925, when construction married the bay to the ocean forever and transformed Miami Beach from a peninsula, connected to the mainland, into an island.

While most of the park is delightful, its main drawback is an anomaly: too much parking. There is no parking on the beach side, but entrances on the bay side lead to enormous concrete dust bowls that are normally empty and offer no shade. Were they planning to build a mall here? From these lots, heading to the beach takes you into shady underground tunnels with plenty of echo-power. That’s the fun



Bill Bird Marina shelters yachts and charter fishing boats, which often sell their fresh catch.

part. Returning to the parking lot, you are assaulted by asphalt.

The bay side used to have a nine-hole golf course, but it was shut down in 2010 and now sits idle. Plans call for repurposing the greens into a “great lawn,” à la Central Park. Guess what? It’s already there.



The golf course, bordering the Intracoastal, is being repurposed as an expansive green space.

Another large patch of lawn close to Haulover Inlet has gone to the kites. A specialty kite shop on the ground advertises its wares by flying unique and enormous kites above, including a scuba diver that looks like a Dementor from the Harry Potter movies. Each year this area hosts a celebration called Kiteober Fest.

Another unique feature of Haulover is that wheelchairs for the beach can



Since 1992, concessionaire Skyward Kites has operated from a grassy area near the marina.

be borrowed from the lifeguard station (next to the yellow tower currently under construction); the county offers this service also at Crandon Park Beach.

Haulover Beach Park is a place to pursue your dreams — whether in a boat, on a bike, or even wearing nothing but your birthday suit. Bring your dog, your grandmother, your tennis racquet, and your fishing pole. You might be shocked to find some Old Florida squeezed in between the new.

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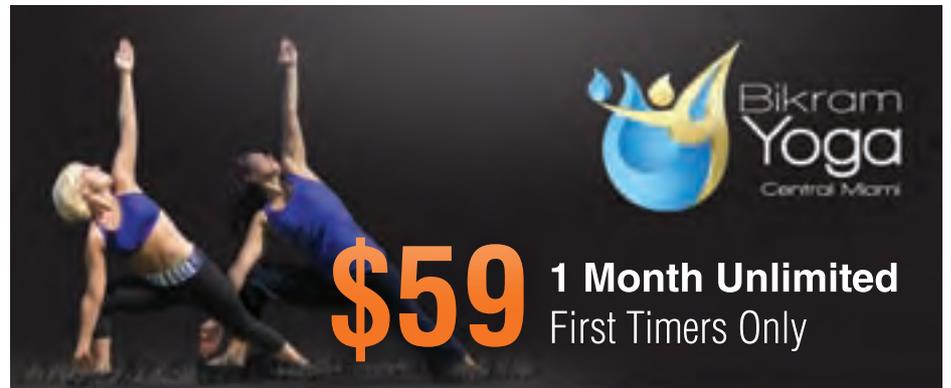
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Something to Chew On

Raising your dog, like raising your child, requires a lot of patience

By Lisa Hartman
BT Contributor

My dog is digging out of the yard. She pees on my expensive rug in the living room; we're thinking of getting rid of her. Rocco knocks down everyone who comes through the front door. We're having another baby and our dog is just *too big* for the house. Oliver has chewed my baseboards in the kitchen and three pairs of Manolo Blahniks!

These are the complaints I often hear when I receive calls from owners having issues with their dogs. Many times their soliloquy ends with a variation on the line: "If you can't fix this, we are thinking

of turning her in, getting rid of her, sending her to a farm, or (fill in the blank)."

And while I understand and can empathize with their frustration, sometimes I wonder what they thought having a dog would be like.

Of course, most of us know that chewing, digging, and barking is natural dog behavior. As a dog lover, I'm not about to ask a dog to not be a dog. Technically, it is not what the dog is doing that is the issue, but rather where, when, and for how long the dog does something that is causing domestic discord.

This is where I come in. As a trainer, it's always my goal to redirect a dog's natural inclinations into appropriate and even useful channels. And though it's



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true I don't have the power to shrink a dog to fit better into a growing family, getting dogs and their behaviors under control is not as difficult as it may seem.

It's funny to me when I hear that human children often exhibit behavior similar to that of dogs, only, in the case of the children, these are not considered "problem behaviors," but rather a normal part of development for a three-year-old, four-year-old, or however old the child in question is. "That's what young boys are like," the client (who has called me in to do something about her dog's hyper behavior) informs me as the boys are running around the room, throwing pencils and shooting loud toy guns at each other.

I've even heard about potty-training problems with kids. I sat fascinated recently watching the morning show *Live with Kelly* as Jerry O'Donnell, the guest host, described the trials and tribulations of potty training his two young daughters. He told of them going on the floor in the bathroom and under the dining room table, even that they were "afraid" to use the toilet for some of their business.

Kelly told her own stories about teaching her kids to toilet in the right

area. As a non-kid owner, I had no idea it was so hard to housebreak kids! After all, they speak our language and can clearly tell us when they have to go! They wear diapers! Except, I guess, when the owners don't bother to put one on.

Apparently this issue is quite common. There's even a bleach commercial in which the child informs the mom that he "made poo-poo." She congratulates and praises him and, after going to the bathroom for inspection, asks him: "Where?"

Who knew of all the similarities between raising dogs and kids? But I've never heard a parent of a child say they are giving up the kid if he doesn't get the hang of potty training, thank goodness.

They grin and bear it and keep pressing forward with the goal of the child learning to go potty like a big boy or girl. They say nothing when there are accidents, and praise and reward the child when he or she does it right, all while patiently waiting months to a year for the lesson to take.

So I have to laugh when the family dog — who doesn't speak the language, who is a whole 'nother species — is threatened with his walking papers if he

doesn't "get it" in the allotted amount of time the client has in mind, be that a day or a month.

What's more, dogs are often punished for the very same mistakes the child may have made, aggravating the problem even more. And since dogs don't speak our language, it's critical we set them up for success as much as possible, limiting their ability to have accidents, and praising and rewarding them for correct responses, so the dog understands what we like.

During the training process and throughout the dog's life, I recommend appropriate outlets for the dog's natural desires. Dogs need exercise, so let them run around the yard and fetch balls in the park. But inside the home, reward calmness: "Jumping up and some rough play is fine with your doggy friends, but we want you to keep four paws on the floor to greet human friends."

Teach them to chew nicely on bones and food-stuffed chew toys but not the furniture. The same goes for kids: Let them play and have treasure hunts outside and in the "play room," but in the living room and in public, instruct them

to play quiet games and act like young ladies and gentleman (and acknowledge their fine behavior when they do).

Does your dog like to put everything in his mouth? Believe it or not, you can train him to bring you objects he picks up. Your own doggy helper! And as dogs are creatures of habit (like humans), getting them into good habits from the beginning is essential.

So before bringing home a dog, realize what a dog is: a domesticated animal. Your dog will sometimes make you ecstatic, sometimes frustrate you to no end, and sometimes leave you bewildered as to what to do with them.

Chewing, digging, and barking happen. But having patience and channeling these natural canine behaviors into appropriate avenues is the key to the long-lasting joy of living with animals.

*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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Good Green News

Recent events suggest that the environment may be making a comeback after all

By **Jim W. Harper**
BT Contributor

Good things are happening in our corner of the planet. On April 10, a native tree was planted in every public school in Miami-Dade County. That's 336 trees and tens of thousands of inspired children. Thank you, local eco-artist Xavier Cortada and the Reclamation Project.

On April 19, one of the world's largest enviro-happenings, Sustainatopia, launched its third year in Miami. Thank you, local eco-entrepreneur John Rosser.

On April 21, thousands of volunteers scooped trash from Biscayne Bay during the 30th annual Baynanza. Thank you, Miami-Dade County.

Next on the calendar: On May 5, a demonstration will be held on South Beach to show how sea-level rise from global warming could drown South Florida within a few decades. Thanks for the warning, international activist Bill McKibben and 350.org.

These actions build hope. They also prove that a local environmental movement is alive and kicking. Maybe the tide is turning after all.

So many people — residents and visitors alike — complain about our area's lack of concern for the environment, and oftentimes I agree, because they preface it with a reference to recycling.

Sure, recycling here may be lagging in comparison to other places, and it

certainly deserves more attention. But recycling alone does not make a city green. Many other factors, especially those related to emissions that speed up global warming, should be taken into account. By that standard, Greater Miami ranks as one of the nation's cleaner and greener places to live.

It's shocking, but true. And it isn't because of parks or public transportation or even basic environmental awareness and appreciation. (We have major work to do in those areas.) Rather, our area's greatest strength is the separation of nature and city, much like the model of church and state. We need these separations. In a world of seven billion people, in a state approaching 20 million residents, we have to crowd into cities to allow nature to sprawl. Call it "freedom of nature," or freedom from the greed of *human* nature.

America's national park system, the greatest in the world, protects such freedom, and only one county in the U.S. contains two national parks within its borders: Miami-Dade. Both Everglades National Park and Biscayne National Park were slated for heavy development before earning their protected status in 1947 and 1980, respectively.

Despite the impression that developers own Florida, sometimes they lose. Miami-Dade's urban development boundary, established in 1975, sets a great example for protecting wetlands. "Hold the line," as the grassroots campaign slogan goes, has been achieved over and over again.



National Park Service

Our kids need to learn about these victories, just as they need to learn about the dismemberment of the greater Everglades, which is costing taxpayers nearly \$20 billion in restoration efforts. The lesson: If you don't break it, you don't have to pay to fix it. First, conserve and preserve.

Environmental regulations with real teeth, such as federal laws protecting endangered species, have proven themselves in our swamps. One of the greatest success stories is the American alligator, which earned protected status in 1967, even before the passage of the U.S. Endangered Species Act of 1973. By 1987 the alligator was removed from the list, and today it continues to thrive.

The saltwater-loving American crocodile is making its comeback. (Doing a thing called the crocodile rock?) This grayer cousin of the alligator exists in the U.S. only in southernmost Florida. It has been protected from hunting since the 1960s, and classified as "threatened" since 1987. While Florida's croc population was once down to 100 scaly specimens holding on for dear life, this year the count is over 1500 — a population considered equivalent to what it was a century ago. We can celebrate by learning its scientific name of *Crocodylus acutus*, instead of its previously used name — no joke — *Crocodylus floridanus*.

Such large, keystone species indicate that something is right with the entire swamp. (You can track their movements online with the "Save Your Logo" campaign from Lacoste and the University of Florida.)

But don't mistake success in one instance with paradise achieved. At the other end of the spectrum, a butterfly population in the Keys hangs by a thread. Called the Miami Blue, this slight creature earned its federal status as endangered just last month. While disturbing news, this status gives hope that the butterfly's habitat will receive the attention it deserves.

Good things happen when people pay attention to the environment and take action to sustain it. Do I sound too happy to be an environmentalist? I'm writing these optimistic thoughts for my sanity, because most news about the environment is making me crazy.

I need a timeout. Don't you? Plant a tree. Dance outdoors. Put some litter in a basket. Make yourself feel good by doing something good for Mother Earth. Sow hope in the earth and harvest it in a greener, cleaner future.

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

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

Crafting Some Home-Style Fun

Creative projects your kids will enjoy don't need to be complicated

By **Crystal Brewe**
BT Contributor

I never aspired to be a crafty mom. There was always something about the do-it-yourself mentality, though, that appealed to me.

I don't own a sewing machine, I don't get knitting, and I can't stand the way glue smells. A trip to Michaels, the crafts store, or Jo-Ann Fabrics used to make me itch on the inside.

My mother, however, always had tricks up her perfectly rolled sleeve. She led my fourth-grade class in Kachina doll-making during our lesson on Native Americans, sewed countless flower-girl dresses and blazers during my Alex P. Keaton phase, and most recently made curtains and throw pillows for my guest room. Instead of following in her creative footsteps, I have memories of the art teacher lecturing me for sloppily pinched legs on my clay sculptures, my paper dolls' heads always ending up shaped like... well, let's just say they weren't shaped right, and my homemade birthday cards always sticking together due to "glue-ooze."

I had a couple of epiphanies, though, that ended up being the key to my acceptance of "crafting." First, I don't need to be Martha Stewart to enjoy a project here and there. Crafting can turn out creations that rank well above the form

and function of a crocheted Yoda or a pipe-cleaner caterpillar.

My friend Kristina always comes up with amazing crafts during play dates and birthday parties. One time she bought a bunch of cheap, gaudy plastic and wooden beads at the local fabric store, along with various cuts and colors of vibrant ribbon. She also secured fancy, empty boxes from some Design District stores.

Then she set the kids to creating the latest fashions in neckwear. When it was all over, each girl was sent home with her design nicely packed in a designer box. It was great for the little fashionistas in awe of the big chunky necklaces making a comeback in the expensive boutiques.

Not all moms are as creative as Kristina, but who needs creativity when you have Oriental Trading Company? Susan, the smartest mom I know, has a treasure trunk full of craft kits from the OTC: purse-making kits, design-your-own planter kits, photo frame-making kits, even binocular- and puzzle-making kits. Susan breaks out a new kit when the kids get antsy — at birthday parties, on a rainy day, or even after the homework has been done, as an alternative to TV.

I follow Prudent Baby, a mommy DIY blog that never fails to inspire. Prudent Baby is full of not-so-typical ideas. I've seen them make everything from stylish booster seats to simple, snuggly blankets. They also offer a section called



BT photo by Crystal Brewe

"Hot Mess Mommy," where moms make their own accessories. I've never attempted any of the projects, but seeing a post often inspires my own ideas.

My projects? Well, I'm not into novelty crafts. But I do like quirky art. For example: One year I scored a giant canvas at a garage sale for two dollars. It featured a hideous painting that someone had spilled coffee on and perhaps used as a table to eat a sloppy pizza. I took it home, gingerly washed it off, and painted it in a fresh coat of white.

I then put paper plates of purple, blue, pink, and green acrylic paint on the floor and gathered the kids. We made a game of stepping in the plates of paint and then running across the canvas to a tub of soapy water. (One of the kiddies threw a tantrum because she couldn't sit down on the canvas in the middle of the project.) The twisting and stomping is immortalized on the canvas and makes for a great story. We call the piece *Happy Trails and Tantrums*, and it hangs proudly in the girls' bedroom.

Another fun, ongoing project is our collection of stickers from our fruits and

vegetables. We buy quirky, inexpensive statues and figurines from garden stores and cover them in colorful produce stickers. Several neighbors and friends have received "Fruita Buddhas" or "Fruity Gnomes" as gifts and continue to add their own stickers to them.

Any time we see inexpensive shadowbox frames, we purchase them. These make great displays for found objects, funny greeting cards, or school artwork.

Everly, our three-year-old, recently brought home a colorful finger painting that was an awkward shape for a frame. I had just purchased four little three-by-three-inch shadowbox frames that were on sale at Target, so I cut squares out of Everly's piece and displayed them vertically in our hallway. She is so proud, and it looks fantastic!

