

# BISCAYNE

July 2012

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

Volume 10 Issue 5

**NEW THIS ISSUE**  
Suburbs in the Sky at "My View" p. 26  
Six more worthy restaurants p. 86

# Times

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by Bonnie & Ilene



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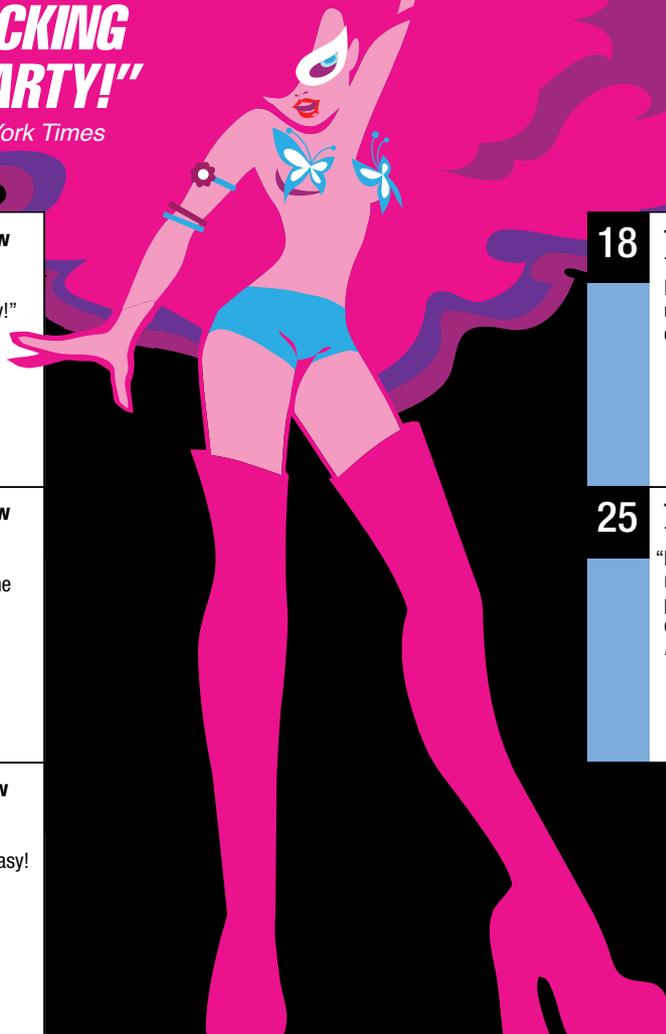
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**15** **The Donkey Show**  
5 PM   
"Passion. Sex. A rollicking cool party!"  
*The New York Times*  
  
IHTF  
**Solitude**  
5 PM

**22** **The Donkey Show**  
5 PM   
Come party on the dance floor to all the '70s disco hits you know by heart!  
  
IHTF  
**Andre & Dorine**  
5 PM

**29** **The Donkey Show**  
5 PM   
Live out your own fabulous disco fantasy!  
  
IHTF - **El No**  
5 PM

**18** **The Donkey Show**  
7:30 PM   
Don't miss the ultimate night fever dance spectacle!

**25** **The Donkey Show**  
7:30 PM   
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*Boston Herald*

**19** **The Donkey Show**  
7:30 PM   
A crazy fun house of disco mirror balls, feathered divas, roller skaters and hustle queens!  
  
IHTF  
**Malinche! Malinches**  
8:30 PM

**26** **The Donkey Show**  
7:30 PM   
Miami's most thrilling theatrical event of the summer!  
  
IHTF - **El No**  
8:30 PM

**20** **The Donkey Show**  
7:30 & 10:30 PM   
"Riveting! So visceral that words seem almost beside the point!"  
*The Boston Globe*  
  
IHTF  
**Malinche! Malinches**  
8:30 PM

**27** **The Donkey Show**  
7:30 & 10:30 PM   
"A fantastic disco party!"  
*Boston Metro*  
  
IHTF - **El No**  
8:30 PM

**21** **The Donkey Show**  
7:30 & 10:30 PM   
If you love the night life, this will be your mid-summer night's dream come true!  
  
IHTF  
**Andre & Dorine**  
8:30 PM

**28** **The Donkey Show**  
7:30 & 10:30 PM   
Join the show and shake your groove thang on stage!  
  
IHTF - **El No**  
8:30 PM

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# BISCAYNE *Times*

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## Commentary: LETTERS

### Trader Joe's: Redefining Brand Loyalty

Jen Karetnick's article on Trader Joe's ("Waiting for Joe," June 2012) prompted me to contact Trader Joe's corporate office. I told them as a native of Miami, I think she is so right that Miami Shores would be a great place for them to consider.

I talked about the foodies here, all the great ethnic influences, and the Hispanic community, which is one of the fastest-growing segments of our population. But in short, I would die to have a Trader Joe's here in our city!

Thanks to Jen for pushing me to join her campaign! Just maybe, we might get lucky.

*Margaret Murray  
Miami Shores*

### Trader Joe's: Obviously It's Not About Savings

Thank you, thank you, thank you Jen Karetnick for "Waiting for Joe." On a recent Thursday, we drove from Miami Beach to Naples to shop at Trader Joe's. This was our third road trip since they opened.

We will be the first to sign Jen's petition for a Trader Joe's in Miami Shores.

*Alan and Judith Robbins  
Miami Beach*

### Trader Joe's: A Mini Version in the Shores

I enjoyed Jen Karetnick's column about the lack of gourmet markets (and a Trader Joe's) in Miami Shores. I agree.

I don't know if Jen has had a chance to check out The Village Stand in Miami Shores. This little boutique store is trying to accomplish exactly what she described, in particular stocking gluten-free products.

They are quite new, though, and a very small store.

*Gladys M. Fernandez  
Miami Shores*

### If You Can't Do the Meeting, Don't Do the Complaining

In Carmen De Bernardi's letter, published under the title "Dear Biscayne Times: Not Everyone Thinks of You as Litter" (May 2012), she labels Biscayne Park residents who that don't hold her views about change as "old, close-minded, insensitive, and dismissive." In particular she bashed the Biscayne Park Code Review Board, of which she was a former member.

De Bernardi's rambling diatribe overlooks her own lack of participation in the process that facilitated change. She states that she quit in "disgust" since the board didn't respond to the needs of the community in

providing for front-yard fences. She mentions that she couldn't see wasting "one more night a month" at the meetings.

Maybe this is why she missed more than half the meetings, which were held twice a month. She never spoke at any of the three workshops on the fence ordinance. She doesn't know or care to mention that it was the village commission that pulled the board's recommendation for front-yard enclosures because of the number of residents who opposed it. I guess she missed that meeting as well.

It did take over a year to incorporate all the comments and concerns of the residents and the commission on the fence ordinance. In addition to the workshops, the proposed ordinance was discussed at several commission meetings.

Despite all the opportunities to voice her strong opinions, now, well after the fact, she expresses great indignation. It is "disheartening to say the least" to have a resident who made no effort to participate criticize others for not doing her bidding.

*Gary Kuhl, member  
Code Review Board  
Biscayne Park*

### Biscayne Times: A Crime Against Mother Nature

In his May column, "Well, Shut My Mouth," Gaspar González grumbled about a petition to combat litter in the Village of Biscayne Park. Some of our more ambitious residents were trying to stop the monthly distribution of *Biscayne Times* to our front lawns.

At many homes, unread newspapers lay in the yards for weeks. Besides giving the neighborhood a rather untidy look, it also gives the impression that a house is unoccupied. The petition suggested an alternative distribution method whereby resident could pick up the publication if they cared to read it.

Sounds reasonable to me.

Gaspar thought this sounded like an attempt to silence his voice and free speech in general. Some of us are actually concerned that even if some of the papers are recycled, the majority would end up in our garbage.

Ever heard of global warming or green initiatives? Cities all over are trying to reduce their waste and its impact on our planet. We have about 1300 homes in Biscayne Park. If one-third of the homes recycled their copies of the *BT*, at eight ounces per copy, that would still leave us with over two and a

Continued on page 16

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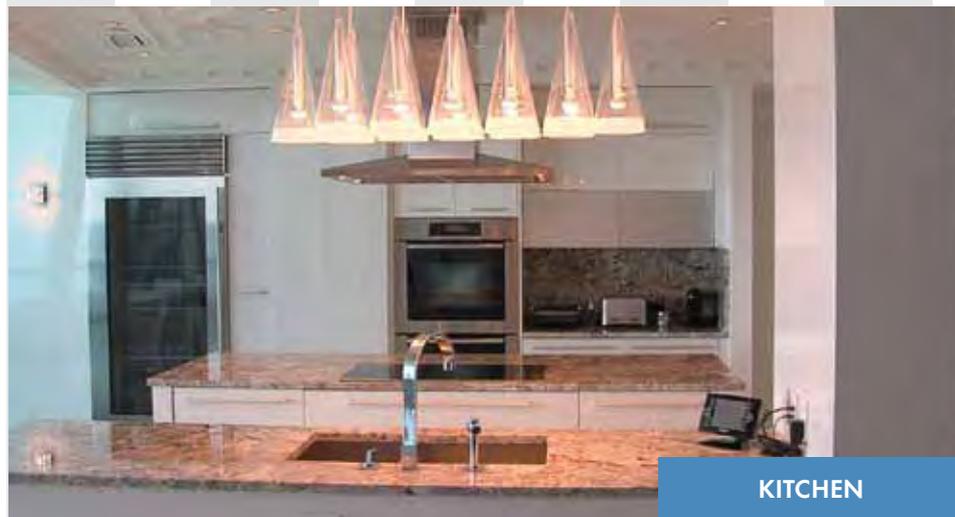
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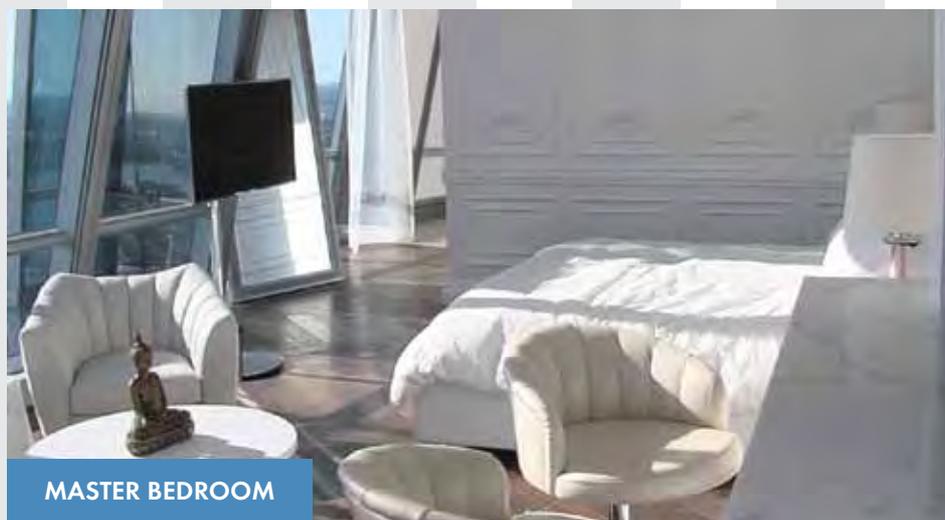


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## Commentary: LETTERS

### Letters

Continued from page 12

half tons of newsprint being added to our regular garbage yearly.