You don't have to like pipe cleaners to enjoy some family crafting. It can be anything you want it to be. With summer break and the rainy season upon us, it's a great time to dream up some fun and artistic projects for the whole family.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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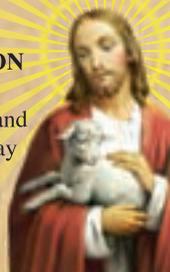
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By **Bill Citara**
BT Contributor

In the spring, a young oenophile's fancy turns to... What should I drink?

Winter's cool (or coolishness) is long gone, and the face-melting heat and wet-clay humidity of summer has yet to pounce.

Those knife-and-fork Zinfandels and oaky, tannic Cabernet Sauvignons that can warm up chilly (and occasionally frigid) winter nights are like sweltering in a wool sweater and mittens on a sunny May afternoon, while the crisp, clean Sauvignon Blancs and Pinot Grigios and well-balanced Chardonnays that can take the edge off the summer blast furnace are like parading around in a thong when an arctic Canadian cold front screams into town.

Even rosés seem to line up on either side of the great seasonal wine-drinking divide — lean and acidic or lush and fruity. So what's a thirsty boy (or girl) to do?

Pour a glass of lightly chilled red, that's what.

Not just any red jammed into the fridge, though. Those big, beefy Cabs and Zins and Syrahs usually don't take well to serious chilling, which mutes their fruity character and emphasizes their tannins, making them taste thin and puckery. (It's worth noting, however, that even those red wines could usually benefit from 15 or 20 minutes of chilling, as "room temperature" in tropical

South Florida is a helluva lot different from a stone-floored wine cellar in more temperate Bordeaux.)

No, what we want here are lighter-bodied reds that are generous in fruit and stingy in tannins, preferably with little or no oak aging and relatively low in alcohol. Dolcetto, Barbera, and Valpolicella from Italy are good bets, as are Beaujolais, Pinot Noir, Chinon, and even some Cabernet Francs from France. Notice I didn't mention any domestic reds — most (though certainly not all) are just too heavy-oaky-alcoholic for our purposes.

The French wines were the stars of this tasting, despite the terrific **2010 Valpolicella from Villa Maffei**. With its exceedingly reasonable \$10 price tag and refreshing strawberry-raspberry fruit balanced by a tangy orange flower-water backbone, the Italian product is right up there. I'd be delighted to see this wine indoors with baked ham and light pastas or in a sun-drenched backyard with hot dogs and pasta salad.

Two other Italian wines weren't nearly so pleasant. The **2010 Cren della Lepre Barbera** was so harsh and bereft of fruit (with some funky-herbal undercurrents) that it was simply undrinkable, though it might find use as paint stripper or for etching metal plates. **Casa Sant'Orsola's 2010 Dolcetto d'Alba** was better, tasting very young and very tart, but mellowing a bit in the glass.

Of the French wines, a pair of Beaujolais-Villages showed why that wine is the obvious choice for warm-weather

chilling. The 2010 vintage from reliable **Georges Duboeuf** delivered everything you could want: pretty rose-red color, crisp strawberry-citrus aromas and flavors that tread lightly on the palate, low alcohol (12.5 percent), and a long, citrusy finish. For eight bucks you're not getting any complexity, but you are getting a wine that can appeal to a variety of taste buds and plays well with everything from hearty fish dishes to roasted chicken.

The **2009 Jean Saint Honoré Beaujolais-Villages** was a bit more demanding. It was pretty tight at first, with a slight vegetal-earthy edge to its faint red cherry-raspberry aromas, and it stayed tight for a good 15 minutes in the glass. After a while, though, it began to open, displaying mellower cherry and strawberry flavors enlivened with hints of anise. Still a little on the austere side, it's probably not for novice wine drinkers.

The surprise of the tasting was the **Lieu dit Beauregard 2010 Bourgueil**, 100-percent Cabernet Franc from the north bank of France's Loire Valley. Fuller and richer than its lighter-bodied competitors, it balanced its fresh, simple cherry-berry flavors that hinted at earth and toast with mild acidity and soft tannins.



The excellent **Ropiteau Pinot Noir** and **Villa Maffei Valpolicella** can be found at the **North Miami Total Wine & More (14750 Biscayne Blvd., 305-354-3270)** for \$9.99 each, as can the not-so-excellent **Sant'Orsola Dolcetto** and **Cren della Lepre Barbera**. The **Biscayne Commons Publix (14641 Biscayne Blvd., 305-354-2171)** carries the always reliable **Georges Duboeuf Beaujolais-Villages** for the value price of \$7.99, while the **Saint Honoré B-V** and **Lieu dit Beauregard Bourgueil** are available at the **North Miami Beach ABC Fine Wine & Spirits (16355 Biscayne Blvd., 305-944-6525)**, both for \$10.99.

Perhaps my favorite wine of all, though, was the **2010 Ropiteau Pays d'Oc Pinot Noir**, made in a lighter and more refined and delicate style than the blockbuster Pinots still coming out of California. It showed off a bit of candy-ish red cherry fruit in the nose, which carried over to the palate, time in the glass adding teases of anise and orange and turning this not-so-young oenophile's fancy to drinking another bottle outdoors in our glorious spring weather.

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Winners and Rumors

Food news we know you can use

By **Pamela Robin Brandt**
BT Contributor

There's too much food news this month to print it all. Still, we want more! Signs of a restaurant opening or closing in your neighborhood? Send in your tips and I'll check them out. Use this: restaurants@biscaynetimes.com.

OPENINGS

Barrel Wine Cantine (3622 NE 2nd Ave., 305-576-7775). In the former W Wine Bar space, it's actually much like the original — a wine market and wine bar with casual, French-influenced food: imported cheeses, charcuterie (including homemade pâtés), quiches, salads, and changing hot entrées. Difference: A real chef is in charge. That would be Victor Passalacqua, trained in Michelin three-star kitchens before helming numerous Miami fine-dining spots.

Bella Beach Club (18001 Collins Ave., 305-692-5777). In the Trump International Resort, this informal resto-lounge couldn't be more beachy. It is right on the sand. Fare ranges from light bites (caviars, elegant salads) to grilled seafood and steaks with varied sauces. There are also day beds, a bocce court, and often a DJ.

Hoops Sports Bar & Grill (900 Biscayne Blvd., 786-472-3050). This Canadian import across from the AA arena, which features more than 180 TVs and standard bar bites with occasional Canadian accents, has been operating for three months, but the official opening is May 5.

Drop by the party, from noon to whenever, for poutine (identical to NJ "disco fries," topped with cheese and gravy).

Strip (801 Brickell Bay Dr., 305-364-5384). That's strip as in steak. At this modern space in the Four Ambassadors there are no exotic dancers — but plenty of exotica on the menu, including antelope and kangaroo. Other than that, the food is traditional steakhouse stuff, but all beef is sourced, grass-fed, and raised without evil hormones.

CLOSINGS

Andalus, in the Design District. Majestic Properties' Jeff Morr, owner of the building (which previously housed Pacific Time), says a rumor that the eatery was sold to a French restaurant group is untrue. So there's a terrific indoor/outdoor space waiting for a tenant. Here's one vote for an Asian street food spot.

SIDE DISH

Speaking of rumors, **Michelle Bernstein** was sure floored to hear the one about Sra. Martinez being sold. "Sra. has not been sold," she says. "I'm in the midst of looking for a chef, and that's about it." Meanwhile, congrats to Bernstein for multiple culinary awards last month: To Sra. Martinez for "Best Restaurant 2012" at Johnson & Wales's first annual ZEST awards ceremony; to Señora's mixologist **Julio Cabrera** for first place in the regional Campari Best Aperitivo Cocktail Competition; and to Bernstein herself, crowned "Princess of Porc" in South Florida's regional Cochon 555, a national

heirloom pig competition. Next stop: the Grand Cochon at Aspen's Food & Wine Classic to vie with nine other regional winners on June 17.

Congrats also to pastry chef **Hedy Goldsmith** (from Michael's Genuine Food & Drink), this year's only James Beard Award finalist from Miami. Winners will be announced in NYC at a May 7 dinner of Beard-inspired recipes, where another Miami chef, **Norman Van Aken** from Tuyo, will represent with his legendary creamy conch chowder. Van Aken says his dish originated from Beard's recipe for the cream of mussels soup known as Billi Bi. And kudos to chef/owner **Kris Wessel** of Red Light, who became a Food Network *Chopped* champion last month. The competition's final deciding dish: a dessert crafted from strawberries, walnuts, corn chips, and hollandaise sauce.

Remember last fall when the Tommy Pooch/Alan Roth restolounge Ricochet opened in Midtown Miami, with much hype about its "menu of small bites dreamed up by Kris Wessel"? Flocking foodies (including me) were, however, puzzled by the uninspired items actually offered.

The back story: Wessel, an old friend of South Beach pioneer Roth, was indeed originally involved, but when I first questioned him in late November, he was delayed in implementing his menu by "a setback with the permitting process" plus a tiny kitchen "with no hood system



Pastry chef extraordinaire Hedy Goldsmith is a James Beard finalist.

for cooking. I won't put my stamp on it until it is ready."

When I ran into Wessel at the South Beach Wine & Food Festival in February, he was still involved — but still no stamp. And now, though the lounge's website continues to tout Wessel, he says, "I don't think I'll ever be involved in implementing a food concept at Ricochet." No food fights involved, just lack of time. At any rate, hit Ricochet for clubbing, not for Krisfood.

Please consult this month's "BizBuzz" column (page 26) for news and deals from BT restaurant advertisers Anise Taverna (soon evolving into RiverShack), Bagels & Company, Jean Paul's House, Racks / Soprano Italian Café and Restaurant, Trio on the Bay, Mario the Baker, and Royal Bavarian Schnitzel Haus.

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Dining Guide

Restaurant Listings

The Biscayne Corridor's most comprehensive restaurant guide. Total this month: 313.

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

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 rijstafel, a mix-and-match collection of small dishes and condiments to be heaped on rice. Note: bring cash. No plastic accepted here. \$-\$\$

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. \$

The Bar at Level 25 (Conrad Hotel)

1395 Brickell Ave., 05-503-6500

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! \$\$\$-\$\$\$

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 Guerande salt), salmon with lentils and fennel salsa, or a very affordable skirt steak au poivre make it possible to resist. \$-\$\$\$

Café Sambal

500 Brickell Key Dr., 305-913-8358

Though the Mandarin Oriental Hotel describes this

NEW THIS MONTH

MIAMI

MIDTOWN / WYNWOOD / DESIGN DISTRICT

Florin

3620 NE 2nd Ave., 786-953-5001

A labor of love from the married team of chocolatier/pastry chef Grazia Maggi and artist Rinaldo Malvernmi, this dessert café/tea house/market is a lovely little spot to enjoy a 100-percent organic afternoon tea (or herbal infusion) plus a daily-changing selection of housemade European-inspired pastries and chocolates, many incorporating edible flowers. Sweets, ranging from apricot-filled dark chocolate Sachertorte and Italian almond cakes to creamy truffles or meringue-dotted chocolate "salami," have unusual sophistication. And artistic, hand-designed packaging makes the goodies great gifts, too – if you can resist eating them yourself. \$\$\$

Jean Paul's House

2426 NE 2nd Ave., 305-573-7373

Jean Paul Desmaison, original chef/co-owner of La Cofradia in Coral Gables, has chosen a decidedly less tony, more transitional neighborhood for this venture. But inside his renovated bungalow, ambiance is stylishly cozy, and the creative contemporary North/South American fusion cuisine is as elegant as ever. Best bets are dishes influenced by Desmaison's native Peru, including crispy pork belly braised in pisco with silky sweet potato purée, and a beautifully balanced nikkei (Japanese/Peruvian) salmon sashimi that does the impossible: tame leche de tigre, Peru's infamous "tiger's milk" marinade. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Wine Vault Miami

Shops at Midtown Miami
Fountain Circle #105, 786-691-2000

From a Wine Vault press release: "Over 1300 square feet of pure decadence." In fact, the soaring, two-story space, complete with glass elevator, has a look that lives up to the hype. But the most decadent thing inside is a nibble from its tapas list: chocolate-covered bacon. Go ahead and make a meal of it. We grown-ups can eat what we want. More substantial plates to accompany the roughly four dozen wines, artisan beers, or cocktails include chorizo with new potatoes, and sweetly piquant

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

Cavas Wine Tasting Room

900 S. Miami Ave. #180, 305-372-8027

Like South Miami's predecessor (now closed), this Cavas is mainly an upscale, high-tech tasting lounge for the wine-curious. Patrons buy prepaid cards to sample ounce, half-glass, or full-glass portions from more than 50 self-service dispensing machines. But there's an extensive selection of tapas/pintxos small plates, flatbread "pizzas," sandwiches, plus fully garnished charcuterie and cheese platters specially selected to pair well with vino. Additionally, more

piquillo peppers stuffed with shredded tuna. Happy-hour wine prices are so low we'd better not mention them. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

UPPER EASTSIDE

Ni.Do. Caffè & Mozzarella Bar

7295 Biscayne Blvd., 305-960-7022

Don't let this little café's easily overlooked strip-mall location, or its informal interior, fool you. The warm welcome is authentically Italian, as are cleverly crafted antipasti, simple but full-flavored pastas, and homemade pastries (from rosemary breadsticks to fruit-topped dessert tortas) that will transport your taste buds to Tuscany. And the housemade mozzarella or burrata cheeses – truly milk elevated to royalty – will transport you to heaven. A small market area provides Italian staples, plus superb salumi and the magnificent mozz, to go. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

NORTH MIAMI

Bagel Bar East

1990 NE 123rd St., 305-895-7022

Crusty outside (even without toasting) and substantially chewy inside, the bagels here are the sort homesick ex-New Yorkers always moan are impossible to find in Miami. For those who prefer puffed-up, pillow bagels? Forget it. Have a nice onion pocket. There's also a full menu of authentic Jewish deli specialties, including especially delicious, custom-cut – not pre-sliced – nova or lox. Super size sandwiches easily serve two, and they'll even improvise a real NJ Sloppy Joe (two meats, Swiss, coleslaw, and Russian dressing on rye) if you ask nice. \$\$

SUNNY ISLES BEACH

Piazzetta

17875 Collins Ave., 305-918-6816

You can't help feeling optimistic about a tourist town's food scene when its resort restaurants, which generally walk the middle of the road, get creative. And it doesn't get much more creative than this stylish restaurant and Italian market, which bills itself as a trip to an Italian-inspired "little market square," but which, along with artisanal salumi plus pizzas and pastas, serves sushi. Particularly tasty: the native Neapolitan pizza chef's truffled taleggio and mushroom pies; melt-ingly tender braised short ribs; an impeccable market-driven meat and cheese platter. \$\$\$

substantial dishes have been added, including a daily three-course lunch special and some tasty, bargain-priced soups (carrot cream with Gouda particularly recommended). \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Chophouse Miami