You would think *Biscayne Times* would encourage the online reading, and delivering papers only to those individuals who want a hard copy. Businesses should be working with communities to help minimize their impact on the environment by reducing the use of natural resources.

Gaspar even admitted he frequently stops his car to pick up litter near his house. He's obviously responsible. Wouldn't you think he would be concerned that *BT* is dropping a two-and-a-half-ton paper ball in Biscayne Park each year?

Barbara Kuhl  
Biscayne Park

### Biscayne Times a Crime? No, Cars Are the Crime

As usual, I love all of Gaspar González's columns and consider him the only one here in Biscayne Park "to get up and stand up for our rights."

"Well, Shut My Mouth" addressed litter in the Park, which, in my opinion, is mostly the result of all the cars cutting through, which leads to *my* problem, which is simply this: The increasing traffic in Biscayne Park has gotten out of control!

I used to take lots and lots of quiet, undisturbed walks with my dogs. Not anymore.

Now I have to look constantly over my back and very often have to jump on neighbors' lawns to get out of a car's way.

Cars are coming from all directions, and lots of them are totally ignoring our 25 mph signs.

As a resident of Biscayne Park for more than 12 years, I am watching this increasing problem with disgust and wondering what can be done to get us back to a quiet Park where residents can walk in peace.

I know we can't stop evolution, but maybe closing a few streets from one side and making it more difficult and therefore inefficient for nonresidents to cut through would be a solution.

Lots of speed bumps?

Katrin Fechler  
Biscayne Park

### I Dare You: Just One Meeting

I have had occasion over the past few months to visit the Village of Biscayne Park and, out of curiosity, to attend a commission meeting to see their local government in action.

Frankly, I was quite shocked. No one could have adequately described for me what I saw and heard.

I urge — no, I challenge — each adult member of the Biscayne Park community to attend one commission meeting in the next few months so they can observe for themselves. Then they can form their own opinions.

Do we really need someone telling us how we should think, interpreting reality for us?

I hope not.

Mimi D'Angelo  
Wellesley, Massachusetts

### Who Wants Walmarts When You Can Have Plazas?

In regards to the cover story about Midtown Miami by Eric Bojnansky ("Like a Rocket," April 2012), for what it's worth, my wife and I visited Spain last year. Sometime thereafter and back in Miami, the media was abuzz with news that Walmart was considering a store at Midtown, and of course part of the buzz was created by those against the Walmart store.

I can understand the anti-Walmart cries. I thought about the space left to be developed and what came to mind was a plaza, like in Spain, or the Piazza San Marco in Venice, Italy.

Obviously the space needs to generate revenue for the Midtown people, but why does it have to be with the same old, same old? You need to have visited the big beautiful Spanish plazas in Madrid to appreciate the unique function they serve in the community and in the surrounding areas.

Not only are they multifunctional, they are very pedestrian friendly and visually beautiful. Basically they are no different from Lincoln Road, except that all the stores, boutiques, restaurants, and cafés with tables and umbrellas are placed in a spacious, beautiful, Spanish-style square with columns all around, beautiful street lamps spread throughout, and a big, multi-tiered fountain in the middle. The square at one end might have a few more floors with some architectural flourish and clock.

In Spain, we saw families sitting and chatting while kids were playing; couples having dinner, enjoying being outside in a cozy setting. Plazas, piazzas, and squares are all so visually beautiful. Neither Lincoln Road nor Bayside offer that experience.

How unique would something of this nature be for Miami! The space at Midtown is big enough to really create a work of functional architectural beauty and commerce.

Just a thought, *Biscayne Times*. Keep up the great work!

Ernie Garcia  
Upper Eastside

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1008 NE 116th St., Biscayne Park Offered at \$338,000    102 NW 105th St., Miami Shores Offered at \$299,000    515 NE 107th St., Miami Shores Offered at \$535,000 \*participated in sale    142 NW 100th St., Miami Shores Offered at \$269,000 \*participated in sale    236 NE 103rd St., Miami Shores Offered at \$349,000    841 NE 95th St., Miami Shores Offered at \$349,000



430 NE 101 St., Miami Shores Offered at \$699,000 \*participated in sale    10528 NW 2nd Ave, Miami Shores offered at \$195,000    9200 NW 2nd Ave., Miami Shores Offered at \$269,000    1200 NE 91st Ter., Miami Shores offered at \$349,000    969 NE 92nd St., Miami Shores offered at \$349,000    1070 NE 96th St., Miami Shores Offered at \$699,000



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# So Long, Scotty's

One thing about Miami's record of waterfront development: It's consistent — consistently awful

By Jack King  
BT Contributor

I'm spending a wonderful long weekend in St. Petersburg, riding bikes and taking in the great museums and galleries — and enjoying the beautiful downtown area with its great bike and walking paths and an unobstructed view of the waterfront.

Sadly, all this is not enough to cure my depressive state about the City of Miami's insane actions relating to development of the Coconut Grove waterfront. The city sent out a Request for Proposals (RFP) to redevelop the waterfront area where Grove Key Marina and Scotty's Landing restaurant are located. What it got back was not pretty.

Like all the developments the city has tried to undertake, it's all about the money. The highest bidder gets the deal, regardless of whether the development is good for the residents of Miami. That's pretty much why we have wall-to-wall condos on our waterfront. It's visual blight of a tall order — you can't see anything.

City Manager Johnny Martinez and his minions started this most recent mess by pushing the vision they had for the waterfront with no input from residents and other designers. They didn't even bother to note that there is a current Coconut Grove Waterfront Master Plan in effect. They brushed that aside, saying it was only a concept and not a real plan.

Next Martinez selected a bid-review committee that included two City of

Miami employees, a Miami Beach employee, an architect, and a person who I thought to be a restaurant specialist and who is employed by a company called Restaurant Services, Inc. Turns out that company is the food services delivery wing of Burger King.

So it turns out that there is not a single person on the review committee who has any knowledge of waterfront development, restaurant operation, or marina operation. That's pretty amazing when you consider that this is an RFP for a waterfront marina and restaurant. Hey, maybe Burger King could be the signature restaurant on the water!

The whole bidding process turned out to be another one the city's famous clown shows. Some bids were not received within the time limit. The presentations from the bidders were held in secret with no residents or media allowed. Before the presentation, a city minion began handing out the bid documents to the media and then quickly snatched them back.

I guess the somewhat good news is that the committee's deliberations over which bidder to recommend was done in public and with the media. However, since they hadn't seen the bid documents, reporters and concerned citizens had no idea what committee members were talking about. So much for government in the sunshine.

In the end, the committee did favor the highest bidder. Now it goes



**According to Miami city officials, this waterfront plan isn't real. What do you think?**

to the city manager, who will decide whether to forward it to city commission for a vote. And still no one in the public or the media has even seen the actual bid documents.

Possibly the saving grace to all this is that the public gets to vote up or down on the project in November. This little bump in the road is a result of the "Carollo Amendment," after former commissioner and mayor Joe Carollo. It requires a citywide referendum any time waterfront property owned by the city is proposed for development. I've never been a big fan of Carollo, but in this case I will say thanks.

Now, you might say we should give city officials time to work through the whole process, but I'd point out that the city doesn't have a particularly good record regarding waterfront development. Let me give you three examples:

There have been five waterfront master plans since 1985 and not a single one has been implemented.

The Flagstone marina/hotel project on the west side of Watson Island was signed, sealed, and delivered nearly ten

years ago. Since then, not one shovel of dirt has moved.

The Jungle Island complex has been built, but it was with federal community-block-grant funds that were meant for revitalizing poor neighborhoods. The place is pretty much a financial disaster. Still the city keeps putting money into it. The owners are in hock for millions to the city and private creditors. Their solution to the problem? They want the city to give them more Watson Island land and a 50-year lease extension so they can get new financing.

Can the City of Miami ever straighten itself out? Not hardly. For more than 30 years I've been tracking one bad city deal after another. The faces change but the misdeeds stay the same.

In the 1950s, the commission was so bad that Florida's governor removed all five of them. While philosophically I think it might be the right thing to do now, I'm not sure it would work. Can you imagine a governor like Rick Scott arguing that some Miami politicians are worse than he is? It's a tossup at best.

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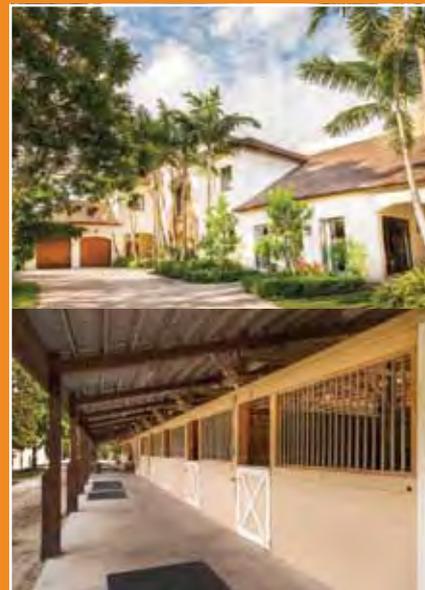
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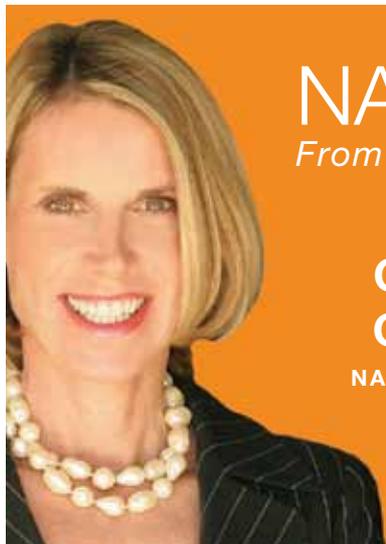
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# The Design District, Redesigned

A new mega-project will define the neighborhood's future

By **Christian Cipriani**  
BT Contributor

When I moved to South Florida in 2005, I accidentally moved to Plantation. It sounded quaint enough, and my map had it less than an inch from South Beach, where I'd landed a job editing a design magazine. I turned up for my first day to locked doors; behind me, Miami geared up to introduce herself.

For the next hour I tested the limits of my Dodge Neon, outrunning a death-black storm as it chased me all the way back up the highway. No one called to say work was canceled because of Hurricane Katrina.

Believe it or not, the novelty of driving up and down I-95 at least once a day wore off after only a year, at which point I took a job in the Design District and moved to NE 26th Street. A five-minute commute and I still managed to be late, but I was proud of where I worked. The "Design District." I didn't even have to say what I did; it just sounded cool. And in 2006, this neighborhood was in a major upswing.

The condo boom was at its height, and people were coming in droves to furnish their new apartments with high-end goods from the likes of Poltrona Frau. My boss at the design magazine used to scoff at my complete ignorance of boldface names: I didn't know the brands, the players, the fairs, the designers, the collectors, or the financiers.

I also made it pretty obvious that I didn't care. (Yes, as a matter of fact I was fired.)

But this was a time when there were two Design Districts. By day, 20- and 30-somethings worked in ad agencies before *Mad Men* made it cool, while older rich people perused decorative arts. The nightlife scene was decidedly young at this time. Poplife, Miami's taste-making Saturday-night indie party, had a huge run at The District before it closed.

By 2008 the space had turned into a high-end restaurant, Pacific Time, which also failed. Over the next few years other nightlife venues came and went. The King Is Dead, Grass, and just up the street, Amendment XXI. With these losses went most people under 35, and the after-11:00 p.m. action tapered off.

The next few years saw more changes to the character of the Design District. First, it turned over second Saturdays Art Walk to Wynwood. There was a time when the split was pretty even, but in the past two years, Wynwood firmly declared itself the seat of the arts. Art Basel week is now focused on Midtown and Wynwood, too. The Design District has pursued an older, wealthier, and more civilized crowd. Hipsters and graffiti out. Moneyed creative-industry types in.

Nightlife now consists of restaurant cocktail bars and the outdoor lounge at NE 39th Street and NE 1st Avenue — the one filled with trees and Bisazza tiles



Courtesy of Dacra

An artist's rendering of the new, pedestrian-friendly Design District.

that can't keep a name.

And I believe all of this change has been thoroughly calculated.

Craig Robins, whose Dacra real estate group controls nearly the whole district, is one of Miami's smartest and most successful developers. His has been the long game, moving the chess pieces in anticipation of getting the neighborhood to where it needed to be for July's big news.

Last month his company unveiled a \$312 million, four-block, mixed-use development that will transform the Design District into Miami's equivalent of Lincoln Road. The Miami city planning commission unanimously gave the project its preliminary approval. More than a shopping destination, the district wants to become a hangout replete with rooftop green spaces and shade trees. This will recreate the Lincoln Road experience of being slowed down enough to buy something.

Dacra also poached ultra-luxury retailers like Hermes and Louis Vuitton from Bal Harbour. Armani, Cartier, Fendi, Zenga, Bulgari, and Armani/Casa are also forthcoming, as are new hotel, residential, and parking components.

I spent about four years working in the Design District, and my memory is of a pretty area nestled right up against Little Haiti. Even with the ubiquitous private security cars lurking around, muggings, car break-ins, and the faint sound of gunshots were realities even by day. In a recent conversation with one of my neighbors, who manages one of the district's premier furniture stores, I learned that these concerns haven't changed. She considers it the biggest threat to doing business in the area.

But Robins is no novice. While neither he nor a Dacra rep were available to comment for this column, I think it's safe to assume that the issue of security is high up on their list of Things That Concern Wealthy Shoppers.

Right now Wynwood isn't just booming, it's exploding. Dacra and the Design District are about to be hot on its heels. As they set their project into motion, I am willing to bet that this neighborhood is unrecognizable by 2015. And those of us who drifted away will almost certainly start drifting back.

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

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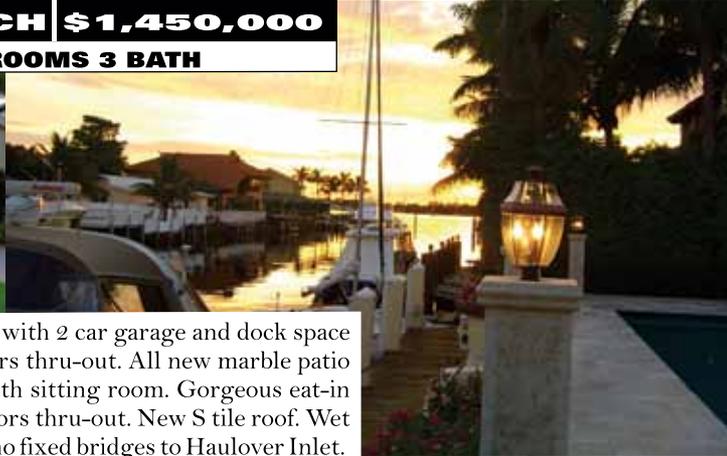
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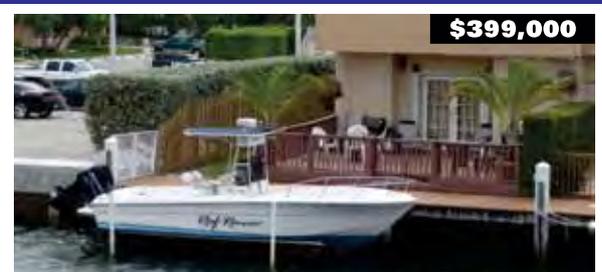
Beautiful updated 2 story waterfront home with 2 car garage and dock space for up to 80 FT yacht. Wood & marble floors thru-out. All new marble patio and remodeled pool. Large master suite with sitting room. Gorgeous eat-in kitchen. Hurricane impact windows and doors thru-out. New S tile roof. Wet bar & large family room. Ocean access and no fixed bridges to Haulover Inlet.



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**EASTERN SHORES TH 3 BR 2 1/2 BTH**

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**\$419,000**

**NORTH MIAMI BEACH**  
**EASTERN SHORES TH 3 BR 3 BTH**

Gorgeous renovated waterfront townhome. Marble floors and hurricane impact windows. French doors thru-out. Master BR has balcony water views. 24FT boat dock space included.



**\$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.



**\$549,900**

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# Miami's Suburbs in the Sky

Brickell's towering condos leave their residents isolated and disengaged

By Craig Chester  
Special to the BT

Are the mega-condos of Brickell the key to urban vitality and innovation or are they just cul-de-sacs in the sky? In a keynote speech during the recent 20th Congress for New Urbanism in West Palm Beach, author Richard Florida challenged the idea that the “rush to density” will unlock and release the potential of our cities.

“This rush to density, this idea that density creates economic growth,” is wrong, Florida said. “It’s the creation of real, walkable urban environments that stir the human spirit. Skyscraper communities are vertical suburbs, where it is lonely at the top. The kind of density we want is a ‘Jane Jacobs density.’”

In her influential book *Death and Life of American Cities* (1961), Jacobs

objected to neighborhoods that were made up exclusively of high-rises and instead preferred neighborhoods with buildings that are a mix of ages and types — Greenwich Village in New York City, for example. When you consider cities around the world, it’s in those types of neighborhoods where you will often find the arts districts, the best music venues, the authentic, the local businesses, the innovators, the vitality — and a sense of place and community.

I live in Brickell, in a rented condo on the 23rd story of building built in 2007. It soars for ten more stories above me and sits atop an eight-level parking pedestal where every car has a happy home. It’s surrounded by other residential towers of similar stature.

I enjoy Brickell primarily because I can walk for nearly all my basic



human needs — groceries, a barber, a slice of pizza. It’s also well-served by Metrorail and the Metromover, both accessible from my doorstep. It’s a rare Miami neighborhood in that regard. But increasingly I find myself questioning if Brickell is a “walkable environment that stirs the human spirit” or merely a semi-walkable streetscape in the shadows of impersonal towers functioning as suburbs in the sky.

In many ways, the mega-condos of Brickell share several of the undesirable characteristics of a suburban gated community, despite being the densest

neighborhood south of New York City along the East Coast. It’s largely impossible to know more than a few people in a 50-story building, if you know any at all. The “inclusion” of a parking space (which can drive up the cost of a unit anywhere from 15 to 30 percent, according to parking expert Jeffrey Tumlin) acts as an incentive to drive, therefore damaging the pedestrian realm. The buildings and their residents, by nature, are segregated by income. The anonymity does not encourage civic engagement; in the most recent city commission elections, the Brickell ZIP codes recorded



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an eight-percent turnout. That means 92 percent did *not* vote.

Meaningful public space in Brickell is severely lacking. With no central plaza, no signature park, no outdoor public room, no farmers market or gathering place, most of the “public” realm is centered around commercial “third places” (Starbucks) or reduced to the street and sidewalks. The latter is problematic because Brickell’s sidewalks are terribly neglected and the streets full of maniacal drivers.

A walk around Brickell is a particularly unrewarding experience: crumbling sidewalks, perpetual construction with worker disregard of pedestrians, dark streets, blank walls, bullying motorists, busy arterials with scant crosswalks, and the desolation of vacant office towers after business hours.