300 S. Biscayne Blvd., 305-938-9000

Formerly Manny's Steakhouse, Miami's Chophouse retains basically everything but the famed name (from the original Manny's in Minneapolis), and remains Miami's most intentionally masculine steakhouse. Here, ensconced in your black leather booth, everything is humongous: dry-aged choice-grade steaks like the Bludgeon of Beef (a boldly flavorful 40-ounce bone-in ribeye, described as "part meat, part weapon"); king crab legs that dwarf the plate; cocktail shrimp that could swallow the Loch Ness monster whole; two-fisted cocktails that would fell a T-Rex. Not for the frail. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

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Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

Crazy About You

1155 Brickell Bay Dr. #101, 305-377-4442
The owners, and budget-friendly formula, are the same here as at older Dolores, But You Can Call Me Lolita: Buy an entrée (all under \$20) from a sizable list of Mediterranean, Latin, American, or Asian-influenced choices (like Thai-marinated churrasco with crispy shoestring fries) and get an appetizer for free, including substantial stuff like a Chihuahua cheese casserole with chorizo and pesto. The difference: This place, housed in the former location of short-lived La Broche, has an even more upscale ambiance than Dolores – including a million-dollar water view. \$\$\$

Cvi.che 105

105 NE 3rd Ave., 305-577-3454
Fusion food – a modern invention? Not in Peru, where native and Euro-Asian influences have mixed for more than a century. But chef Juan Chipoco gives the ceviches and tiraditos served at this hot spot his own unique spin. Specialties include flash-marinated raw seafood creations, such as *tiradito a la crema de rocoto* (sliced fish 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 restorlounge MIA, the hip, high-tech nightclub component remains the same, as does much of the restaurant space's mod décor. The liquid nitrogen tanks are gone from the kitchen, however, and the atmosphere aims for a retro all-American feel to match the fare: burgers (from a hormone/antibiotic-free ground Angus chuck/brisket/short rib blend), with choice of housemade sauce plus customizable toppings ranging from pickles to pork belly. Also available: veggie burgers, dogs, salads, Buffalo chicken sandwiches, and standard sides. Rich malts and shakes come regular or adult (spiked). \$\$

db Bistro Moderne

345 Avenue of the Americas, 305-421-8800
Just two words – “Daniel Boulud” – should be enough for foodies craving creative French/American comfort cuisine to run, not walk, to this restaurant. If they can find it. (Hint: The mysterious “Avenue of the Americas” is really Biscayne Boulevard Way. Don't ask.) Downtown's db is an absentee celeb chef outpost, but on-site kitchen wizard Jarrod Verbiak flawlessly executes dishes ranging from the original NYC db Bistro's signature foie gras/short rib/black truffle-stuffed burger to local market-driven dishes like crusted pompano with garlic/parsley veloute. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

The Democratic Republic of Beer

255 NE 14th St., 305-372-4161
The food here? Beer is food! The DRB serves 400 beers from 55 countries, ranging from \$2 Pabst Blue Ribbon to \$40 DeuS (an 11.5% alcohol Belgian *methode Champenoise* brew). But for those favoring solid snacks, tasty global smallish plates include fried fresh zucchini with dip (cheese recommended); chorizo with home-made cilantro Mayo; or steak tacos, served Mexican-style with onions, cilantro, and spicy salsa. Sadly for breakfast-brew enthusiasts, the DRB isn't open that early. But it is open late – till 5:00 a.m. \$\$

Dolores, But You Can Call Me Lolita

1000 S. Miami Ave., 305-403-3103
From the stylish setting in Miami's historic Firehouse No. 4, one would expect a mighty pricy meal. But entrées, which range from Nuevo Latino-style ginger/orange-glazed pork tenderloin to a platter of Kobe mini-burgers, all cost either \$18 or \$23. And the price includes an appetizer – no low-rent crapola, either, but treats like Serrano ham croquetas, a spinach/leek tart with Portobello mushroom sauce, or shrimp-topped eggplant timbales. The best seats are on the glam rooftop patio. \$\$\$

Edge, Steak & Bar

1435 Brickell Ave., 305-358-3535
Replacing the Four Seasons' formal fine dining spot Acqua, Edge offers a more kick-back casual welcoming vibe. And in its fare there's a particularly warm welcome for non-carnivores. Chef-driven seafood items (several inventive and unusually subtle ceviches and tartares; a layered construction of corvina encrusted in a jewel-bright green pesto crust, atop red piquillo sauce stripes and salad; lobster corn soup packed with sweet lobster meat; more) and a farm-to-table produce emphasis make this one steakhouse where those who don't eat beef have no beef. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

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
Originally opened by Michelin-starred “New Aegean” chef Michael Psilakis, Eos changed upon the chef's departure into a more familiar Mediterranean resort eatery, minus Greek-inspired innovations. Now inspiration comes mainly from Spain and Italy, with nods to Morocco and Latin America. Best bets include a tasting platter of Spanish cheeses and cured meats; a pistachio-garnished salad featuring Serrano ham, figs, and arugula; crispy parmesan risotto balls with prosciutto and smoked tomato dip; and olive/smoked paprika-rubbed roast chicken. At lunch burgers and upscale sandwiches are added. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Fado Irish Pub

900 S. Miami Ave. #200, 786-924-0972
Unlike most Miami “Irish” pubs, which serve mostly American bar food, rarely foraying past fish and chips or shepherd's pie, Fado (pronounced “f doe”) has a menu reflecting the pub grub found today in Ireland, including solid standards. But most intriguing are dishes mixing classic and contemporary influences, particularly those featuring boxty, a grated/mashed potato pancake. Try corned beef rolls (boxty wraps, with creamy mustard sauce and cabbage slaw), or smoked salmon on mini-boxty “blini,” with capers and horse-radish sauce. There's a seasonal menu, too. \$\$

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. \$\$

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; home-made pastas like seafood-packed fettuccine al scoglio; or delicate Vitello alla Milanese on arugula. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Fresco California Bistro

1744 SW 3rd Ave., 305-858-0608
This festively decorated indoor/outdoor bistro packs a lot of party spirit into a small space, a large variety of food onto its menu. To the familiar Latin American/Italian equation, the owners add a touch of Cal-Mex (like Tex-Mex but more health conscious). Menu offerings range from designer pizzas and pastas to custardy tamales, but the bistro's especially known for imaginative meal-size salads, like one featuring mandarin oranges, avocado, apple, blue cheese, raisins, candied pecans, and chicken on a mesclun bed. \$\$

Garcia's Seafood Grille and Fish Market

398 NW N. River Dr., 305-375-0765
Run by a fishing family for a couple of generations, this venerable Florida fish shack is the real thing. No worries about the seafood's freshness; on their way to the dining deck overlooking the Miami River, diners can view the retail fish market. Best preparations are the simplest. When stone crabs are in season, Garcia's claws are as good as Joe's but considerably cheaper. The local fish sandwich is most popular – grouper, yellowtail snapper, or mahi mahi. \$\$\$

Giovana Caffe

154 SE 1st Ave. 305-374-1024
If the menu at this charming downtown hideaway contained only one item – pear and gorgonzola ravioli dressed, not drowned, in sage-spiced cream sauce – we'd be happy. But the café, formerly lunch-only but now serving weekday dinners, is also justly famed for meal-size salads like grilled skirt steak atop sweetly balsamic-dressed spinach (with spinach, tomatoes, bacon, hard-boiled eggs, blue cheese, and almonds), or an especially lavish chicken salad with pine nuts, golden raisins, apples, and basil, an Italian twist. \$\$

Grimpa Steakhouse

901 Brickell Plaza, 305-455-4757
This expansive indoor/outdoor Brazilian eatery is sleekly contemporary, but no worries. The classic sword-wielding gauchos are here, serving a mind-reeling assortment of skewered beef, chicken, lamb, pork, sausages, and fish. And included in the price (dinner \$47, lunch \$34) is the traditional belly-busting buffet of hot and cold prepared foods, salad, cold cuts, and cheeses. A pleasant, 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 cheese-burger, the pancetta/mozzarella/plum-filled Americana, and several vegetarian options. At just over two bucks apiece, they're a money-saving moveable feast. \$

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. \$\$

Il Gabbiano

335 S. Biscayne Blvd., 305-373-0063
Its location at the mouth of the Miami River makes this ultra-upscale Italian spot (especially the outdoor terrace) the perfect power lunch/business dinner alternative to steakhouses. And the culinary experience goes way beyond the typical meat market, thanks in part to the flood of freebies that's a trademark of Manhattan's Il Mulino, originally run by Il Gabbiano's owners. The rest of the food? Pricy, but portions are mammoth. And the champagne-cream-sauced housemade ravioli with black truffles? Worth every penny. \$\$\$

Hibachi Grill

45 NE 3rd Ave., 305-374-2223
Imagine a mini-express Benihana. This place specializes in teppanyaki cuisine – minus the thrilling (or terrifying) tableside knife theatrics, true, but the one-plate meals of seasoned steak slices, chicken, shrimp, or salmon plus dipping sauces, fried rice, and an onion/zucchini mix come at bargain prices. There are also hefty soups or Japanese, Thai, and Singapore-style noodle and rice bowls loaded with veggies and choice of protein (including tofu). The limited sides are Japanese (shumai, plump chicken gyoza) and Chinese (various egg rolls). Fancy? No, but satisfying. \$\$\$

Indigo / Table 40

100 Chopin Plaza, 305-577-1000
Long known for its power-lunch buffet – including hot entrées, carving station, custom pastas, packed-to-the-gills salad, sushi, and dessert stations – the InterContinental Hotel's Indigo restaurant now has a hip offspring intended for private dining: Table 40. The charming, glassed-in wine “cellar” (actually in the kitchen) enables 12-14 diners to watch the action in heat-shielded, soundproofed comfort while eating creations by veteran chef Alexander Feher, combining Continental technique with local seasonal ingredients. Highlights: tender house-smoked, stout-braised short ribs; lavish lobster salad with grilled mango; and a seductive fresh corn gazpacho. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Iron Sushi

120 SE 3rd Ave., 305-373-2000
(See Miami Shores listing)

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Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

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 truffle oil, proprietors Jennifer Porciello and Horatio Oliveira continue to draw a lunch crowd that returns for dinner, or perhaps just stays on through the afternoon, fueled by the Lawyer's Liquid Lunch, a vodka martini spiked with sweetened espresso. \$\$\$

La Moon

144 SW 8th St., 305-860-6209

At four in the morning, nothing quells the munchies like a Crazy Burger, a Colombian take on a trucker's burger: beef patty, bacon, ham, mozzarella, lettuce, tomato, and a fried egg, with an arepa corn pancake "bun." While this tiny place's late hours (till 6:00 a.m. Friday and Saturday) are surprising, the daytime menu is more so. In addition to Colombian classics, there's a salad Nicoise with grilled fresh tuna, seared salmon with mango salsa, and other yuppie favorites. \$\$\$

La Provence

1064 Brickell Ave. 786-425-9003

Great baguettes in the bread basket, many believe, indicate a great meal to come. But when Miamians encounter such bread – crackling crust outside; moist, aromatic, aerated interior – it's likely not from a restaurant's own kitchen, but from La Provence. Buttery croissants and party-perfect pastries are legend too. Not so familiar is the bakery's café component, whose sandwich/salad menu reflects local eclectic tastes. But French items like pan bagnats (essentially salade 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-macaroon sandwich cookies with daily-changing fillings. \$\$\$

Lime Fresh Mexican Grill

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

(See Midtown / Wynwood / Design District listing.)

Little Lotus

25 N. Miami Ave. #107, 305-533-2700

Secreted inside the International Jewelry Exchange, this eatery (owned by stealth super-foodie Sari Maharani – paralegal by day, restaurateur by night) is tough to find but seems destined to become one of our town's toughest tables to book. Two talented chefs, whose credits include Morimoto (NYC) and hometown fave Yakko-san, create Japanese, Indonesian, and fusion small plates that look remarkably artful and taste like they're about ready to take on Iron Chef Morimoto himself. Saucing, often with multiple but balanced potions, is especially noteworthy. The prices? A steal. \$\$\$

LouLou Le Petit Bistro

638 S. Miami Ave., 305-379-1404

When Indochine's owner, Jacques Ardisson, closed his Asian spot to open this charming French eatery in the same space, it was a return to his roots. He and his daughter, for whom the place is named, come from Nice. You'll be transported, too, by dishes like lamb shank with flageolets (known as the caviar of beans), duck leg confit on a bed of mouthwatering green lentils from Le Puy, a classic moules/frites, a shared charcuterie platter with a bottle from the savvy wine list, and, of course, salade niçoise. \$\$\$

Mare Nostrum

1111 SW 1st Ave., 786-691-2770

While Mare Nostrum's own blurbs describe it as a

Mediterranean restaurant, it would be more accurate to precede that with "not just another." Both the name ("our sea") and a raw bar packed with pristine Spanish and local seafood make clear what is the specialty of chef Pedro Gallardo, an Arzak/El Bulli veteran. And indeed, simply steamed or grilled cigala (Mediterranean langoustines) are impeccable. But one could also be happy making a meal of sea-free small plates like luscious deep-fried artichokes with peppery, rich romesco sauce. \$\$\$

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-crusting 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. \$

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Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

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 mouthwatering finger food, shared among friends. \$\$\$

neMesis Urban Bistro

1035 N. Miami Ave., 305-415-9911
Truly original restaurants are hard to find here, and harder to describe in standard sound bites. But they often are the attention-grabbing people-magnets that spark revivals of iffy neighborhoods. That's our prediction for this quirkily decorated bistro, where the kitchen is helmed by *Top Chef* contestant Micah Edelstein. The intensely personal menu of creative dishes inspired by her global travels (plus her fascination with unfamiliar ingredients) changes constantly, but scrumptious signatures include South African smoked veal bobotie, and Peruvian pinoli pancakes with housemade chicken/apple sausage, hibiscus syrup, and maple granules. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Novocento

1414 Brickell Ave., 305-403-0900
For those who think "Argentine cuisine" is a synonym for "beef and more beef," this popular eatery's wide range of more cosmopolitan contemporary Argentine fare will be a revelation. Classic parrilla-grilled steaks are here for traditionalists, but the menu is dominated by creative Nuevo Latino items like a new-style ceviche de chernia (lightly lime-marinated grouper with jalapeños, basil, and the refreshing sweet counterpoint of watermelon), or crab ravioli with creamy saffron sauce. Especially notable are the entrée salads. \$\$\$

Oceanaire Seafood Room

900 S. Miami Ave., 305-372-8862
With a dozen branches nationwide, Oceanaire may seem more All-American seafood empire than Florida fish shack, but menus vary significantly according to regional tastes and fish. Here in Miami, chef Sean Bernal supplements signature starters like lump crab cakes with his own lightly marinated, Peruvian-style grouper ceviche. The daily-changing, 15-20 specimen seafood selection includes local fish seldom seen on local menus: pompano, parrot fish, amberjack. But even flown-in fish (and the raw bar's cold-water oysters) are ultra-fresh. \$\$\$