The businesses attracted to Brickell are beginning to look a lot like those implanted in suburban shopping malls — national franchises like Blue Martini, Fado, P.F. Chang’s — which would be acceptable if there were actually some other businesses opening besides restaurants. The 800-pound gorilla in the room

no one seems to be talking about is the future Brickell CitiCentre, a five-million-square-foot retail, office, hotel, and condo behemoth and the largest private construction project in the United States at present.

For better or worse, this billion-dollar project will fundamentally transform the neighborhood, if not the entire city. On the one hand, it will mitigate the retail deficit that exists in Miami’s urban core. On the other, we can expect plenty of national franchises, thousands of parking spaces, and intensified motorized traffic. Ultimately it may be a series of towers that function more like a suburban shopping mall rather than an edifice with an active pedestrian realm seamlessly integrated into the urban fabric.

It’s obvious that areas like Wynwood, Midtown, and the Design District are the emerging centers of Miami’s arts and creative community. Brickell is beginning to seem like a stark contrast to those neighborhoods, identified as a weekend playground for suburbanites, wealthy South Americans on vacation to their second homes, and disengaged young professionals.

The longer-term prospects for the Brickell mega-towers are arguably quite bleak, as flimsy homeowner associations will face massive maintenance costs and liabilities in an era of expensive energy — an increasingly urgent situation that smaller, human-scaled buildings will have an easier time confronting. When these towers require broad renovations, the limitations of their enormity will be truly exposed.

The key to long-term vitality in a neighborhood is whether it’s inhabitants are fulfilled by their surroundings. To quote Richard Florida: “The quality of a place itself is the single most important factor in people’s fulfillment. There are four parts to this: the degree to which a community values its history; is walkable and mixed-use; values arts, both street art and high art; and integrates the built and natural environment.”

Aside from Brickell’s walkability, it seems to be failing on the other fronts Florida mentions. Valuing history? Entitled residents are using an ancient burial ground as a toilet for their dogs. Street art and high art? There are no art galleries in Brickell and the only “street

art” is the incessant sidewalk spray paint indiscriminately spewed by utility and construction companies. Integrates the built and natural environment? Another failure, as virtually all that exists in Brickell is the built environment. (The Miami Riverwalk project would be nice if completed in my lifetime.)

There are some improvements on the way. Triangle Park will be a welcome, albeit small, neighborhood oasis. There are plans to overhaul S. Miami Avenue to be more pedestrian-oriented in the coming years. However, it’s unlikely these projects will significantly change the underlying social construct of a skyscraper-burdened community.

I increasingly find myself leaving Brickell in search of more authentic urban experiences elsewhere in the city. Actually, I need to leave Brickell just to go to a bookstore or bicycle shop, amenities commonly found in places with a “Jane Jacobs” density.

*This article first appeared on [www.transitmiami.com](http://www.transitmiami.com).*

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PROPERTIES

# BizBuzz: July 2012

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

By Pamela Robin Brandt  
BT Contributor

July is the month that starts with one fabulous fun blast — fireworks — on the fourth, and then hopefully doesn't continue with more big blasts that aren't such fun — heat waves, hurricanes, floods. But whatever comes, BT advertisers have deals to help you get through the month in good shape.

Let's start with Independence Day, when the City of Miami Beach, plus radio Classical South Florida and Coca-Cola bring you **Fire on the Fourth**, a free family-friendly, all-day beachfront festival (stage at 8th Street and Ocean Drive). Kicking off with DJ Maximus3000 at 1:00 p.m., highlights include indie art-rock musician Fred Thomas at 6:30 p.m., the South Florida Symphony Orchestra Quartet at 8:30, and fireworks by the famed Zambelli company to finish. Tip for drivers: Park in North Beach and take free shuttles to and from South Beach (heading south from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. at Collins and 81st or 72nd streets; returning north from 10:00 to 11:00 p.m.).

Prefer something less traditional than fireworks, but just as loud? Wynwood's cutting-edge alternative **O Cinema** (90 NW 29th St., 305-571-9970)

has you covered with its Audio Junkie Independence Day Bash. From 2:00-11:00 p.m. the party features live performances by Deaf Poets, Rat Bastard, and a half-dozen other bands, plus live silk screening (BYO shirt), food trucks and local microbrews, too. Admission: \$10.

For pet owners, the **Humane Society of Greater Miami** (16101 W. Dixie Hwy., 305-696-0800), which was just named Best Charity by *New Times*, has tips for keeping your furry friends safe and sane on July 4. First, since firecracker noises can agitate pets, keep them inside (possibly with the TV on, to mask the explosions). If pets are outside, don't use fireworks around them; fireworks are toxic — and that goes for matches and lighter fluid, too. Make sure pets are wearing secure ID tags, in case they get scared and bolt. And finally, as funny as it is to allow the four-legged party animals lap up a bowl of beer with you, resist. Alcohol can be poisonous to pets.

Evidently there's more than one reason why midsummer scorches are referred to as dog days, including a record number of canine-related ads this month. This includes new advertiser **Poop 911** (1-877-POOP-911), a clean-up service that's "here to pick up where your dog left off," meaning their poop-scooping staff will keep your



yard clean, green, and party-friendly; additional services range from dog walking to feeding and watering. The company has larger cleaning solutions for homeowner and condo associations, dog parks, and shopping centers.

Health-conscious pups and their people will be happy with July's deal from By Nature: \$4 off a 15-17 lb. bag of the company's nutritionally complete dog food, and \$1 off **By Nature** dog biscuits. See this issue's ad for local stores carrying this natural and organic brand.

For years the Doggie Bag Café, located at **Smiling Pets Animal Clinic** (7310 Biscayne Blvd., 305-710-7266), has offered organic gourmet meals, such as delectable-looking "mutt-loaf," for pets. Now there's another reason for smiles: On July 15, 22, and 29, chef Laly Abelate presents Cooking for Canines classes, from 1:00-3:00 p.m. The \$30 price (for one dog and his or her human) includes a taste test of the day's recipe, the café's brunch for doggie, and some people-type refreshments.

Advance payment required, so call ahead.

Before you're tempted to cadge Fido's bacon-topped vegetable quiche, hurry over to new advertiser, and new Design District hot spot, **Barrel Wine Cantine** (3622 NE 2nd Ave., 305-576-7775), where chef/owner Victor Passalacqua serves classic quiches for humans, plus Miami's ultimate foie gras terrine and much more. There are also weekday specials: 50% off wines on Mondays' "Industry Nights," happy hour for ladies on Tuesday evenings, Wednesday wine tastings with some very impressive master wine experts, and live jazz on Thursdays.

Welcome also to new advertiser **Adelita's Café** (2699 Biscayne Blvd., 305-576-1262), humble-looking and slightly hidden from view, but Miami's first name in Honduran food. From breakfast's à la ranchera eggs with mantequilla and chimol salsa to baleadas (Honduras's unique take on tacos) to a

Continued on page 32



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## Our Sponsors: JULY 2012

### BizBuzz

Continued from page 30

meal-in-a-bowl sopa de caracol (conch soup) or tapado de res (beef/coconut stew), it has long been the place to go for a comprehensive introduction to this cuisine's Greatest Hits.

Welcome back to **Mike's at Venetia** (555 NE 15th St. 9th Floor, 305-374-5731), a place we knew as a darned fine hangout long before this tropical Irish pub, with expansive bayview terrace, first became an advertiser. Mike's has been a home away from home for local journalists forever, so you know that both the American pub grub (hefty burgers and steaks, roast beef sandwiches, seafood platters) and free-flowing beer are affordable enough to eat there every day, lunch to late night.

For Italian comfort food that'll evoke the homey red sauce joints of your childhood, not just in taste but in portion size (big) and price (small), visit new advertiser that has possibly been around since your childhood: 25-year-old **Il Piccolo Café** (2112 NE 123rd St., 305-893-6538). As well as all the expected old Italian-American favorites, you'll find a few surprises, including elaborate fresh salads and a variety of international sandwiches.

How about a restaurant that's both new and old? It's not a Zen riddle. It's new advertiser **Café 46** (190 NE 46th St., 305-400-8828) which, in all but name and address, is essentially South Beach's decade-old neighborhood institution Joe Allen, which closed its doors last year. And you can now enjoy your old favorite dishes not only at dinner but at a just-started Sunday brunch, 11:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m., which also features \$3 mimosas (first one free!).

At **Bagels and Company** (11064 Biscayne Blvd., 305-892-2435) David Cohen is offering readers four coupon specials, including bagel mavens' fave: buy a dozen, get another dozen free. The rest are for eat-in diners: \$2 off tabs of \$10 or more; \$5 off checks over \$20; and a buy-one-entrée-get-one-free deal. All offers are good weekdays only, with this issue's ad only.

While All-You-Can-Eat Lobster Wednesdays aren't a summer-only thing at Sunny Isles Beach's **Kitchen 305** (16701 Collins Ave., 305-749-2110), here's what is: Through September, the lobsters are softshell "shedders," New England aficionados' preferred pick for their supreme sweetness. True, the growing crustaceans'

meat doesn't fill their new shells, annoying diners who are paying per lobster. But at \$35 prix fixe for unlimited eating, size isn't an issue.

Dine on dishes and drinks from dozens of South Florida's top restaurants and beverage specialists on July 19 at the 25th annual Taste of the Nation Miami feast at **Turnberry Isle** (19999 W. Country Club Dr., Aventura, 305-933-6930). Taste chairman Allen Susser started the charity event when he was the resort's executive chef. Go to strengthflorida.org for info on all participating eateries. Oh, and 100% of ticket sales go to Share Our Strength to fight childhood hunger.

If you're seeking entertainment options for your own children during summer vacation, try Midtown Moonlit Movies, sponsored by **The Shops at Midtown Miami**. The free family-friendly film series, originally scheduled to end in June, has been extended owing to overwhelming demand. Flicks will be screened at 8:00 p.m. at Fountain Plaza on the second and fourth Wednesdays of the next two months (July 11 and 25, August 8 and 22).

Earlier we mentioned getting through the month in good shape. Well, you could be in the best shape *ever* if you visit **Inner Balance Studio** (12579 Biscayne Blvd., 786-383-3088). Added to its signature roster of massages and classes in yoga, Pilates, and other disciplines that bolster both body and mind are new Prenatal Yoga and Postnatal Yoga with Baby classes. Mention the *BT* for 10% off your first class.

If you're more mind-oriented than body-oriented, try a **Psychic Tarot Reading by Sophia** (786-284-8203). By appointment only, her palm, tea leaf, or crystal-ball readings address anxiety management, marital issues, phobias, and more. She does parties, too.

If you're more into body improvement, on the other hand, get instant gratification at **Hannah & Her Scissors** (611 NE 86th St., 305-772-8426). This month's deal: 10% off all hair services, eyebrow and body waxing, and even Hannah Lasky's own hair products when you mention the *BT* and say the magic words: "Got Hannapoo?" That's her shampoo. Check out the hair artist's artwork, too, at her salon's new and expanding art gallery and gift boutique; the paintings, handmade pillows, custom upholstery, and more are truly unique.

If it's your home that needs improving, visit **360 Furniture Consignments** (18340 W. Dixie Hwy., 305-627-3148), which buys and sells new plus high-end (gently) used furniture, accessories, and art. To celebrate the start of the showroom's third year in business, 360's Dave Widdas is offering customers, especially *BT* customers, 20-50% off select items during July.

The annual huge summer sale at **Scan Design** (3025 Sunny Isles Blvd., 305-944-8080) actually started June 22 and only runs through July 8. So lovers of stylish contemporary furniture need to run, not walk.

Those who favor 18th-20th-century home décor will find one-stop shopping at **Antiques Plaza** (8650 Biscayne Blvd.), a unique collection of more than two dozen exciting, independent showrooms (plus a Cuban restaurant; nothing like some restorative chicharrones to return one's strength for shopping). Welcome back to this returning advertiser.

Cool bay breezes make boating one of Miami's few enjoyable summer sports. But in case those breezes turn to

hurricanes, boat owners need to prepare. Call **Keystone Point Marina** (1950 NE 135th St., 305-940-6236) whose full services include "safe harbor" hurricane boat storage plans.

To protect your car from the muddy messes made by summer storms, **Busy Bee Car Wash** (10550 Biscayne Blvd., 305-891-5889) recommends cleaning underneath your car, to keep rubber seals clean and keep your engine from overheating. So take advantage of July's special deal: an exterior and undercarriage wash for only \$9.

Most Miamians don't budge from the comfort of our air-conditioned homes this season. To ensure that comfort is maximized, check out new advertiser **Blue Breeze/One-Hour Air Conditioning** (655 NW 118th St., 305-865-1220), whose motto is: "Always on time...or you don't pay a dime." The company's techies can handle any kind of air-conditioning emergency, from simple air filter changes or preventative tune-ups to repairing, upgrading, or completely replacing your unit. To schedule service, e-mail [ScheduleSomeHelp.com](mailto:ScheduleSomeHelp.com) or call

888-333-8888. Blue Breeze sells and installs not just A/C units but supplemental stuff particularly useful in South Florida, like dehumidifiers and/or UV air purifiers (to combat mold), and more.

If home, for you or loved ones, means assisted living, welcome returning advertiser **Bay Oaks Home** (435 NE 34th St., 305-573-4337). Call to schedule a tour of the beautiful grounds and accommodations at this historic retirement residence, which looks like a charming, luxe New England bed and breakfast — except with tropical landscaping, and Biscayne Bay half a block away.

Looking ahead from July, Dr. Margaret Okonkwo and her staff at **Kidstown Pediatrics** (4112 NE 1st Ave., 305-576-5437) say it's time to schedule a preschool physical, and remind parents that for kids entering kindergarten, or any grade in a Florida school for the first time, a physical within 12 months prior to the start of school is actually required for attendance. Naturally, an annual

check-up is a good idea even when not required, and Kidstown is known for making the process non-threatening,

even fun, for kids. And definitely breaking through the fun barrier is a preschool family picnic/bazaar Kidstown is planning for August; no date yet, but we'll let you know next issue.

Finally, you've no doubt noticed this issue's many new advertisers connected to August 14th's election. Here's the list: **Alison Austin, Tanya Brinkley, Alix Desulme, Don S. Cohn, Robert Coppel, Patricia Marino-Pedraza, Teresa Mary Pooler, John Rodriguez, Katherine Fernandez Rundle, Jacci Suzan Seskin, Teretha Lundy Thomas, and Frederica Wilson.**

There's also the **City of North Miami**, whose ad concerns a referendum to expand their Museum of Contemporary Art. It's not appropriate for this column to tell you *how* to vote. But we very much urge to do it: **Vote!** And please research the issues in advance. That old chestnut about how all politicians are the same really doesn't cut it.

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# Welcome to the Ted Vernon Show

Yes, he sells classic cars to foreign potentates, but that's just his warm-up act

By Erik Bojnansky  
Photos by Silvia Ros

**T**ed Vernon loves to be the center of attention. He craves it. It's what drives him, and as such, it's good for business.

For the past 35 years, Vernon has owned and operated Ted Vernon Specialty Automobiles, a dealership that mainly sells and trades classic cars, trucks, and motorcycles. His customers range from small-business owners, retirees, tourists, and fellow car dealers to celebrities, professional athletes, and even royalty from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates.

"The way he buys, sells, and trades is nothing short of amazing, to be honest," says Jim Silverman, sales manager at Vista BMW in northern Broward. "He's a master of knowing what a deal is going to do. He trades down the line. You do a

deal, he shakes your hand, and as far as he's concerned, the deal is done."

Vernon isn't content, however, with being the local classic-car guru. A short, muscular man with a long bushy mus-

**Vernon also produces movies whose plots have included homicidal scarecrows, a maniacal Seminole spirit, and murderous Cuban communist art thieves.**

tache and bald pate, he produces movies that usually star himself and whose plots have included homicidal scarecrows, a kidnapped autistic child watched over by a guardian angel, a maniacal Seminole spirit, zombies, and murderous Cuban communist art thieves.

At age 63, Vernon also wrestles for Fort Lauderdale-based Future of Wrestling as his alter-ego, the "Trillionaire Ted Vernon," an unscrupulous wrestling manager out to destroy whoever is cast

as the protagonist in a particular bout. Previously he sang in a doo-wop group, smashed cars in demolition derbies at the old Hialeah Park racetrack, and fought in amateur and professional boxing matches.

"He's a character and he likes to entertain people," says his wife, Robin Ziel-Vernon, a striking, six-foot blonde

thirtysomething who runs the day-to-day affairs of the business while Ted makes deals. "That makes Ted Vernon happy. If you're laughing, he won't stop making jokes."

"I am an egotistical fellow," he admits. "I like being in front of the camera. I don't enjoy the behind-the-scenes stuff at all, the whole hardworking stuff. That's why Robin's here. Robin does all the hard stuff. I buy, sell, trade cars. I laugh all day. I deal with nice people all day. I don't do a damn thing. It's great stuff!"

A glimpse of the Vernons' world can still be seen on Discovery's Velocity Channel, where reruns of the 2011 realty show *South Beach Classics*, featuring



Vernon's wife Robin actually runs the business: "My wife is a rocket scientist! She gets it all done."



Vernon has been collecting stuffed animals, mounts, and skins for years: "They all have stories."

the couple and their auto dealings, still air. "When people come here, they may not come here to buy a car," Vernon says. "I'll crack on their old lady, tell them stories, keep them laughing. It's not about the car anymore. It's about the experience. It's the Ted Vernon Show!"

The couple has just moved to a larger stage, in fact. For 33 years Ted Vernon Specialty Automobiles operated from a hidden lot barely a half-acre in size at 471 NE 79th St. in the Upper Eastside, shoehorned between the Biscayne Plaza Shopping Center and the Little River. That changed several months ago, when the business moved to 8301 NW 7th Ave., adjacent to I-95. (The

old location is being leased as a storage and repair facility for boats and jet skis.)

Aside from providing more exposure than the old site, the new property covers four acres and includes a pair of show-

**"People may not come here to buy a car. I'll keep them laughing. It's not about the car anymore. It's about the experience. It's the Ted Vernon Show!"**

rooms. This gives plenty of space for Vernon not only to display his vehicles, but to show off his art collection, including a "machine gun" created by Miami titanium artist Omar Ali, as well as sports memorabilia and a taxidermy collection.

That last features an elephant head with trunk outstretched, a wallaby that

appears to be flipping the bird with its sharp claw, squirrels "frozen" on bark, and mounted antelope and deer heads, bear and lion rugs, a raccoon, a sloth, and a warthog. A professed animal lover

who claims not even to keep a catch when he fishes, Vernon says he's been collecting stuffed animals, mounts, and skins for years. "They all have stories," he says.

The Vernons' own story has taken some unexpected turns. The couple moved from their old location not

because they wanted to, but because they had to, he says. For the past seven years, the Vernons have been locked in a legal struggle with the owners of Biscayne Plaza Shopping Center, principally developers Edward Easton and Allen Greenwald, and Stephen Bittel, president of Terranova, a Miami Beach-based property management company. The fight has cost him millions of dollars, Vernon maintains, and has been a source of relentless stress.

Alan Marcus, the Vernons' attorney, contends that the conflict started in 2005, when Vernon refused to sell his 79th Street property to Biscayne Plaza. At the time, the shopping center owners wanted to replace the aging mall with

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## Vernon Show

Continued from page 37

a multi-use project comprising 2470 housing units and 200,000 square feet of retail. The site plan included Vernon's dealership, and when he refused to sell, the owners retaliated by severely limiting access to it.

Visitors were even forbidden from using a back road perpendicular to 79th Street. Instead, two narrow strips of land, barely the width of a car, were provided to the Vernons as easements. One easement, just north of 79th Street, is obstructed by two streetlights. "I couldn't walk in and out of my building. Can you imagine that?" Vernon seethes. Robin eventually created a new doorway by ripping down a wall facing their parking lot.