Ozzi Sushi

200 SE 1st St., 786-704-8003
Since its 1958 invention, conveyor-belt sushi has been the most fun form of Japanese fast food, but problematic. Who knew how long plates had been circulating on the sushi-go-round? Happily, this sushi-boat spot avoids sanitation issues with clear plastic

covers, and as for freshness, low prices ensure a steady stream of diners grabbing makis, nigiri, and more as they float by. Highlights include glistening ikura (salmon roe) in a thin-sliced cucumber cup, a sweet-sauced mango/guava/crab roll, and a festively frosted strawberry Nutella dessert maki. \$\$\$

Pega Grill

15 E. Flagler St., 305-808-6666
From Thanasios Barlos, a Greek native who formerly owned North Beach's Ariston, this small spot is more casually contemporary and less ethnic-kitschy in ambiance, but serves equally authentic, full-flavored Greek food. Mixed lamb/beef gyros (chicken is also an option), topped with tangy yogurt sauce and wrapped, with greens and tomatoes, in fat warm pita bread, are specialties. But even more irresistible is the taramasalata (particularly velvety and light carp roe dip), available alone or on an olive/pita-garnished mixed meze platter. \$\$

Pasha's

1414 Brickell Ave., 305-416-5116
The original branch on Lincoln Road was instantly popular, and the same healthy Middle Eastern fast food is served at several newer outlets. The prices are low enough that you might suspect Pasha's was a tax write-off rather than a Harvard Business School project, which it was by founders Antonio Ellek and Nicolas Cortes. Dishes range from falafel and gyros to more unusual items like muhammara (tangy walnut spread) and silky labneh yogurt cheese. Everything from pitas to lemonade is made fresh, from scratch, daily. \$\$\$

Peoples Bar-B-Que

360 NW 8th St., 305-373-8080
Oak-smoked, falling-off-the-bone tender barbecued ribs (enhanced with a secret sauce whose recipe goes back several generations) are the main draw at this Overtown institution. But the chicken is also a winner, plus there's a full menu of soul food entrées, including what many aficionados consider our town's tastiest souse. And it would be unthinkable to call it quits without homemade sweet potato pie or banana pudding, plus a bracing flop – half iced tea, half lemonade. \$\$\$

Perricone's

15 SE 10th St., 305-374-9449
Housed in a Revolutionary-era barn (moved from Vermont), this market/café was one of the Brickell area's first gentrified amenities. At lunch chicken salad is a favorite; dinner's strong suit is the pasta list, ranging from Grandma Jennie's old-fashioned lasagna to chichi fiocchi purses filled with fresh pear and gorgonzola. And Sunday's \$15.95 brunch buffet (\$9.95 for kids) – featuring an omelet station, waffles, smoked salmon and bagels, salads, and more – remains one of our town's most civilized all-you-can-eat deals. \$\$

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. \$\$\$

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 Lucanian sausage and a balsamic reduction. Or maybe an even more evocative Roman ice cream tartufo? Mangia! \$\$\$

Soi Asian Bistro

134 NE 2nd Ave., 305-523-3643
From the owners of Calle Ocho's hip Mr. Yum and 2B

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

Soya & Pomodoro

120 NE 1st St., 305-381-9511
Life is complicated. Food should be simple. That's owner Armando Alfano's philosophy, which is stated above the entry to his atmospheric downtown eatery. And since it's also the formula for the truest traditional Italian food (Alfano hails from Pompeii), it's fitting that the menu is dominated by authentically straightforward yet sophisticated Italian entrées. There are salads and sandwiches, too. The most enjoyable place to dine is the secret, open-air courtyard. Alfano serves dinner on Thursdays only to accompany local musicians and artists. \$\$\$

Sparky's Roadside Restaurant & Bar

204 NE 1st St., 305-377-2877
This cowboy-cute eatery's chefs/owners (one CIA-trained, both BBQ fanatics nicknamed Sparky) eschew regional purism, instead utilizing a hickory/apple-wood-stoked rotisserie smoker to turn out their personalized style of slow-cooked, complexly dry-rub fusion: ribs, chopped pork, brisket, and chicken. Diners can customize their orders with mix-and-match housemade sauces: sweet/tangy tomato-based, Carolinas-inspired vinegar/mustard, pan-Asian hoisin with lemongrass and ginger, tropical guava/habanero. Authenticity aside, the quality of the food is as good as much higher-priced barbecue outfits. \$\$\$

Sushi Maki

1000 S. Miami Ave., 305-415-9779
Fans of the popular parent Sushi Maki in the Gables will find many familiar favorites on this Brickell branch's menu. But the must-haves are some inventive new dishes introduced to honor the eatery's tenth anniversary – and Miami multiculturalism: "sushi tacos" (fried gyoza skins with fusion fillings like raw salmon, miso, chili-garlic sauce, and sour cream), three tasty flash-marinated Asian/Latin tiraditos: addictive rock shrimp tempura with creamy/spicy dip. Also irresistible: four festive new sake cocktails. \$\$\$

SuViche

49 SW 11th St., 305-960-7097
This small Japanese-Peruvian place serves food influenced by each nation distinctly, plus intriguing fusion items with added Caribbean touches. Cooked entrées, all Peruvian, include an elegant aji de gallina (walnut-garnished chicken and potatoes in peppery cream sauce). But the emphasis is on contemporary ceviches/tiraditos (those with velvety aji amarillo chili sauce particularly), plus huge exotic sushi rolls, which get pretty wild. When was the last time you encountered a tempura-battered tuna, avocado, and scallion maki topped with Peru's traditional potato garnish, 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. \$\$



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Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

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. \$\$

Tré Italian Bistro

270 E. Flagler St., 305-373-3303

"Bistro" actually sounds too Old World for this cool hangout, from the owners of downtown old-timer La Loggia, but "restolounge" sounds too glitzy. Think of it as a neighborhood "bistrolounge." The food is mostly modernized Italian, with Latin and Asian accents: a prosciutto-and-fig pizza with Brazilian catupiry cheese; gnocchi served either as finger food (fried, with calamata olive/truffle aioli), or plated with orange-ginger sauce. But there are tomato-sauced meatballs with r'gawt for Grandpa Vinnie, too. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Truluck's Seafood, Steak, and Crabhouse

777 Brickell Ave., 305-579-0035

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

Tuyo

415 NE 2nd St., 305-237-3200

Atop the revolutionary Miami Culinary Institute, this upscale eatery, unlike the café downstairs, isn't student-run. Rather it's designed to showcase school ideals – including sustainability as well as definitive Miami cuisine. The changing menu, from a culinary Dream Team headed by "New World Cuisine" inventor/MCI instructor Norman Van Aken (plus former protégés Jeffrey Brana and Travis Starwalt), mixes citrus-inflected creamy conch chowder and other pioneering signatures with new inventions like mind-reeling multidimensional oyster

pan stew, or tartare of tuna and bursting ripe tomato topped with a delicate sous vide egg. \$\$\$\$

Waxy O'Connor's

690 SW 1st Ct., 786-871-7660

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

Wok Town

119 SE 1st Ave., 305-371-9993

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

Zuma

270 Biscayne Blvd. Way, 305-577-0277

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

Midtown / Wynwood / Design District

3 Chefs Chinese Restaurant

1800 Biscayne Blvd. #105, 305-373-2688

Until this eatery opened in late 2010, the solid Chinese restaurants in this neighborhood could be counted on the fingers of no hands. So it's not surprising that most

people concentrate on Chinese and Chinese/American fare. The real surprise is the remarkably tasty, budget-priced, Vietnamese fare. Try pho, 12 varieties of full-flavored beef/rice noodle soup (including our favorite, with well-done flank steak and flash-cooked eye round). All can be customized with sprouts and fresh herbs. Also impressive: Noodle combination plates with sautéed meats, salad, and spring rolls. \$\$

Adelita's Café

2699 Biscayne Blvd., 305-576-1262

From the street (which is actually NE 26th, not Biscayne) this Honduran restaurant seems unpromising, but inside it's bigger, better, and busier than it looks. Unlike many Latin American eateries, this one sticks close to the source and proves a crowd-pleaser. On weekends especially, the dining rooms are packed with families enjoying authentic fare like baleadas (thick corn tacos), tajadas (Honduras' 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 Andalucía. On weekends, food is served till 4:00 a.m. \$\$\$

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. \$\$

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 (anti-pasti, soups, salads, pizzas) as its older sibling, South Miami's Blu Pizzeria, plus burgers. The thin-crust, pliable pizzas, though lacking burn blisters, are brick-oven cooked, as are "blues," unusual calzones (like the blu oceano, fatly filled with mozzarella, prosciutto crudo, arugula, and fresh tomatoes). Hefty half-pound burgers come similarly stuffed rather than topped. A sheltered patio and full bar make the place a pleasant neighborhood lounge, too. \$\$

Bin No. 18

1800 Biscayne Blvd., 786-235-7575

At this wine bar/café, the décor is a stylish mix of contemporary (high loft ceilings) and Old World (tables made from wine barrels). Cuisine is similarly geared to the area's smart new residents: creative sandwiches and salads at lunch, tapas and larger internationally themed Spanish, Italian, or French charcuterie platters at night. Though the place is small and family-run friendly, chef Alfredo Patino offers sophisticated snacks like the figiutto: arugula, gorgonzola dolce, caramelized onions, pine nuts, fresh figs, and prosciutto. Free parking behind the building. \$\$

Blue Piano

4600 NE 2nd Ave., 305-576-7919

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

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Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

Buena Vista Bistro 4582 NE 2nd Ave., 305-456-5909

If a neighborhood eatery like this one — which serves supremely satisfying bistro food — were within walking distance of every Miami resident, we'd be a helluva hip food town. Like true Parisian bistros, it's open continuously, every day, with prices so low that you can drop in anytime for authentic rillettes (a rustic pâté) with a crusty baguette, steak with from-scratch frites, salmon atop ratatouille, or many changing blackboard specials. Portions are plentiful. So is free parking. \$\$

Buena Vista Deli 4590 NE 2nd Ave., 305-576-3945

At this casual café/bakery, co-owned by Buena Vista Bistro's Claude Postel, the day starts in authentic French fashion, with fresh breakfast breads, chocolate almond croissants, and other delights. At lunch cornichon-garnished baguette sandwiches (containing housemade pâtés, sinfully rich pork rillettes, superb salami, and other charcuterie classics) are irresistible, and a buttery-crust, custardy quiche plus perfectly dressed salad costs little more than a fast-food combo meal. As for Postel's homemade French sweets, if you grab the last Paris-Brest, a praline butter-cream-filled puff pastry, we may have to kill you. \$-\$\$

Café 46 190 NE 46th St., 305-400-8828

It doesn't look like South Beach's late lamented Joe Allen. The urban beach bar décor and bohemian vibe actually are more reminiscent of this space's first restaurant, 190. But the menu is virtually identical — no surprise since co-owner/host Mario Rubeo, plus most kitchen staffers, are Joe Allen veterans. Revisit faves like matzo meal-crust chicken, the famous burger, still-unique dinner salads spotlighting uncommon ingredients like smoked trout, and fun signature desserts like Rice Krispy treats. \$\$\$

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 anticuchos, so buttery-rich we nearly passed out with pleasure. \$\$

Catch Grill & Bar 1633 N. Bayshore Dr., 305-536-6414

A location within easy walking distance of the Arsht Center for the Performing Arts, in the extensively renovated Marriott Biscayne Bay, makes this casual-chic eatery, whose specialty is local and sustainable seafood, a great option for pre-show bites. Then again, enjoying lures like sweet-glazed crispy shrimp with friends on the outdoor, bayfront terrace is entertainment enough. It's worth calling to ask if the daily catch is wreckfish, a sustainable local that tastes like a cross between grouper and sea bass. Bonus: With validation, valet parking is free. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

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

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

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-Emeri's) has designed a varied menu to match. Highlights: an astonishingly thin/crunchy-crust pizza topped with duck confit, wild mushrooms, port wine syrup, and subtly truffled béchamel; crispy calamari (rings and legs) with light, lemony tomato emulsion; and tuna tartar that is refreshingly free of sesame oil. Big portions and a full bar to boot. \$\$-\$\$\$\$

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

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

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

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

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 favas, tahini, garlic, lemon juice, and olive oil. A brick oven makes both pizzas and homemade pitas superior. \$\$

18th Street Café 210 NE 18th St., 305-381-8006

Most seating in this cool, pioneering neighborhood café is in a giant bay window, backed with banquettes, that makes the small space feel expansive — fitting, since the menu keeps expanding, too. Originally breakfast/lunch only, the café, though closed weekends, now serves dinner till 10:00 p.m., with comfort food entrées like secret-recipe meatloaf joining old favorites: daily-changing homemade soups, varied burgers, layered international salads, inspired sandwiches (like roast beef and provolone with creamy horseradish). Beer and wine is available, and now so is delivery. \$\$

The Federal Food, Drink & Provisions 5132 Biscayne Blvd., 305-758-9559

At the Fed, expect what locals know to expect from somelier/chef team Aniece Meinhold and Cesar Zapata, whose previous restaurant concepts have included Blue Piano (gourmet stoner snacks) and Vietnamese pop-up Phuc Yea. That is, expect the unexpected. The Fed is an updated tavern featuring creative, from-scratch takes on traditional American regional dishes: flaky Southern biscuits with sausage gravy (and crisp-coated sweetbreads, if desired); Northeastern-inspired "pig wings" (pork drumettes with homemade Buffalo sauce, blue cheese mousse, and pickled veggies). Desserts, from third partner Alejandro Ortiz, include sinful sticky buns. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Five Guys Famous Burger and Fries Shops at Midtown Miami Buena Vista Ave., 305-571-8341

No green-leaf faux health food here. You get what the name says, period, with three adds: kosher dogs, veggie burgers, and free peanuts while you wait. Which you will, just a bit, since burgers are made fresh upon order. Available in double or one-patty sizes, they're well-done but spurtingly juicy, and after loading with your choice of free garnishes, even a "little" burger makes a major meal. Fries (regular or Cajun-spiced) are also superior, hand-cut in-house from sourced potatoes. \$

Fratelli Lyon 4141 NE 2nd Ave., 305-572-2901

This Italian café has been packed since the moment it opened. No surprise to any who recall owner Ken Lyon's pioneering Lyon Frères gourmet store on Lincoln Road (1992-97), another joint that was exactly what its neighborhood needed. The restaurant's artisan salumi, cheeses, flavorful boutique olive oils, and more are so outstanding that you can't help wishing it also had a retail component. Entrées include properly al dente pastas, plus some regional specialties like Venetian-style calves liver, rarely found outside Italy. \$\$\$

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

As befits its location in artful, working-class Wynwood,

Gigi has minimalist modern diner ambiance paired with truly creative contemporary Asian-influenced comfort food from Top Chef contender Jeff McInnis (formerly of the South Beach Ritz-Carlton) at surprisingly low prices. From a menu encompassing noodle and rice bowls, steam-bun ssams, grilled goodies, and raw items, highlights include pillow-light roast pork-stuffed buns, and possibly the world's best BLT, featuring Asian bun "toast," thick pork belly slices rather than bacon, and housemade pickles. There's \$2 beer, too. \$-\$\$\$

The Grrrlz of Sandwich 555 NE 15th St., 2nd floor (Venetia condo) 305-374-4305

Riot Grrrl DIY spirit shines in the homemade soups, sweets, salads, and exceptionally tasty warm baguette sandwiches (like prosciutto and fresh mozzarella, dressed with a unique sumac vinaigrette) at this concealed café, hidden on the Venetia condo's mezzanine. Owners Ana Oliva and Fadia Sarkis scour local markets daily for the freshest of ingredients, and their breads (plus light-crust 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 zep-poles, 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 heat-coded sauces and dry rubs meant for custom-tossing with wings and other things (including white-meat "boneless wings," really wing-shaped chicken breast pieces), accompanied by ranch or classic blue-cheese dip and celery. It would be silly to not pair your main with garlic/herb-butter parmesan fries. There are many other items, too, including salads. But hey, celery is salad, right? \$\$

Jimmy's Kitchen 2700 N. Miami Ave. #5, 305-573-1505

No need to trek to South Beach for what many consider Miami's best classic Puerto Rican mofongo (fried green plantains mashed with fresh garlic, olive oil, and pork cracklings, surrounded by chicken or shrimp in zesty criollo sauce). This new location is bigger and better than the original, plus the mofongo is served every day, not just on weekends. But don't ignore the meal-size salads or high-quality sandwiches, including a pressed tripleta containing roast pork, bacon, Black Forest ham, provolone, and caramelized onions. \$\$

Joey's Italian Café 2506 NW 2nd Ave., 305-438-0488

The first new restaurant in the Wynwood Café District, this stylish indoor/outdoor Italian hangout is as casually cool as one would hope — and as affordable. There's a five-buck half-serving of spaghetti al pomodoro and respectable vino for under \$30. And few can resist delicately thin, crunchy-crust pizzas like the creative Dolce e Piccante or orgasmic Carbonara. Pastas are fresh; produce is largely local; the mosaic-centered décor is minimalist but inviting. And no need to be wary of the warehouse district at night: Valet parking is free. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$



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Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

La Latina 3509 NE 2nd Ave., 305-571-9655

At last, an authentic Venezuelan arepera (purveyor of homemade arepas, with a variety of meat, cheese, and veggie fillings) that isn't out in the boonies – and decidedly isn't a dive. With colorful décor concocted from recycled objects, this space, though small, has truly eclectic, Midtown style. The signature corn cakes, crisped outside and fluffy inside, put sodden supermarket specimens to shame. And cachapas (softer, sweeter corn pancakes folded around mozzarella-like fresh cheese) or bollarepitas (cheese-stuffed deep-fried corn cakes, with tangy nata dip) may be even tastier. \$\$-\$\$

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 ambiance, encouraged by an expansive, rustic wooden deck. \$\$

Lemoni Café 4600 NE 2nd Ave., 305-571-5080

The menu here reads like your standard sandwiches/salads/starters primer. What it doesn't convey is the freshness of the ingredients and the care that goes into their use. Entrée-size salads range from an elegant spinach (goat cheese, pears, walnuts, raisins) to chunky homemade chicken salad on a bed of mixed greens. Sandwiches (cold baguette subs, hot pressed paninis, or wraps, all accompanied by side salads) include a respectable Cuban and a veggie wrap with a deceptively rich-tasting light salad cream. \$\$-\$\$

Lime Fresh Mexican Grill Shops at Midtown Miami Buena Vista Avenue, 305-576-5463

Like its South Beach predecessor, this Lime was an instant hit, as much for being a hip new Midtown hangout as for its carefully crafted Tex-Mex food. The concept is “fast casual” rather than fast food – meaning nice enough for a night out. It also means ingredients are always fresh. Seafood tacos are about as exotic as the menu gets, but the mahi mahi for fish tacos comes from a local supplier, and salsas are housemade daily. Niceties include low-carb tortillas and many Mexican beers. \$

Limón y Sabor 3045 Biscayne Blvd., 786-431-5739

In this dramatically renovated space, the room is now light and open, and the food is authentic Peruvian, with seafood a specialty. Portions are huge, prices low, quality high. Especially good are their versions of pescado a lo macho (fish fillet topped with mixed seafood in a creamy, zesty sauce); jalea (breaded and deep-fried fish, mixed seafood, and yuca, topped with onion/pepper/lime salsa), and yuca in hot yet fruity rocoto chili cream sauce. \$\$

Lost & Found Saloon 185 NW 36th St., 305-576-1008

There's an artsy/alternative feel to this casual and friendly Wynwood eatery, which, since opening as a weekday-only breakfast and lunch joint in 2005, has grown with its neighborhood. It's now open for dinner six nights a week, serving Southwestern-style fare at rock-bottom prices. Dishes like piñon and pepita-crusted 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. \$

Mandolin Aegean Bistro 4312 NE 2nd Ave., 305-576-6066

Inside this converted 1940s home's blue-and-white dining room – or even more atmospherically, its tree-sheltered garden – diners feast on authentic rustic fare from both Greece and Turkey. Make a meal of multinational mezes: a Greek sampler of creamy tzatziki yogurt dip, smoky eggplant purée, and airy tarama caviar spread; and a Turkish sampler of hummus, fava purée, and rich tomato-walnut dip. The meze of mussels in lemony wine broth is, with Mandolin's fresh-baked flatbread, almost a full meal in itself. \$\$-\$\$\$

Mario the Baker 250 NE 25th St., 305-438-0228 (See North Miami listing)

Mercadito Midtown 3252 NE 1st Ave., 786-369-0423

Some people frequent this fashionable restolounge, festooned with graffiti-style murals designed to evoke a bustling Mexican street market, just for the dangerously smooth margaritas. But the main must-haves here are tacos, encased in a rarity: genuinely made-from-scratch corn tortillas, small but 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 contemporary American cuisine compelling enough to attract hordes. Dishes are basically comfort food, but *ultimate* comfort food: the most custardy, fluffy French toast imaginable; shoe-string frites that rival Belgium's best; mouthwatering maple-basted bacon; miraculously terrific tofu (crisply panko-crust and apricot/soy-glazed); even a “voluptuous grilled cheese sandwich” – definitely a “don't ask, don't tell your cardiologist” item. \$\$-\$\$\$

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

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

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 pizzas now offer authentic Italian or delicate designer pizzas. But a satisfying Brooklyn-style street slice? Fuhgedit. Thankfully that's the specialty 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.

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 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. \$\$-\$\$

Salumeria 104 3451 NE 1st Ave. #104, 305-424-9588

In Italy, salumerias started, like American delicatessens, as shops selling salumi (cured meats), but evolved into the equivalent of eat-in deli/restaurants that also serve cold and hot prepared foods. At this modern Midtown salumeria, the soups-to-salads-to-sweets range of fare is the same. Custom-sliced imported cold cuts are a main focus, especially for those who enjoy taste-testing a plate pairing Italy's two most famous prosciuttos: Parma and San Daniele. But homemade pastas are also impressive, as are hard-to-find regional entrées like fegato alla Veneziana, which will turn liver-haters into lovers. \$\$-\$\$\$

Sakaya Kitchen Shops at Midtown Miami, Buena Vista Avenue 305-576-8096

This chef-driven, fast-casual Asian eatery is more an iza-kaya (in Japan, a pub with food) than a sakaya (sake shop). But why quibble about words with so many more intriguing things to wrap your mouth around? The concept takes on street-food favorites from all over Asia, housemade daily from quality fresh ingredients. French Culinary Institute-trained Richard Hales does change his menu, so we'd advise immediately grabbing some crispy Korean chicken wings and Chinese-inspired, open-faced roast pork buns with sweet chili sauce and homemade pickles. \$\$

Sake Room 275 NE 18th St., 305-755-0122

Sake takes a back seat to sushi – and sophisticated décor – at this small but sleek restolounge. Among the seafood offerings, you won't find exotica or local catches, but all the usual sushi/sashimi favorites, though in more interesting form, thanks to sauces that go beyond standard soy – spicy sriracha, garlic/ponzu oil, and many more. Especially recommended: the yuzu hamachi roll, the lobster tempura maki, and panko-coated spicy shrimp with hot-and-sour Mayo and a salad. \$\$-\$\$\$

Salsa Fiesta 2929 Biscayne Blvd., 305-400-8245

The first stateside offshoot of a popular Venezuelan mini chain, this “urban Mexican grill” serves health-conscious, made-fresh-daily fare similar in concept to some fast-casual competitors. But there are indeed differences here, notably pan-Latin options: black beans as well as red; thin, delightfully crunchy tostones (available as a side or as the base for a uniquely tasty take on normal nachos). Other pluses include weekday happy hours with two-for-one beers – and free parking. \$\$-\$\$

S & S Diner 1757 NE 2nd Ave., 305-373-4291

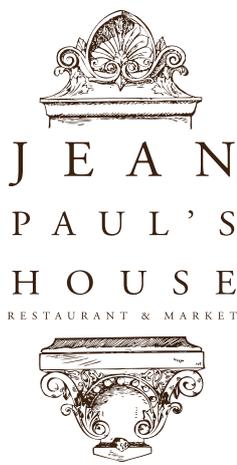
Some things never change, or so it seems at this classic diner. Open since 1938, people still line up on Saturday mornings, waiting for a seat at the counter and enormous breakfasts: corned beef hash or crab cakes and eggs with grits; fluffy pancakes; homemade biscuits with gravy and Georgia sausage – everything from oatmeal to eggs Benedict. The lunch menu is a roll call of the usual suspects, but most regulars ignore the menu and go for the daily blackboard specials. \$\$-\$\$

Sra. Martinez 4000 NE 2nd Ave., 305-573-5474

No Biscayne Corridor resident needs to be told that this lively tapas bar is the second restaurant that Upper Eastside homegirl Michelle Bernstein has opened in the area. But it's no absentee celebrity-chef gig. Bernstein is hands-on at both places. Her exuberant yet firmly controlled personal

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touch is obvious in nearly four dozen hot and cold tapas on the menu. Items are frequently reinvented. Keepers include wild mushroom/manchego croquetas with fig jam; white bean stew; crisp-coated artichokes with lemon/coriander dip; and buttery bone marrow piqued with Middle Eastern spices and balanced by tiny pickled salads. \$\$\$

Sugarcane Raw Bar Grill

3250 NE 1st Ave., 786-369-0353

This chic indoor/outdoor space is an offspring of Lincoln Road's SushiSamba Dromo and a sibling of Sugarcane lounges in NYC and Las Vegas, but more informal than the former and more food-oriented than the latter, as three kitchens – normal, raw bar, and robata charcoal grill – make clear. Chef Timon Balloo's LatAsian small plates range from subtle orange/fennel-marinated salmon crudo to intensely smoky-rich short ribs. At the daily happy hour, select dishes (like steamed pork buns with apple kimchi) are discounted. \$\$\$-\$

Sustain

3252 NE 1st Ave. #107, 305-424-9079

Is it possible for a restaurant to be sincerely eco-conscious without being self-righteousness? It is at this casual/chic restolounge, where dedication to local, sustainable food comes with considerable humor. Fare includes playful items like "wet" fries (with mouthwatering gravy), corn dogs, housemade soft pretzels with mustard and orange blossom honey, and a "50 Mile Salad" that seems almost like a game show in its challenge: All ingredients must come from within a 50-mile radius. At brunch don't miss the glazed "sin-a-buns." \$\$\$-\$

Tapas y Tintos

3535 NE 2nd Ave., 305-392-0506

With about 50 different generously sized traditional tapas plates, from simple (imported Spanish cheeses and cured meats; varied croquetas, including beautifully smooth spinach) to sophisticated (crisp-fried soft-shell crab with aioli dip; the witty Popeye y Olivia, garlicky wine-sauced chickpeas with spinach and olive oil) plus complex salads, paellas, and char-broiled meat and seafood entrées, all add up to entertaining eating even without this tapas/wine bar's live entertainment. This second T&T feels less nightclub and more neighborhood than the South Beach original. Great for dates, business lunches, or very happy hours. \$\$\$

Tony Chan's Water Club

1717 N. Bayshore Dr., 305-374-8888

The décor at this upscale place, located in the Grand, looks too glitzy to serve anything but politely Americanized Chinese food. But the American dumbing-down is minimal. Many dishes are far more authentic and skillfully prepared than those found elsewhere in Miami, like delicate but flavorful yu pan quail. Moist sea bass fillet has a beautifully balanced topping of scallion, ginger, cilantro, and subtly sweet/salty sauce. And Peking duck is served as three traditional courses: crêpe-wrapped crispy skin, meat sautéed with crisp veggies, savory soup to finish. \$\$\$-\$

Vintage Liquor & Wine Bar

3301 NE 1st Ave. #105, 305-514-0307

Gentrified ambiance, a remarkably knowledgeable staff, and a hip stock (including global beers as well as liquor and wine, plus gourmet packaged foods to accompany), and self-service wine dispensers for sampling make this an enjoyable retail shop. A wine/cocktail/tapas bar, open from 4:00 p.m. daily, makes it an enjoyable neighborhood hangout, too. Tapas include beef carpaccio, bruschetta cones, varied salads and empanadas, a daily ceviche, and fresh-made sandwiches. And remember to ask about special events: karaoke Thursdays, monthly wine dinners, tastings, more. \$\$\$

Wynwood Kitchen & Bar

2550 NW 2nd Ave., 305-722-8959

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. \$\$\$-\$

Upper Eastside

Andiamo

5600 Biscayne Blvd. 305-762-5751

With brick-oven pizzerias popping up all over town the past few years, it's difficult to remember the dark days when this part 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. \$\$\$-\$

Blue Collar

6730 Biscayne Blvd., 305-756-0366

Like its predecessor in this space (Michael Bloise's American Noodle Bar), this working-class-themed eatery is helmed by a former fine-dining chef, Daniel Serfer, a Chef Allen's vet who now crafts casual, creative fare at prices all can afford. Dishes are eclectic. The roughly dozen veggie dishes alone range from curried cauliflower purée to maduros to bleu cheese roasted asparagus. Shrimp and grits compete with any in Charleston; pork and beans, topped with a perfectly runny fried egg, beats Boston's best. \$\$\$

Boteco

916 NE 79th St., 305-757-7735

This strip of 79th Street is rapidly becoming a cool alt-culture enclave thanks to inviting hangouts like this rustic indoor/outdoor Brazilian restaurant and bar. Especially bustling on nights featuring live music, it's even more fun on Sundays, when the fenced backyard hosts an informal fair and the menu includes Brazil's national dish, feijoada, a savory stew of beans plus fresh and cured meats. But the everyday menu, ranging from unique, tapas-like pastéis to hefty Brazilian entrées, is also appealing – and budget-priced. \$\$

Le Café

7295 Biscayne Blvd. 305-754-6551

For anyone who can't get over thinking of French food as intimidating or pretentious, this cute café with a warm welcome, and family-friendly French home cooking, is the antidote. No fancy food (or fancy prices) here, just classic comfort food like onion soup, escargot, daily fresh oysters, boeuf bourguignon (think Ultimate Pot Roast), Nicoise salad, quiche, and homemade crème brûlée. A respectable beer and wine list is a welcome addition, as is the 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. \$\$\$