Easton, Greenwald, and Bittel also sued Vernon for more than \$2 million for alleged trespass violations made by "invitees" to his business, and for back rent on some vacant mall property he formerly used as a parking lot. Marcus insists that Biscayne Plaza's owners waived the rent for 15 years until they sought Vernon's land. A jury awarded



**A nasty legal battle prompted Vernon's move to a spacious new location on NW 7th Avenue.**

the mall owners \$40,583 in March 2011. Early this year Judge William Thomas added the mall owners' legal fees of \$266,588 to Vernon's bill.

The Vernons are appealing the case. They're also countersuing the shopping center owners for lost income and fraud based on a 1957 court judgment Robin uncovered guaranteeing the right to use

the private road as an easement. Marcus claims the owners knew about the easement but never disclosed it during the civil trial. During a deposition, Miami developer Michael Dezer testified that he backed out of a deal to buy the shopping center in 1986 after Stephen Bittel informed him of the easement.

Harris Buchbinder, an attorney representing the shopping center owners in the Vernons' lawsuit, scoffs at the fraud charge. He insists Bittel never knew about the 1957 ruling and accuses Dezer of protecting his friend and fellow car collector. (Dezer owns the Dezer Collection, a car museum in North Miami Beach.)

Marcus is confident that an appellate court will overrule Judge Thomas's decision and clear the way for the Vernons to extract damages from the mall owners: "They have much more to worry about than we do."

Says Vernon: "I have a very low bullshit tolerance. I don't like being pushed around. I don't like being bullied. I don't like it. And they are bullies."

Continued on page 40



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## Vernon Show

Continued from page 38

When he was growing up in Brooklyn, Vernon recalls, he was constantly targeted by wanna-be tough guys. "I was the one Jewish kid in my neighborhood who didn't back down," he says. "I didn't let them push me down. It started with one fight and then it was with bigger guys and bigger guys and bigger guys.... I was like, 'What would it take to stop this?' And it was that I had to lose. And I wasn't going to do that."

His cousin, Avi Wygodski, who lives in Tallahassee, doubts that Vernon ever wanted to back out of a tussle. "He was a fighter. That was his personality. You never gave him shit."

Vernon didn't like people tormenting his family members, either. When he discovered that an older boy in the neighborhood was forcing little Avi to walk off the sidewalk whenever he was around, he came to the rescue. "As we were walking, this bully came by," Wygodski remembers. "I told Ted, 'We have to get off the sidewalk. This guy doesn't



The dealership's location adjacent to I-95 has provided visibility it never had on NE 79th Street.

like me being in front of him."

His cousin refused and told him to stay on the sidewalk too. Insults were exchanged until suddenly the smaller Vernon picked up the kid, swung him around, and flung him between two parked cars. The bully lost his balance

and hit his head against one of the cars.

"He started to cry," Wygodski recalls.

"That was it. From that day on, I walked on the sidewalk. He didn't mess with me."

"When you fight someone, you must leave them never wanting a piece of you again," Vernon explains. "You don't just

hold someone down and make them say uncle, because then they'll come back. If you're going to get stupid and fight somebody, or you have to defend yourself, do it well. Don't have them come back and think you got lucky."

As soon as he graduated high school, Vernon left New York. "Common sense told me to go," he says. Trouble soon followed him to Ohio, his next stop. He was charged with reckless driving and lost his license, so he stored his 1962 Buick convertible with his uncle. "It was like my baby," he says. "It had a fresh wax and seal. It was gorgeous."

The day the suspension was lifted, he gleefully picked up his car. "I'm driving along and all of a sudden, pop, pop, pop." Three kids in their late teens, roughly Vernon's age, hit his Buick with snowballs. Vernon says he chased them down and clobbered them one by one. The next day the local paper ran the story under the headline "Three Teenagers Attacked by Gang." Vernon was picked up by the police, who questioned him about the other gang members. "I

Continued on page 42



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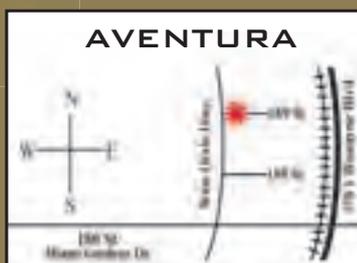
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## Vernon Show

Continued from page 40

said, "What gang?"

Vernon then went to work for his father, Harold Vernon, a real estate developer, and the job took him to West Virginia, Pennsylvania, and finally South Florida. Once he reached Miami, he knew he'd found home. He'd also reached his breaking point in the real estate business. He managed the construction of Tower 41 in Miami Beach (41st Street and Pine Tree Drive) and then quit. "I was his dirty-job guy," Vernon says. "Anytime there was an unpleasant job, there was me. I didn't want to work for him anymore."

"I love my dad, but I didn't like working for him," he adds. "I wanted the independence of being myself. I probably would have been a very wealthy guy had I kept working for him — maybe."

Vernon decided to go into the car business. He opened his first dealership with a partner in 1977, but he didn't get along with his business associate, he says. So in 1979 he bought an old boating facility on the banks of the Little River for \$150,000. "I bought it on a handshake," he says. "You can't do that anymore."



Vernon in 2010 at his old location behind Biscayne Plaza, whose owners, he says, are "bullies."

Vernon learned on the job. "I had a thousand dollars and a lot of debt," he says. "I worked 24/7 for years and built this dealership up. I love what I do. I love my clients. Every day is fun. Every day is a different deal."

Robin Vernon credits her husband's success to his drive. "When he wants something," she says, "he'll get it."

This was apparently the case when the couple met on a blind date 14 years ago. At the time, Ted Vernon was divorced and had custody of his two children. Robin Ziel was working two jobs while going to school and taking care of her terminally ill mother. On that date, he told her they'd be getting married; all she had to do was say when. She moved in with him about two

months later and they were married within two years. "The fact that he was so sure of himself is what attracted me to him," she says.

Robin soon went to work for her husband and provided focus for his business. For example, in the late 1990s she recognized the value of having a website, an innovation that has allowed Vernon to obtain most of his automotive inventory through trades rather than car auctions. "My wife is a rocket scientist!" he beams. "She's the straw that stirs the drink. She gets it all done. I'm able to do what I do because of her, and she never did this before she met me."

Of all Vernon's extracurricular activities, acting seems to be his favorite. He says he's appeared in 20 films and various television shows since the mid-1980s. Most of his roles are unnamed, menacing tough guys, such as a recent episode of *Burn Notice* that was shot a couple years ago at his old location. In one scene, he was supposed to sneak up behind protagonist Michael Westen, played by actor Jeffrey Donovan, only to get kicked in the chest.

Continued on page 44

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### Vernon Show

Continued from page 42

"I told Donovan: 'You know, hit me. Don't play. Because I'm going to sell this like you killed me.' He says, 'Get him a kick pad,' and I said, 'I don't need no stinkin' kick pad.' So he hit me. I flew back. I hit the car."

On the second take, Vernon says, he decided to give Donovan even more encouragement. "As the set is about to start I say, 'You know, Jeff, you kick like a pussy.' Boom! He hit me again!"

Vernon produces the movies in which he stars. His first, *Scarecrows*, which came out in 1988, wasn't even his idea. A photographer approached him with a horror-movie concept: Heavily armed robbers who pull off a heist and hijack a plane parachute with their hostages into a haunted Florida cornfield, only to be hunted down and gutted one by one by living dead scarecrows.

Around the same time, he produced and co-wrote another movie, *Hammerhead Jones*, about a kind wrestler who is exploited by a greedy promoter. He reportedly made no money on the film but told the Canadian online sports magazine *SLAM! Sports*: "You lose but you learn. I had fun with it."

Vernon's movies have earned him fans and additional film work. Just a few months ago, he says, he flew to Siberia to star in and produce two low-budget horror movies, *Tumors* and *Zombie Infection*. "The executive producer thing was more of an honor thing than anything else," he explains, adding that the director, Alex Wesley, loved *Scarecrows*, now a B-movie cult classic, and was willing to pay his first-class airfare. "I had a great time," he says.

Vernon definitely had an impact on the cinematic career of Aiden Dillard, a 31-year-old who has shot commercials and documentaries for income and, for

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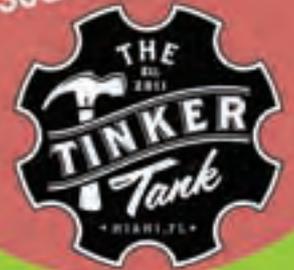
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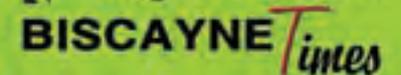
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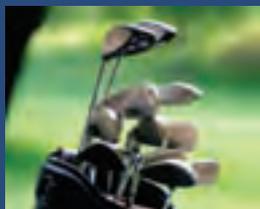
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**Robin on Ted: "I don't like being the center of attention. He loves it. He needs it."**

### Vernon Show

Continued from page 44

fun, creates bizarre and zany films which he describes on his own website as "some of the worst cinematic debacles of all time." At the age of 24, prior to meeting Vernon, Dillard directed and wrote *Meat Weed Madness*, followed by the sequel *Meat Weed America*, starring potent marijuana and horny girls.

When Dillard finally crossed paths with Vernon, he was actually trying to make a special kind of movie on autism

Local fetish artist Rubber Doll and techno musician Otto Von Schirach play detectives trying to track down the painting the agents stole in the course of their homicide. And Dillard just wrapped up filming *Hell Glades*, about a Seminole spirit named Coo-wah-chobee who slaughters a group of beautiful women while they wander through an Everglades jungle on Columbus Day. Vernon plays the part of the axe-wielding spirit.

Dillard cast Robin Vernon in *Deathprint* and *Hell Glades*, too, but she acted reluctantly. Unlike her husband, she says, she doesn't seek the limelight. "Ted will

**In Deathprint, Vernon is a pacifist art dealer whose daughter is murdered by Cuban agents. In Hell Glades, he's an axe-wielding Seminole spirit.**

for Accord Productions, a Miami-based company that also owns the Beach Channel. "I wanted a warehouse space on the river and asked Ted if I could shoot there," Aiden recalls. "He says, 'Sure, if you give me a role.' I rewrote the script and turned it into a gangster movie."

Thus came *Special Angelz*, in which Vernon plays a gangster who kidnaps an autistic kid in order to recoup a debt. The movie also features an invisible guardian angel. On his website, Dillard proudly calls it "the most embarrassing movie I have ever made," and he had found a new partner in his cinematic mischief. "We became great friends," he says.

Vernon produced and starred in Dillard's next two movies. In *Deathprint*, Vernon is a pacifist art dealer whose daughter is murdered by Cuban agents.

guilt-trip me into it," she says. "I don't like being the center of attention. He loves it. He needs it."

It might be a while before there are more Dillard B-movies. He is taking a hiatus from the fictional film business. "I'm trying to get into real estate or learn something that pays money," he says. While figuring out an income-generating career, Dillard did a brief stint as a car salesman at Vernon's dealership. He is also finishing a documentary project about seahorses.

Vernon is confident that Dillard's break won't last long. Filmmaking is in his blood, just as acting is in Vernon's. The entrepreneur says, "As soon as I say to him: 'Aiden, let's make a movie,' he'll make a movie, I promise you."

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

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# Strange Case of the Missing Signs

When neighbors saw that they'd disappeared, e-mails zipped and rumors flew

By Mark Sell  
BT Contributor

Believing bullfrogs, chirruping crickets, and buzzing mosquitoes aren't the only sounds this month along the Arch Creek East Environmental Preserve nature trail linking NE 135th Street with Florida International University.

The chattering of antsy neighbors is adding to the rainy-season cacophony at the edge of Oleta State Park. And it's not just about the trail.

Every blessed sign and marker along the path, about 16 altogether, went missing in the dead of night right before Memorial Day. Bike Lane. No Motor Vehicles. Watch For... [Pedestrians, Bikers]. Simply disappeared. All the poles were gone, dug out of the ground. Some of the signs were strewn in the brush on the

side of the trail, which runs roughly a third of a mile. The sign for the adjoining coastal FIU nature trail was also missing, too.

E-mailers and callers got busy.

Was FIU up to something nefarious? Is FIU getting ready to widen the nature trail, which it has long coveted, into a four-lane road, giving the 6500-student campus the second access road? The signs, after all, included things like: "No Motorized Vehicles."

The answer: Nope, not this time.

"It was theft," says North Miami City Councilman Scott Galvin. "As soon as the signs went missing, my phone was ringing off the hook. People thought it was FIU. I get why they'd be panicked. They stole all of the posts, but left some of the signs behind."

Galvin helped lead the fight to create the preserve in 2007 and protect it in late



BT photo by Wendy Doscher-Smith

**A tranquil scene along the nature trail, which FIU hopes to turn into a busy roadway.**

2011, when FIU president Mark Rosenberg led the university's aborted (or at least suspended) attempt to turn the paved nature trail back into a vehicular road. The city council voted unanimously against FIU's effort after residents gathered in force. Rosenberg quickly acknowledged the community's will and looked forward to working together.

FIU says nothing much has changed and that, no, of course it had nothing to do with the sign theft, though the issue still burns. FIU director of media

relations Maydel Santana-Bravo did note: "Our need for a second route in and out of campus is still there."

Santana-Bravo says FIU is still talking with council members and seeking input in getting that second route in and out of the campus.

Even if nothing has changed, one thing is indisputable: The neighborhood around the nature trail is about to go through a wrenching change, and it's not

Continued on page 56

# Be Aware, All Ye Who Enter

It only took a decade to mark the entrance of Miami's historic Bayside neighborhood

By Margaret Griffis  
BT Contributor

Bayside is not one of Miami's better-known neighborhoods. The quiet, demure area is hidden away behind the attention-grabbing MiMo Historic District, but its wealth of early 20th-century architecture made it a natural pick to become one of Miami's first historic districts in 1991.

Still, it took another 21 years of persistence for the neighborhood to gain public recognition and a monument to acknowledge the designation.

On June 10, about 50 invited VIPs, including county Commissioner Audrey

Edmonson and Miami Commissioner Marc Sarnoff, attended a short commemoration of the new monument. The small ceremony threatened to block traffic on Biscayne Boulevard, so a public party was moved to the American Legion Post at nearby Legion Park, once the unveiling was completed.

Darcon Group Corp. cast the 23-foot-long marker in place on a bare portion of the NE 69th Street median that is now filled with grass. The work resembles a ship's bow or a full-length canoe, a reminder of Biscayne Bay's nautical heritage; the taller end stands at a modest 2.5 feet, gently sloping downward toward the marker's other end. A generous two-foot width allows the slab to serve as a planter,



Photo by Joseph Canale

**At 23 feet long and a total cost of \$21,400, it is one impressive welcome sign.**

presaging the row of stately oaks and lush foliage behind it on NE 69th Street.

"It gives us a sense of community, being a part of the Bayside Historic Neighborhood," said Louis Bourdeau, president of the Bayside Residents Association, the main force that fought for the marker. "We have that natural gateway at 69th Street, so it's really kind of neat having a place where everybody comes in and out, and they see it all the time."

As one of Miami's earliest neighborhoods, Bayside saw its first residents in the late 19th Century, when the area was still classified as part of Lemon

City. By 1909 the neighborhood, which is bordered by Biscayne Boulevard, NE 68th Street, NE 72nd Street, and Biscayne Bay, had already begun to assert its individuality. Most of the buildings that contribute to the historic designation were constructed during the 1920s and 1930s, and encompass the iconic Mediterranean Revival, Art Deco, and Streamline Moderne styles of early 20th-century Miami. But the older vernacular buildings, and even the post-World War II homes, fit neatly into the overall scale

Continued on page 50

# The Greening of Brickell

A super-dense neighborhood desperately needs parkland, but who can afford it?

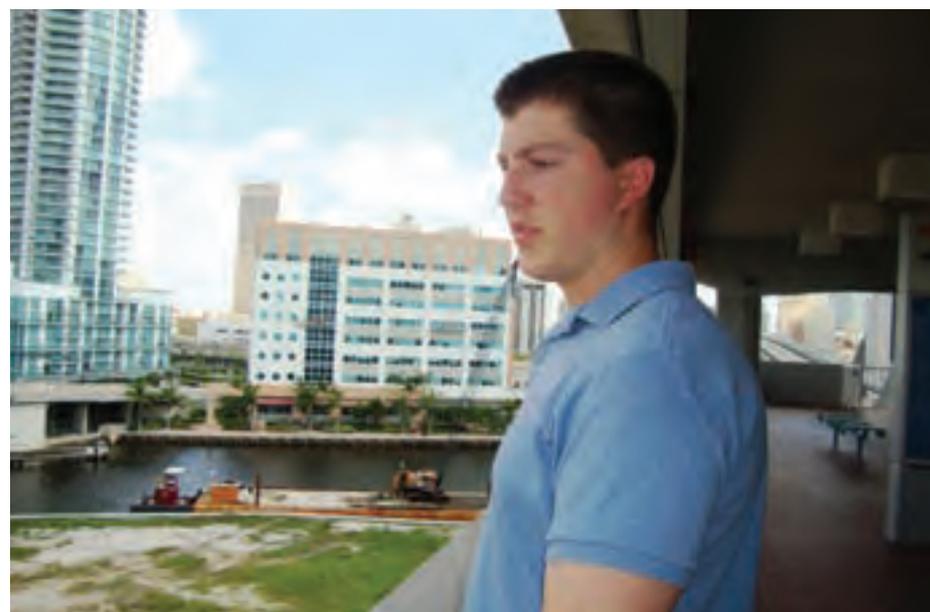
By Erik Bojnansky  
BT Senior Writer

As another crop of high-rises prepares to sprout in Brickell, a group of activists hopes to get area residents interested in obtaining more parkland within the most intensely developed neighborhood south of Manhattan.

The group, Brickell Green Space, plans to ask Brickell's developers to buy vacant lots from private-property owners and turn the land into parks. "Brickell actually has some decent temporary open space," says Mark Schrieber, a 27-year-old certified LEED project manager with the Spinnaker Group, a green-construction consulting company. "Those parcels will be gone soon. That's why we chose to focus on Brickell. It's on a critical timeline. The development cycle has begun."

On June 27, the Hong-Kong-based Swire Properties officially broke ground for the billion-dollar Brickell CitiCentre project on nine acres at SE 6th Street and SW 1st Avenue. Once completed, Brickell CitiCentre will comprise five million square feet and include condominiums, a hotel, offices, restaurants, and high-end retail.

But the neighborhood is already drastically short on parks, even by Miami standards, and future development will only make the green-space deficit worse, Schrieber argues. According to the national nonprofit Trust for Public Land, the City of Miami has just 2.8 acres of parkland per 1000 residents, one of the lowest ratios in the country. Within Brickell, a one-square-mile area where more than 31,000 people live between I-95 on the west, Miami River to the north and Rick-enbacker causeway to the south, there is only 0.54 acres per 1000 residents.



Mark Schrieber at the Metromover station overlooking tempting vacant land.

Instead of pleading with the city, which has been struggling to balance its budget in recent years, Brickell Green Space intends to ask developers to buy privately owned parcels and then donate them to the city. Craig Chester, a freelance writer affiliated with Brickell Green Space, says parks are actually in the developers' best interest. Without them, builders will have a harder time selling units.

"We're becoming rapidly overdeveloped," Chester says. "The loss of

views of all the surrounding areas will impact property values while increasing the strain on infrastructure." (Chester's essay "Miami's Suburbs in the Sky" appears in this issue, on page 26.)

But before making a formal request to Swire, Brickell Green Space wants to create a groundswell of support on its website, brickellgreenspace.com and other online media outlets. "We want to build that support and have that

Continued on page 52

# East Greynolds Growling

A six-dollar weekend fee to use the dog park has some patrons howling

By Erik Bojnansky  
BT Senior Writer

Terry Levinson and her husband Fred don't regret moving from New York to Aventura eight months ago. "I like it here very much, except for the traffic," says Terry. "They say that New Yorkers are bad drivers. Well, they've never been to Florida."

Their three-and-a-half-year-old Maltese-poodle mix, Andy, gets restless and lonely sitting in their apartment. So a couple of times each month the Levinsons expose themselves to Miami's vehicular madness and drive Andy to East Greynolds, a waterfront park at 167th Street and Biscayne Boulevard that features two fenced-off dog areas (one reserved for small dogs, the other for large) with amenities such as benches,

faux fire hydrants, poop bags, and doggy water fountains.