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East Side Pizza

731 NE 79th St., 305-758-5351

Minestrone, sure. But a pizzeria menu with carrot ginger soup? Similarly many Italian-American pizzerias offer entrées like spaghetti and meatballs, but East Side also has pumpkin ravioli in brown butter/sage sauce, wild mushroom ravioli, and other surprisingly upscale choices, including imported Peroni beer. As for the pizza, they are classic pies, available whole or by the slice, made with fresh plum tomato sauce and Grande mozzarella (considered the top American pizza cheese). Best seating for eating is at the sheltered outdoor picnic tables. \$

Europa Car Wash and Café

6075 Biscayne Blvd., 305-754-2357

Giving new meaning to the food term "fusion," Europa serves up sandwiches, salads, car washes, coffee with croissants, and Chevron with Technon. Snacks match the casual chichness: sandwiches like the Renato (prosciutto, hot cappicola, pepper jack cheese, red peppers, and Romano cheese dressing); an elaborate almond-garnished Chinese chicken salad; H&H bagels, the world's best, flown in from NYC. And the car cleanings are equally gentrified, especially on Wednesdays, when ladies are pampered with \$10 washes and glasses of sparkling wine while they wait. \$

Garden of Eatin'

136 NW 62nd St., 305-754-8050

Housed in a yellow building that's nearly invisible from the street, the Garden has the comfortable feel of a beach bar, and generous servings of inexpensive Afro-Caribbean vegan food. Large or small plates, with salad and fried sweet plantains (plus free soup for eat-in lunchers), are served for five or seven bucks. Also available are snacks like vegetarian blue corn tacos, desserts like sweet potato pie, and a breakfast menu featuring organic blueberry waffles with soy sausage patties. \$

Gourmet Station

7601 Biscayne Blvd., 305-762-7229

Home-meal replacement, geared to workaholics with no time to cook, has been popular for years. But the Gourmet Station has outlasted most of the competition. Main reason: deceptive healthiness. These are meals that are good for you, yet taste good enough to be bad for you. Favorite items include precision-grilled salmon with lemon-dill yogurt sauce, and lean turkey meatloaf with homemade BBQ sauce – sin-free comfort food. Food is available à la carte or grouped in multimeal plans customized for individual diner's nutritional needs. \$\$

Go To Sushi

5140 Biscayne Blvd., 305-759-0914

This friendly, family-run Japanese fast-food eatery offers original surprises like the Caribbean roll (a festively green parsley-coated maki stuffed with crispy fried shrimp, avocado, sweet plantain, and spicy Mayo), or a wonderfully healthful sesame-seasoned chicken soup with spinach, rice noodles, and sizable slices of poultry. Health ensured, you can enjoy a guiltless pig-out on Fireballs: fried dumplings of chicken, cabbage, and egg, crusted with quills – really a delectable crunchy noodle mix. \$

Jimmy's East Side Diner

7201 Biscayne Blvd., 305-754-3692

Open for more than 30 years, Jimmy's respects the most important American diner tradition: breakfast at any hour. And now that the place is open for dinner, you can indulge your breakfast cravings for several more hours. There are blueberry hot cakes and pecan waffles; eggs any style, including omelets and open-face frittatas; and a full range of sides: biscuits and sausage gravy, grits, hash, hash browns, even hot oatmeal. And don't forget traditional diner entrées like meat loaf, roast turkey, liver and onions, plus burgers, salad platters, and homemade chicken soup. \$-\$\$

La Cigale

7281 Biscayne Blvd., 305-754-0014

"Bistro" can mean almost anything these days, but with owners who are a husband/wife team recently arrived from Marseille, it's not surprising that this neighborhood wine bistro is the classic kind found in France – a home away from home where the contemporary but cozy space is matched by the southern French comfort food coming from the open kitchen. Drop in for drinks and snacks such as artisan cheeses and charcuterie, or enjoy full meals ranging from classic (wine-poached mussels; a boldly sauced steak/frites) to creative (Parma ham-wrapped tuna loin). \$\$-\$\$\$

Lo De Lea

7001 Biscayne Blvd., 305-456-3218

In Casa Toscana's former space, this cute, contemporary parillada is proof that you can have an Argentinean meal and a cholesterol test in the same month. While traditional parillada dishes are tasty, they're meat/fat-heavy, basically heaps of grilled beef. Here the grill is also used for vegetables (an unusually imaginative assortment, including bok choy, endive, and fennel), two of which are paired with your protein of choice. You can indulge in a mouthwateringly succulent vacio (flank steak), and walk out without feeling like you're the cow. \$\$-\$\$\$

Magnum Lounge

709 NE 79th St., 305-757-3368

It's a restaurant. It's a lounge. But it's decidedly not a typical Miami restolounge, or like anything else in Miami. Forbidding from the outside, on the inside it's like a time-trip to a cabaret in pre-WWII Berlin: bordello-red décor, romantically dim lighting, show-tune live piano bar entertainment, and to match the ambiance, elegantly updated retro food served with style and a smile. For those feeling flush, home-style fried chicken is just like mom used to make – in her wildest dreams. \$\$\$

Metro Organic Bistro

7010 Biscayne Blvd., 305-751-8756

Big changes have come to Karma the car wash, the first being a separate new name for the revamped restaurant: Metro Organic Bistro, an all-organic fine-dining restaurant where simple preparations reveal and enhance natural flavors. An entirely new menu places emphasis on grilled organic meat and fish dishes. Try the steak frites – organic, grass-fed skirt steak with organic chimichurri and fresh-cut fries. Vegetarians will love the organic portabella foccacia. Dine either inside the architect-designed restaurant or outdoors on the patio. Beer and wine. \$-\$\$\$

Michy's

6927 Biscayne Blvd.

305-759-2001

Don't even ask why Michele Bernstein, with a top-chef résumé, not to mention regular Food Network appearances, opened a homey restaurant in an emerging but far from fully gentrified neighborhood. Just be glad she did, as you dine on white almond gazpacho or impossibly creamy ham and blue cheese croquetas. Though most full entrées also come in half-size portions (at almost halved prices), the tab can add up fast. The star herself is usually in the kitchen. Parking in the rear off 69th Street. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

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 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 tamer 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

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Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

surprisingly, the chef-driven menu is limited, but several signature specialties, if available, are not to be missed: BBQ shrimp in a tangy Worcestershire and cayenne-spiked butter/wine sauce, irresistible mini conch fritters, and homemade ice cream. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Reva's Italian Ristorante 8601 Biscayne Blvd., 305-758-1010

Owned by two couples (including former Village Café chef Marlon Reyes), this eclectic eatery occupies the former space of Frankie's Big City Grill, and fulfills much the same purpose in the neighborhood as an all-day, family-friendly place with affordable prices. The menu includes wraps and elaborate salads of all nations. But simple yet sophisticated Italian specialties like spaghetti ai fiume (with pancetta, tomato, garlic, basil, and a touch of cream) or yellowtail fraise (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 pile at a time. The fare includes housemade sausages (mild veal bratwurst, hearty mixed beef/pork bauernwurst, spicy garlic-wurst) 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. But the 2010 arrival of three Joe Allen veterans as executive chef, pastry chef, and sommelier signaled a culinary revival for the restolounge, always a neighborhood focal point, now more food-focused. The contemporary comfort food menu ranges from fun small plates (deviled eggs with smoked salmon and dill, crisp-fried foccchi pockets with gorgonzola sauce, oysters Rockefeller) to heartier items like burgers and steak au poivre. And don't miss the sticky date/toffee pudding. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Sushi Siam 5582 NE 4th Ct., 305-751-7818

On the menu of sushi-bar specialties plus a small selection of Thai and Japanese cooked dishes, there are a few surprises, such as a unique lobster maki that's admittedly huge in price (\$25.95), but also in size: six ounces of crisp-fried lobster chunks, plus asparagus, avocado, lettuce, tobiko (flying fish), masago (smelt) roes, and special sauces. Thai dishes come with a choice of more than a dozen sauces, ranging from traditional red or green curries to the inventive, such as an unconventional honey sauce. \$\$\$

Uva's 6900 Biscayne Blvd., 305-754-9022

Formerly UVA 69, this casual-chic cafe/lounge, a MiMo neighborhood pioneer, has changed its name and original owners, but remains an all-day-to-late-night hangout. And menu strong points also remain, from fresh-baked pastries and breads to elegant cross-cultural sandwiches (particularly two Latin-inspired upgrades: a classic Cuban with French ham, cornichons, and a baguette; and la minuta, a beer-battered fish fillet on focaccia with cilantro aioli). Whether diners opt for full entrées or make a meal of small plates, the subtle global blending makes fusion make sense. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Yiya's Gourmet Cuban Bakery 646 NE 79th St., 305-754-3337

A true community jewel, this bakery is also a most welcoming café, serving lunch specials from chef Delsa Bernardo (who co-owns the place with attorney Abbie Cuellar) that are homemade right down to the herbs grown on the bakery's window sills. Bernardo's pan con lechon sandwiches and flaky-crust Cuban pastries are legend. But she also crafts treats not found at average Cuban bakeries, like pizzas using housemade Indian naan bread. Additionally Bernardo carries unique treats produced by a few friends: candies, cupcakes, and exotically flavored flans. \$

NORTH BAY VILLAGE

Bocados Ricos 1880 79th St. Causeway, 305-864-4889

Tucked into a mall best known for its Happy Stork Lounge, this little luncheonette services big appetites. Along with the usual grilled churrascos, there's bandeja paisa, Colombia's sampler platter of grilled steak, sausage, chicharron, fried egg, avocado, plantains, rice, and beans. Don't miss marginally daintier dishes like sopa de costilla, if this rich shortrib bowl is among the daily homemade soups. Arepas include our favorite corn cake: the hefty Aura, stuffed with chorizo, chicharron, carne desmechada (shredded flank steak), plantains, rice, beans, and cheese. \$\$\$

The Crab House 1551 79th St. Causeway, 305-868-7085

Established in 1975, this Miami fish house was acquired by Landry's in 1996 and is now part of a chain. But the classic décor (knotty pine walls, tile floors, booths, outdoor waterfront deck) still evokes the good old days. Though the all-you-can-eat seafood/salad buffet (\$20 lunch, \$30 dinner) is a signature, freshness fanatics will be happiest sticking to à la carte favorites like the All-American fisherman's platters, or global specials like Szechuan shrimp, that change seasonally. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Japanese Market and Sushi Deli 1412 79th St. Causeway, 305-861-0143

Inside a small market that is widely considered Miami's premier source of Japanese foodstuffs, the "Sushi Deli" restaurant component is nothing more than a lunch counter. But chef Michio Kushi serves up some sushi found nowhere else in town. Example: traditional Osaka-style sushi – layers of rice, seasoned seaweed, and marinated fresh mackerel, pressed into a square box, then cut into lovely one-bite sandwich squares. While raw fish is always impeccable here, some unusual vegetarian sushi creations also tempt, as do daily entrées. \$

Mario the Baker 1700 79th St. Causeway, 305-867-7882

(See North Miami listing)

Oggi Caffè 1666 79th St. Causeway, 305-866-1238

This cozy, romantic spot started back in 1989 as a pasta factory (supplying numerous high-profile restaurants) as well as a neighborhood eatery. And the wide range of budget-friendly, homemade pastas, made daily, remains the main draw for its large and loyal clientele. Choices range from homey, meaty lasagna to luxuriant crab ravioli with creamy lobster sauce, with occasional forays into creative exotica such as seaweed spaghetti, with sea scallops, shiitakes, and fresh tomatoes. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Shuckers Bar & Grill 1819 79th St. Causeway, 305-866-1570

"Cheap eats and a million-dollar view" is the sound bite manager Philip Konkin 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

Who says old dogs can't learn new tricks? Opened in 1993 (with 28 seats), the Cea family's now-sprawling trattoria has added inventive chef Carlos Belon and modern menu items, including foccchi rapera (pear/cheese-filled pasta purses with truffled prosciutto cream sauce), an unlikely (soy sauce and parmesan cheese?) but luscious Italian/Japanese fusion tuna carpaccio, and fresh-fruit sorbets. But traditionalists needn't worry. All the old favorites, from the café's famed beef carpaccio to eggplant parm and pastas sauced with Argentine-Italian indulgence, are still here and still satisfying. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

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



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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 technique, and meticulous attention to detail, down to the stylish plaid ribbons that hold together the café's baguette sandwiches. \$\$

Iron Sushi

9432 NE 2nd Ave., 305-754-0311

With three Biscayne Corridor outlets (plus several branches elsewhere in town), this mostly take-out mini chain is fast becoming the Sushi Joint That Ate Miami. And why do Miamians eat here? Not ambiance. There isn't any. But when friends from the Pacific Northwest, where foodies know their fish, tout the seafood's freshness, we listen. There are some surprisingly imaginative makis, like the Maharaja, featuring fried shrimp and drizzles of curry Mayo. And where else will you find a stacked sushi (five assorted makis) birthday cake? \$\$

Miami Shores Country Club

10000 Biscayne Blvd., 305-795-2363

Formerly members-only, the restaurant/lounge facilities of this classy 1939 club are now open to the public – always, lunch and dinner. Not surprisingly, ambiance is retro and relaxed, with golf course views from both bar and indoor/outdoor dining room. The surprise is the food – some classic (steaks, club sandwiches) but other dishes quite contemporary: an Asian ahi tuna tower; a lavish candied-walnut, poached-pear, grilled chicken salad; and fresh pasta specials. Prices are phenomenal, with dinner entrées \$9 to \$17; drinks average \$3 to \$4. \$\$

PizzaFiore

9540 NE 2nd Ave., 305-754-1924

Owned by Arcoub Abderrahim, who opened South Beach's original PizzaFiore way back in 1996, this café serves the kind of nostalgic, medium-thin crust, oozing-with-goopy-cheese pizzas reminiscent of our childhood pies in northern NJ Sopranos' territory, except now there are options for today's toppings – sundried tomatoes, buffalo mozzarella, etc. But there's also a full menu of Italian-American classics, including antipasto salads, subs, and particularly popular, pastas. Garlic rolls are a must, but we didn't have to tell you that. \$\$

NORTH MIAMI

Alaska Coffee Roasting Co.

13130 Biscayne Blvd., 786-332-4254

When people speak of the West Coast as the USA's quality coffeehouse pioneer territory, they're thinking Seattle – and then south through coastal California. North to

Alaska? Not so much. But owner Michael Gesser did indeed open this hip place's parent in Fairbanks back in 1993, after years of traveling through every coffee-growing country in the world. Brews like signature smooth yet exotic Ethiopian Yirgacheffe don't even need cream or sugar, much less frappe frou-frou. All beans are house-roasted. There's solid food, too: brick-oven pizzas, salads, sandwiches, and pastries. \$\$

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/Bulldog Burger

15400 Biscayne Blvd., 305-940-9655

These adjacent restaurants are really one place with two dining areas, since they connect and diners can order from either menu. They also share a BBQ/burger master: Top Chef contender Howie Kleinberg, whose indoor electric smoker produces mild-tasting 'cue ranging from the expected pulled pork, ribs, brisket, and chicken to more unusual items like hot-smoked salmon. As for burgers, many feature unique ingredients such as mayo flavored like red-eye gravy, with strong coffee, or the bun of the infamous Luther: a sweet-glazed mock (holeless) Krispy Kreme donut. Costs are comparatively high, but such is the price of fame. \$\$-\$\$\$

Cane á Sucre

899 NE 125th St., 305-891-0123

From the Vega brothers (who pioneered the Design and MiMo districts with, respectively, the original Cane A Sucre and UVA 69), this charming artisanal sandwich bar is the perfect breakfast/lunch stop before or after ingesting visual arts at nearby MOMA. Actually, creations like El Fig (fig confit, gorgonzola cheese, walnuts, and honey on an authentically French crisp-crust fresh-baked baguette) are art in their own right. Inventive, substantial salads, sides, daily soups, and homemade sweets (including mouthwateringly buttery croissants) complete the menu. \$\$\$

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)



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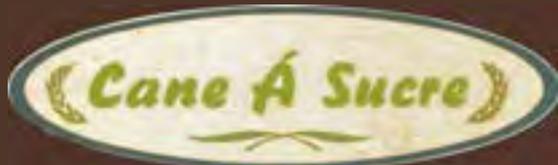
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Flip Burger Bar

1699 NE 123rd St., 305-741-3547

Casual-chic burger bars, everywhere in South Beach, are still rare farther north. One reason this easy-to-miss venue is a must-not-miss for North Miami locals: The hefty half-pounders on fresh brioche buns include a scrumptious patty with Gruyere, mushrooms, and onion marmalade. The Fireman is a jalapeño/chipotle scorcher. There are even turkey and veggie variations. Other draws are hand-cut fries, beer-battered onion rings, a top-drawer beer list, budget-priced combo specials, conversation-friendly acoustics, and a South Beach rarity: free parking. \$-\$\$

Giraffas

1821 NE 123rd St., 786-866-9007

Festooned with eye-poppingly colored panels and giraffes – subtler but everywhere – this first North American branch of a wildly popular, 30-year-old Brazilian fast/casual chain is the flagship of a planned 4000 U.S. Giraffas. Given that the steaks, especially the tender, flavorful picanha, rival those at the most upscale rodizio joints – and beat the sword-wielding grandstanders for custom cooking (because staff asks your preference) – we'd bet on giraffe domination. Overstuffed grilled sandwiches, salads, even tasty veggie options are all here, too. The cheese bread is a must. \$\$

Happy Sushi & Thai

2224 NE 123rd St., 305-895-0165

Grab a booth at this cozy eatery, which serves all the expected Thai and sushi bar standards, including weekday lunch specials. But there are also delightful surprises, like grilled kawahagi (triggerfish) with seasoned Japanese mayonnaise. This intensely savory/sweet "Japanese home cooking" treat satisfies the same yen as beef jerky, except without pulling out your teeth. Accompanied by a bowl of rice, it's a superb lunch. For raw-fish fans, spicy, creamy salmon tartare (accompanied by hiyashi wakame seaweed) is a winner. \$\$-\$\$\$

Here Comes the Sun

2188 NE 123rd St., 305-893-5711

At this friendly natural foods establishment, one of Miami's first, there's a full stock of vitamins and nutritional supplements. But the place's hearty soups, large variety of entrées (including fresh fish and chicken as well as vegetarian selections), lighter bites like miso burgers with secret "sun sauce" (which would probably make old sneakers taste good), and daily specials are a tastier way to get healthy. An under-ten-buck early-bird dinner is popular with the former long-hair, now blue-hair, crowd. Frozen yogurt, fresh juices, and smoothies complete the menu. \$-\$\$

Le Griot de Madame John

975 NE 125th St., 305-892-9333

When Madame moved her base of operations from her Little Haiti home to a real restaurant (though a very informal one, and still mostly take-out), she began offering numerous traditional Haitian dishes, including jerked beef or goat tassot and an impressive poisson gros sel (a whole fish rubbed with salt before poaching with various veggies and spices). But the dish that still packs the place is the griot: marinated pork chunks simmered and then fried till they're moistly tender inside, crisp and intensely flavored outside. \$

Little Havana

12727 Biscayne Blvd. 305-899-9069

In addition to white-tablecloth ambiance, this place features live Latin entertainment and dancing, making it a good choice when diners want a night out, not just a meal. It's also a good choice for diners who don't speak Spanish, but don't worry about authenticity. Classic Cuban home-style dishes like mojo-marinated lechon asado, topped with onions, and juicy ropa vieja are translated on the menu, not the plate, and fancier creations like pork filet in tangy tamarind sauce seem universal crowd-pleasers. \$\$\$

Mama Jennie's

11720 NE 2nd Ave. 305-757-3627

For more than 35 years this beloved red-sauce joint has been drawing students and other starvation-budget diners with prodigious portions of lasagna, spaghetti and meatballs (the latter savory yet light-textured), veal marsala topped with a mountain of mushrooms, and other Italian-American belly-busters. All pasta or meat entrées come with oil-drenched garlic rolls and either soup (hearty minestrone) or a salad (mixed greens, tomatoes, cukes, brined olives, and pickled peppers) that's a dinner in itself. Rustic roadhouse ambiance, notably the red leatherette booths, add to Mama's charm. \$\$\$

Mario the Baker

13695 W. Dixie Highway, 305-891-7641

At this North Miami institution (opened in 1969) food is Italian-American, not Italian-Italian: spaghetti and meatballs, lasagna, eggplant parmigiana, and hot or cold subs. No imported buffalo, arugula, or other chichi stuff on the New York-style medium-thin-crust pizza; the top topping here is the savory housemade sausage. And no one leaves without garlic rolls, wash 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 house-made bread; quiches; pot pies; even a baked-to-order Grand Marnier soufflé. The pecan sticky buns are irresistible. \$\$

Petit Rouge

12409 Biscayne Blvd., 305-892-7676

From the mid-1990s (with Neal's Restaurant and later with Il Migliore), local chef Neal Cooper's neighborhood-oriented Italian eateries have been crowd-pleasers. While this cute 32-seat charmer is French, it's no exception, avoiding pretense and winning fans with both classic and nouvelle bistro fare: frisée salad with lardons, poached egg, and bacon vinaigrette; truite Grenobloise (trout with lemon/caper sauce); consommé with black truffles and foie gras, covered by a buttery puff pastry dome; perfect pommes frites, and equally perfect apple or lemon tarts for dessert. \$\$\$

Rice House of Kabob

14480 Biscayne Blvd., 305-944-4899

Since 2006, South Beach's original Rice House has been serving up mountainous platters of basmati rice and Greek salad topped with Persian-style marinated/char-grilled meat, poultry, seafood, or veggie kabobs – for very little money. This branch of what is now a growing chain has the same menu (which also features wraps, for lighter eaters) and the same policy of custom-cooking kabobs, so expect fresh, not fast, food. Sides of must-o-kear and must-o-mooseer (thick yogurt dips with herbed cukes or shallots) are must-haves. \$\$

Smashburger

14730 Biscayne Blvd., 786-406-6614

Two things distinguish the griddled patties of this Denver-based chain, touted as "the nation's fastest-growing 'better burger' restaurant," from other better burgers: a nod to local tastes (like toppings of fried chorizo and potato fritas), and the smashing technique, producing an appealing thickly crusted exterior. Got burger overkill? Substitute chicken, or have a salad. An added draw: unusual veggie sides, which go beyond regular and sweet potato fries to crisp onion strings, "veggie frites" (carrots, string beans), and an Old South fish-camp classic: fried pickles. \$-\$\$

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 or cold subs, simple salads, and a few new protein adds – grilled chicken breast, fried fish, or a steak. \$-\$\$

Wong's Chinese Restaurant

12420 Biscayne Blvd., 305-891-4313

The menu reads like a textbook on how to please everyone, with food ranging from traditional Chinese to Chinese-American to just plain American. Appetizers include honey garlic chicken wings or Buffalo wings. A crab-claw starter comes with choice of pork fried rice or French fries. Seafood lovers can get shrimp chop suey, or salty pepper shrimp (authentically shell-on). And New Yorkers will find a number of dishes that are mainstays of Manhattan Szechuan menus but not common in Miami: cold sesame noodles, 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. \$\$\$



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Yes Pasta!

14871 Biscayne Blvd., 305-944-1006

At this fast/casual Italian eatery, the specialty is mix-and-match. Choose one of seven fresh or dried pastas (whole wheat and gluten-free options available), then one of 15 sauces. Our personal pick is carbonara, correctly creamy-coated (via egg thickening, not cream overload); Bolognese is a wise choice for those who like sauces rich and red. Many options exist for vegetarians and pescatarians as well as carnivores, all clearly coded on the menu. \$\$

NORTH MIAMI BEACH

Bamboo Garden

1232 NE 163rd St., 305-945-1722

Big enough for a banquet (up to 300 guests), this veteran is many diners' favorite on the 163rd/167th Street "Chinatown" strip because of its superior décor. But the menu also offers well-prepared, authentic dishes like peppery black bean clams, sautéed mustard greens, and steamed whole fish with ginger and scallions, plus Chinese-American egg foo young. Default spicing is mild even in Szechuan dishes marked with red-chili icons, but don't worry; realizing some like it hot, the chefs will customize spiciness to heroic heat levels upon request. \$\$

Blue Marlin Fish House

2500 NE 163rd St., 305-957-8822

Located inside Oleta River State Park, this casual outdoor eatery is a rare surprise for nature lovers. The featured item is still the house-smoked fish this historic venue began producing in 1938, available in three varieties: salmon, mahi mahi, and the signature blue marlin. But the smokehouse now also turns out ribs and delectable brisket. Other new additions include weekend fish fries. Entry is directly from 163rd Street, not through the main park entrance. No admission fee. \$

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 often 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). \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

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. \$\$

Hanna's Gourmet Diner

13951 Biscayne Blvd., 305-947-2255

When Sia and Nicole Hemmati bought the Gourmet Diner from retiring original owner Jean-Pierre Lejeune in the late 1990s, they added "Hanna's" to the name, but changed little else about this retro-looking French/American diner, a north Miami-Dade institution since 1983. Customers can get a cheeseburger or garlicky escargots, meatloaf in tomato sauce or boeuf bourguignon in red wine sauce, iceberg lettuce and tomatoes, or a mushroom and squid salad with garlic dressing. For oysters Rockefeller/tuna melt couples from Venus and Mars, it remains the ideal dinner date destination. \$\$-\$\$\$

Hiro Japanese Restaurant

3007 NE 163rd St., 305-948-3687

One of Miami's first sushi restaurants, Hiro retains an amusing retro-glam feel, an extensive menu of both sushi and cooked Japanese food, and late hours that make it a perennially popular after-hours snack stop. The sushi menu has few surprises, but quality is reliable. Most exceptional are the nicely priced yakitori, skewers of succulently soy-glazed and grilled meat, fish, and vegetables; the unusually large variety available of the last makes this place a good choice for vegetarians. \$\$

Hiro's Sushi Express

17048 W. Dixie Hwy., 305-949-0776

Tiny, true, but there's more than just sushi at this mostly take-out spin-off of the pioneering Hiro. Makis are the mainstay (standard stuff like California rolls, more complex creations like multi-veg futomaki, and a few unexpected treats like a spicy Crunch & Caliente maki), available à la carte or in value-priced individual and party combo platters. But there are also bento boxes featuring tempura, yakitori skewers, teriyaki, stir-fried veggies, and udon noodles. Another branch is now open in Miami's Upper Eastside. \$

Heelsha

1550 NE 164th St., 305-919-8393

If unusual Bangladeshi dishes like fiery pumpkin patee (cooked with onion, green pepper, and pickled mango) or Heelsha curry (succulently spiced hilsa, Bangladesh's sweet-fleshed national fish) seem familiar, it's because chef/owner Bithi Begum and her husband Tipu Raman once served such fare at the critically acclaimed Renaisa. Their menu's mix-and-match option allows diners to pair their choice of meat, poultry, fish, or vegetable with more than a dozen regional sauces, from familiar Indian styles to exotica like satkara, flavored with a Bangladeshi citrus reminiscent of sour orange. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Iron Sushi

16350 W. Dixie Hwy., 305-945-2244

(See Miami Shores listing?)

Jerusalem Market and Deli

16275 Biscayne Blvd., 305-948-9080

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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 house-made cabbage and onion salads, plus unusually rich and tart tahina. \$-\$

Kabobji 3055 NE 163rd St., 305-354-8484

This place makes a very good tahini sauce. In fact that alone is reason enough to visit. We prefer ours with this bright, cheery eatery's delightfully oniony falafel or a veg-garnished wrap of thin-sliced marinated beef schwarma. They also do a beautifully spiced, and reassuringly fresh-tasting, raw kibbi naye (Middle Eastern steak tartare). It's hard to resist putting together a grazing meal of starters and wraps, but there's also a roster of full entrées (with soup or salad plus starch), including tempting vegetarian and seafood meals for noncarnivores. \$\$

Kebab Indian Restaurant 514 NE 167th St., 305-940-6309

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

King Palace 330 NE 167th St., 305-949-2339

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

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

Laurenzo's Market Café
16385 W. Dixie Hwy., 305-945-6381
It's just a small area between the wines and the fridge counters – no potted palms, and next-to-no service in this cafeteria-style space. But when negotiating this international gourmet market's packed shelves and crowds has depleted your energies, it's a handy place to refuel with eggplant parmesan and similar Italian-American classics, housemade from old family recipes. Just a few spoonfuls of Wednesday's hearty pasta fagirole, one of the daily soup specials, could keep a person shopping for hours. And now that pizza master Carlo is manning the wood-fired oven, you can sample the thinnest, crispiest pies outside Napoli. \$-\$

Little Saigon 16752 N. Miami Ave., 305-653-3377

This is Miami's oldest traditional Vietnamese restaurant, but it's still packed most weekend nights. So even the place's biggest negative – its hole-in-the-wall atmosphere, not encouraging of lingering visits – becomes a plus since it ensures fast turnover. Chef/owner Lily Tao is typically in the kitchen, crafting green papaya salad, flavorful beef noodle pho (served with greens, herbs, and condiments that make it not just a soup but a whole ceremony), and many other Vietnamese classics. The menu is humongous. \$-\$

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

Racks Soprano Café & Italian Restaurant 3933 NE 163rd St. (Intracoastal Mall), 305-917-7225

Racks has a new owner and a new name. Italian chef Rocco Soprano is bringing his authentic Italian flavors and style to a lovely setting. We'll have more details next month, but we know the specialties include Italian steaks, seafood, and an oyster bar. One thing that won't change: the coal-fired pizza oven, which reliably turns out an astonishingly light yet chewy crust that makes the pies a revelation. Especially enjoyable is the waterfront deck. \$\$

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 minipotato pancakes ever – eight per order, served with sour cream and applesauce. \$\$

Sang's Chinese Restaurant 1925 NE 163rd St., 305-947-7076

Sang's has three menus. The pink menu is Americanized Chinese food, from chop suey to honey garlic chicken. The white menu permits the chef to show off his authentic Chinese fare: salt and pepper prawns, rich beef/turkey casserole, tender salt-baked chicken, even esoteric like abalone with sea cucumber. The extensive third

menu offers dim sum, served until 4:00 p.m. A live tank allows seasonal seafood dishes like lobster with ginger and scallion. Recently installed: a Chinese barbecue case, displaying savory items like crispy pork with crackling attached. \$\$\$

Shing Wang Vegetarian, Iced & Tea House 237 NE 167th St., 305-654-4008

At this unique, mostly Taiwanese eatery, all seafood, poultry, and meats used to be skillfully crafted and delicious vegetarian imitations. These are still here, plus there's now a wider choice of dishes, some featuring real meat. Try the authentic-tasting Vietnamese banh mi sandwiches (available with a variety of meat and mock-meat fillings). Bubble tea is the must-not-miss drink. The cold, refreshing boba comes in numerous flavors, all supplemented with signature black tapioca balls that, sipped through straws, are a guaranteed giggle. \$

Siam Square 54 NE 167th St., 305-944-9697

Open until 1:00 a.m. every day except Sunday (when it closes at midnight), this relatively new addition to North Miami Beach's "Chinatown" strip has become a popular late-night gathering spot for chefs from other Asian restaurants. And why not? The food is fresh, nicely presented, and reasonably priced. The kitchen staff is willing to customize dishes upon request, and the serving staff is reliably fast. Perhaps most important, karaoke equipment is in place when the mood strikes. \$\$\$

Slices Pizza & Pasta 13750 Biscayne Blvd., 305-949-5684

While pizza by the slice is common street food in every city in the USA, this informal Italian eatery offers a variation particularly appropriate to Latin American-influenced Miami: slices served rodizio-style. Brazil's traditional rodizio restaurants feature many different grilled meats, served tableside by a continuing parade of waiters till diners cry uncle. Here the concept is the same, with dozens of varieties of pizza (plus several pastas) replacing the beef. \$\$

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

Tania's Table 18685 W. Dixie Hwy., 305-932-9425

A location at the tail end of a tiny, tired-looking strip mall makes this weekday lunch-only kosher eatery easy to miss. But the cute bistro, an extension of chef Tania Sigal's catering company, is well worth seeking for its unusually varied daily-changing menus – not just familiar Eastern European-derived dishes (chicken matzoh ball soup, blintzes, etc.) but numerous Latin American specialties (zesty ropa vieja), Asian-influenced items (Thai

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chicken/noodle salad), lightened universal Ladies-Who-Lunch classics (custardy quiches, grilled trout with mustard sauce), and homemade baked goods. \$\$\$

Tuna's 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 hama-chi sashimi; toro with enoki mushrooms, bracing ooba (shiso), tobiko caviar, and a sauce almost like beurre blanc; rock shrimp/shitake tempura with a delicate salad; elegant salmon tartare with a mix-in quail egg. And spicy, mayo-dressed tuna rock makis are universal crowd-pleasers. \$\$\$

Caffe Da Vinci 1009 Kane Concourse, 305-861-8166

After renovations in 2010, this old favorite (since 1989) reopened with a hip new lounge – but no fixes to what

ain't broke, notably handmade artisanal pastas sauced with high quality ingredients. Choose luxe stuffed models (like crab-filled ravioli with rich lobster sauce) or relatively pristine preparations like linguini with garlic, wine, and fresh littlenecks. Eating light? Make a meal of lavish salads or starters like true beef carpaccio – dressed, like the original from Venice's Harry's Bar, with creamy mustard sauce rather than mere olive oil. \$\$\$

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 pimentos. This classic (whose carb components make it satisfying without à la carte sides, and hence a relative bargain) isn't on the menu anymore, but cooks will prepare it on request. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

AVENTURA / HALLANDALE

Anthony's Coal Fired Pizza 17901 Biscayne Blvd., 305-830-2625

When people rave about New York pizzas' superiority, they don't just mean thin crusts. They mean the kind of airy, abundantly burn-bubbled, uniquely flavorful crusts that can only be consistently produced by a traditional coal (not wood) oven – like those at Anthony's, which began with one Fort Lauderdale pizzeria in 2002 and now has roughly 30 locations. Quality toppings, though limited, hit all the major food groups, from prosciutto to kalamata olives. There are salads, too, but the sausage and garlic-sautéed broccoli rabe pie is a tastier green vegetable. \$\$

Bagel Cove Restaurant & Deli 19003 Biscayne Blvd. 305-935-4029

One word: flagels. And no, that's not a typo. Rather these crusty, flattened specimens (poppy seed or sesame seed) are the ultimate bagel/soft pretzel hybrid – and a specialty at this bustling Jewish bakery/deli, which, since 1988, opens at 6:30 a.m. – typically selling out of flagels in a couple of hours. Since you're up early anyway, sample elaborately garnished breakfast specials, including unusually flavorful homemade corned beef hash and eggs. For the rest of the day, multitudes of mavens devour every other delectable deli specialty known to humankind. \$\$

Bella Luna 19575 Biscayne Blvd., Aventura Mall, 305-792-9330

If the menu here looks familiar, it should. It's nearly identical to that at the Upper Eastside's Luna Café and, with minor variations, at all the rest of Tom Billante's eateries (Rosalia, Villaggio, Carpaccio), right down to the typeface. But no argument from here. In a mall – a setting more accustomed to food court – dishes like carpaccio al salmone (crudo, with 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. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Blu Sushi 600 Silks Run Rod., 954-744-4398

Even hard-core sushi-bar addicts must admit that many such establishments suffer from a certain sameness. Not Blu. At this restolounge in the Village at Gulfstream Park, part of a mini-chain originating in southwest Florida, the specialty makis are outdone in outrageousness only by extravagant cocktails. Yes, there are California rolls. But why be bored when you have an alternative like Kin-SO: tempura king crab salad, tuna, and avocado with scallions, smelt roe, and tempura flakes, plus mayo and sweet eel sauce. \$\$\$

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

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 restolounge/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. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

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

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Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

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

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 frank steak, mushrooms in onion sauce, much more. \$\$\$

Luca Bella

19088 NE 29th Ave., 305-792-2222

In the space that once housed Chef Allen's, this trattoria offers a crowd-pleasing combination: décor with

white-tablecloth elegance, yet the family-friendly feel of a classic checkered-tablecloth eatery – and Italian-American comfort food to match. Highlights: Mickey's Meatballs (named for owner Mickey Maitese), a meal-size marinara-sauced starter featuring whipped ricotta and creamy mascarpone; veal Bella Luca, mixing modern and traditional influences via a hefty breadcrumb-coated pan-fried chop with a topping of bracing balsamic reduction-dressed mesclun. \$\$\$

The Grill on the Alley

19501 Biscayne Blvd. (Aventura Mall), 305-466-7195

Ensclosed in a leather booth, with dark hardwood everywhere and a massive bar dispensing two-fisted drinks, you'd never know you were dining in a shopping mall – or in the new millennium. This upscale mini chain salutes America's great grill restaurants of yesteryear, with prodigious portions of charbroiled meats and seafood, plus classics like creamy chicken pot pie. New retro dishes are added quarterly, but our favorite remains Sunday night's prime rib special: a \$32 hunk of juicy beef that'll take care of Monday's meals too. \$\$\$\$

Mahogany Grille

2190 NW 183rd St., 305-626-8100

Mahogany Grille has drawn critical raves and an international clientele since retired major league outfielder Andre Dawson and his brother transformed this place in 2007. Today it's white tablecloths and, naturally, mahogany. The menu is a sort of trendy yet traditional soul fusion of food from several African diaspora regions: Carolina Low Country (buttery cheese grits with shrimp, sausage, and cream gravy), the Caribbean (conch-packed fritters or salad), and the Old South (lightly 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 glopplly sauced, Americanized-Cantonese chop sueys here. Cooking is properly light-handed, and seafood specialties shine (try the spicy/crispy salt and pepper shrimp). For adventurers, there's a cold jellyfish starter. Even timid taste buds can't resist tender fried shrimp balls described this way: "With crispy adorable fringing outfit." \$\$-\$\$\$

Pilar

20475 Biscayne Blvd. 305-937-2777

Chef/owner Scott Fredel previously worked for Norman Van Aken and Mark Miltello. 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 "manigoat", 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 Sam

19575 Biscayne Blvd. 305-932-8955

(See Miami / Upper Eastside listing)

SUNNY ISLES BEACH

Chef Philip Ho

16850 Collins Ave., 305-974-0338

Deep-pocketed diners who ate at the Setai when Jonathan Wright was executive chef already know chef Ho's work. His dazzling dim sum were the menu's highlight. Now they're affordable for all. Dumplings (chive and shrimp, green tea duck, truffle-spiked scallop, more) have skins delicate enough to see through; open shrimp dumplings with dried scallops are almost flower-like in appearance; steamed cheung fan (rice noodle crêpes) rolled around Chinese crullers are simply sinful, as are flaky-crust egg custard tarts. And the regular menu measures up to the small plates. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Copper Chimney

18090 Collins Ave., 305-974-0075

At this family-owned (and kid-friendly), white-tablecloth Indian restaurant, prices are more upscale than average, but so is the food's elegant presentation – plus features like a full bar, live Bollywood/belly dancing on weekends, and, among familiar North Indian fare, dishes blending contemporary touches with traditional tastes. Especially enjoyable: starters inspired by street snacks, like bikaneeri chaat (fried gram flour crisps, chickpeas, and yogurt) served with two chutneys; anything featuring paneer cheese, from classic spinach/cheese palak paneer to creative khazas-e-lazzat (sundried tomato-stuffed paneer/potato dumplings in smooth cream sauce). \$\$\$

Epicure Gourmet Market & Café

17190 Collins Ave., 305-947-4581

Who even knew that the late Rascal House had an ocean view? Diners may have to eat standing up to glimpse water over the dunes from the panoramic café windows of the gourmet market that replaced the Rascal, but you know you're on a tropical beach, not Brighton Beach. The big, bright café's menu, more global diner than Jewish deli, includes daily specials ranging from spa-grilled chicken to homemade Italian sausage and peppers. But it's worth seeking out items that made South Beach's original Epicure famous: sandwiches featuring housemade rare roast beef; shrimp or chunky smoked whitefish salads; fresh baked goods. \$\$\$

The H Restaurant

17608 Collins Ave., 305-931-9106

This friendly, family-owned bistro is the sort of

homeaway-from-home found every few blocks in France – here Gerard and Karin Herrison, plus chef son Julien, formerly had a restaurant – but they're rarely found in South Florida. Burgers, et al., are available, but with garlicky escargots, a savory/sweet-dressed salad of duck confit atop frisée, pan-seared foie gras with port/raspberry sauce, fish with an impeccable lemon beurre blanc, and a satisfying steak/frites (with peppery cognac cream sauce). We'd leave the American stuff to the kids. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Il Mulino New York

17875 Collins Ave., 305-466-9191

If too much is not enough for you, this majority upscale Italian-American place, an offshoot of the famed NYC original, is your restaurant. For starters, diners receive enough freebie food – fried zucchini coins, salami, bruschetta with varying toppings, a wedge of quality parmigiano, garlic bread – that ordering off the menu seems superfluous. But mushroom raviolis in truffle cream sauce are irresistible, and perfectly tenderized veal parmesan, the size of a large pizza, makes a great take-out dinner...for the next week. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Kitchen 305

16701 Collins Ave., 305-749-2110

Offering eclectic American fare, this resort restaurant room, despite its contemporary open kitchen, has the retro-glam look of a renovated discotheque – which is what it was. In fact, it's still as much lounge as eatery, so it's best to arrive early if you want a relatively DJ-free eating experience. A seductive mango-papaya BBQ sauce makes ribs a tasty choice any night, but most local diners in the know come on nights when the restaurant features irresistibly priced seasonal seafood specials (all-you-can-eat stone crabs one night, lobster on another). A spacious dining counter overlooking the cooks makes the Kitchen a comfortable spot for singles. \$\$\$

St. Petersburg Deli

17080 Collins Ave., 305-947-9696

Don't expect fancified stuff like menus, or the English language, at this informal market/café. If there's signage identifying the prepared foods behind the counters, it's in Russian, and daily dishes are pretty much what the cooks feel like making. So look and point. We'd suggest pointing at cold yogurt-based soups like tangy okroshka (with cukes, egg, scallions, potatoes, and dill) or holodnik (similar, with beets added); eggplant roulades, stuffed with spiced shredded carrots, are also a refreshing summer dish. Hot choices include meatballs in rich cream sauce and chicken Kiev. \$\$

Timo

17624 Collins Ave., 305-936-1008

Since opening in 2003, the inventive yet clean and unfussy Italian/Mediterranean-inspired seasonal food at this hot spot, created by chef/owner Tim Andriola (at the time best known for his stints at Chef Allen's and Mark's South Beach), has been garnering local and national raves. Don't bother reading them. Andriola's dishes speak for themselves: a salad of crisp oysters atop frisée, cannelloni bean, and pancetta; foie gras crostini with a subtle caramelized orange sauce; a blue crab raviolo with toasted pignolias and brown butter; or a wood-oven three-cheese "white" pizza. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Werner Staub's Peppermill

350 Bayview Dr., 305-466-2016

It'll likely be years until diners stop instinctively heading for the tropic-alpine chalet that formerly housed the Peppermill at the Waterways in Aventura. But this new indoor/outdoor space's bay views are much more spectacular. And the food is the same unique old-school stuff. Seafood is featured, and while there are contemporary preparations, you can't resist hard-to-find retro dishes like imported Dover sole almondine, Swiss-style poached trout with champagne-shallot sauce, an elaborate steak tartar, or for dessert, peach Melba or strawberries Romanoff. \$\$\$

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WEST OMNI: 1729 NE 1 AVE
For Lease \$13.50 PSF Mod Gross

The West Omni Art District Box is a unique property with 260' of North Miami Ave. frontage. Allows a range of uses. Units from 5,000 - 15,000 SF.

Tony Arellano | 305.571.9991
tarellano@metro1cre.com



DOWNTOWN: 1325 NE 1 AVE
For Lease \$13.50 PSF Mod Gross

Unique urban spaces (5,400 - 11,500 SF) that allow a range of uses. Recently refurbished building is next to the Performing Arts Center with I-395 visibility.

Tony Arellano | 305.571.9991
tarellano@metro1cre.com



AIRPORT WEST: 7245 NW 66TH ST
For Lease \$6.95 PSF Modified Gross

52,500 SF free-standing, street-level distribution warehouse with 22' ceiling, divisible to 17,500 SF. Ideal for construction supply, distribution and more.

Frank Calautti | 305.571.9991
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