Usually they visit on weekdays, when visitors are charged just a dollar for parking, but they seldom come on weekends. "I don't want to pay six dollars just for him to play with other dogs," she says.

Several East Greynolds patrons interviewed by the BT are quick to gripe about the six-dollar fee charged per car on weekends and holidays. (Buses and campers are charged \$15.) Judy Peraza, a real estate agent from North Miami Beach, admits she had just complained to the park attendant on this Sunday afternoon. "Usually I come with him at 4:30 p.m. and leave at 6:00 p.m.," says Peraza, referring to Cowboy, her friendly black Pomeranian. "But I still have to pay six dollars."



Despite commercial sponsorship and entrance fees, East Greynolds and all other county parks are money-losers.

Making the fee all the more perplexing is the abundance of dog parks in the area that charge either nothing or far lower rates. Haulover Park, for example, charges only three dollars on weekends. "It is not worth it for 30 minutes," says Uta Nieths, a tour-guide operator from Biscayne Park whose two-year-old Maltese is named Schatzi. "Even if you're here 15 minutes before closing, they still charge you."

Doris Howe, manager of communications and marketing for Miami-Dade

County Parks, Recreation, and Open Spaces, says her department doesn't like charging six dollars either. "Nothing would be more ideal for us than to not have to charge fees for the services, programs, and facilities we provide," Howe says in an e-mail to the BT. "However, the reality is that it is simply not economically feasible or practical for us to do so, as there is an insufficient amount

Continued on page 50



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**“People say, ‘Listen, politicians, we need your help, and we need things done, and you’re going to do it for us.’”**

**Bayside**

Continued from page 48

and feel of the neighborhood.

Although Bayside was singled out for its architecture, the real draw is the people. “The thing I like about the community is that it’s eclectic,” explains longtime resident Joseph Canale. “It’s like New York City. You have different cultures. You have the Spanish culture, you have the Haitian culture, you have the American culture. You have many different people, just like in New York.

“It’s wonderful,” he adds, “and it’s a well-grounded community of people who care. People get involved with the community, even though they’re working all day and they have families. They still take the time to come out and say, ‘Listen, politicians, we need your help, and we need things done, and you’re going to be here, and you’re going to do it for us.’”

The marker project took almost ten years to see completion, Canale says. Part of the reason for the delay was Biscayne Boulevard construction and a drainage project, but the most daunting obstacle was the City of Miami. The original designs, by Shulman & Associates, were deemed too large for the site, he notes, and other considerations needed to be addressed.

While waiting for all the kinks to be knocked out, the community raised \$7925, and Commissioners Edmonson

and Sarnoff each added \$5000 to the project through their offices. The final bill for the marker was \$21,413.

About \$19,000 of the sum was exclusively for construction; the rest of it went to internal costs paid for through the city’s Capital Improvements Program. Fortunately, most of the funds designated for the project were set aside long before the real-estate bust forced the county and city to tighten their belts.

Albert Sosa, director of the city’s Capital Improvements Program, headed the coordination efforts, including scaling down the piece to fit within the city’s restrictions (his office and the Historic and Environmental Preservation Board were the two departments that had to sign off on the project).

Sosa notes how impressed he was with the community’s persistence. “You had a homeowners association who was very committed to getting this done,” he says. “They never gave up. For many years there was always a reason why the current design iteration wouldn’t work, but they kept at it. We’re just happy that we could get together with them and develop something that, number one, was feasible and, number two, was something that they liked. So I think it was a win-win for everybody.

“I’m glad they persevered and stuck with it,” he adds. “It would have been easy to give up at the first *no*, but they didn’t do that.”

*Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com*

**East Greynolds**

Continued from page 49

of revenue to offset operational costs, including maintenance.”

Since 2007 Howe’s department, which is responsible for nearly 13,000 acres of land in 263 county parks, has been struggling with a dwindling supply of property tax revenue. To balance the budget, staffing has been slashed and hours at some parks curtailed.

In such an environment, lowering park fees would come at a price. “If the fees were lowered, there will be less revenue, which would call for more subsidy [from the county’s general fund], which would call for taxes going up,” says Kevin Kirwin, Miami-Dade Parks’ assistant director of operations.

County officials consider East Greynolds to be part of Greynolds Park, the 233-acre expanse of natural habitats,

Continued on page 54

# CRITICAL DEBT PROTECTION INFORMATION

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**DON'T!** – Trust the Bank to stop their foreclosure because you are working on a loan modification or short sale. The Bank is under no obligation to delay their foreclosure, and the will not protect your rights. Do not ignore the lawsuit.

**DO** – File a response to the lawsuit within twenty (20) days of service. You can lose valuable rights by not responding. If you need time to seek legal advice, ask for an extension of time to seek an attorney.

**DON'T!** – Think that talking to the Bank is the same as answering the Complaint. It is not.

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Foreclosure defense attorneys must aggressively test the basis for each case on your behalf. They must have the knowledge and experience where and how to apply pressure on the Bank. Your attorney should have experience to know when to apply pressure to best meet your goals.

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- Contacting you if you have written to them requesting that they stop.
- Impersonating a law office, government agency, or credit reporting company.
- Threatening arrest for not paying.
- Using abusive or insulting language to coerce payment.
- Repeatedly contacting your friends or family.

If you feel that a Debt Collector has been abusive, then you may have the right to sue them under the FDCPA.

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## Community News: BISCAYNE CORRIDOR

### Brickell

Continued from page 49

support base before we go to potential land donors,” Schrieber says, “because why would they listen to a random guy who walks off the street and says, ‘Hey, we want you to buy some land for us,’ versus someone who walks in with a thousand signatures and support from the community? That goes a lot further.”

Brickell Green Space’s web page lists eight possible locations for parks. At the top of the list are 2.5 acres of vacant land near the Miami River and the SE 5th Street Metromover station, right across the street from land controlled by Swire Properties. Schrieber says his group envisions a 3.5-acre park that will be large enough to accommodate a running track, a playground, and a dog park. He adds that Brickell Green Space has also reached out to other developers, the Related Group and the Foram Group. “They have the overwhelming majority of condos in that area,” Schrieber says of the builders. “They clearly have a big stake in this effort.”

The land won’t be cheap. Just last month, New York-based Millennium Partners, developer of Brickell’s 70-story Four Seasons Tower, sold 2.5 acres of the proposed parkland for \$28.2 million to Carlos Mattos, according to the *Daily Business Review*. A Colombian auto executive, Mattos has been snatching up properties in Brickell lately, including the 100-year-old Tobacco Road building at 626 S. Miami Ave.

“We’d been trying to get in touch with [Millennium], but they didn’t want to have a meeting, for whatever reason,” Schrieber admits. “I guess they were going through with this deal.” He’s still hopeful that Mattos might embrace the idea of his newly acquired land becoming a park. “It doesn’t change our overall goal,” Schrieber says.

Swire Properties, the Related Group, and Foram Group did not return phone calls from the *BT*. Mattos could not be reached for comment.

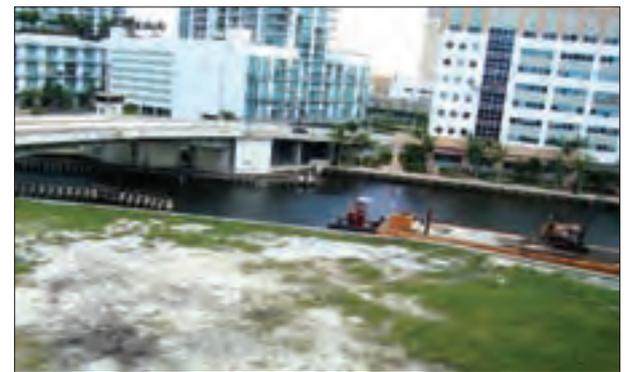
Miami Commissioner Marc Sarnoff, who represents the Brickell area, appreciates what Brickell Green Space is trying to do but doubts the group will be

successful in its quest. “You’re talking about prime real estate in Miami,” Sarnoff says. “Am I hopeful they will succeed? Yes I am. Am I skeptical? Unfortunately, I am. Why would property that sells for \$60 a square foot be given away?”

Mallory Kauderer, managing partner of Brickell Flatiron LLC, also questions Brickell Green Space’s strategy. “I don’t know how practical it is business-wise to buy land for it to simply be a park,” he says.

Nevertheless a park is being built on property owned by Flatiron at 20 SE 10th St. Flatiron’s parcel is part of a larger, triangular property, similar to the Manhattan land on which the renowned Flatiron Building stands.

Thanks to a deal with the city brokered by Commissioner Sarnoff, Kauderer says, a permanent park designed by landscape architect Raymond Jungles is being created on 3100 square feet of the parcel’s



A park here would be very nice, but it was just sold for \$28 million.

southern tip. A temporary park will be built on another 6000 square feet of land.

Chester says the current Flatiron Park project is encouraging, but he notes that much of the designated park will only be temporary. In fact, the Flatiron parcel is also on Brickell Green Space’s wish list. “Our goal would be making the entire triangle a park,” he says.

Kauderer says he and his partners are still figuring out the parcel’s future in this market: “We might do a joint venture here or sell it to someone in the future — who knows?” As for the entire parcel becoming a park: “I haven’t really thought of it. I’m not sure what the city would offer me for it.” (The land’s market value was \$5.3 million last year, according to the county appraiser’s office.)

The concept of developers donating land for parks doesn’t sound ridiculous

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**East Greynolds**

Continued from page 50

campgrounds and picnic areas, walking and biking paths, a nine-hole golf course, and winding canals on the west side of Biscayne Boulevard. In fiscal year 2010, both Greynolds (excluding the golf course) collected \$195,368 in fees, yet expenditures totaled \$732,600, Kirwin says.

Kathy Sanchez, a dog owner from Highland Lakes, believes the county's insistence on treating the two parks as one is part of the problem. The entrance to big Greynolds Park (17530 W. Dixie Hwy.) is a mile from East Greynolds. At Greynolds Park, which also charges six dollars to park during weekends and holidays, but does not allow dogs, there is plenty to do. Not so at East Greynolds. "There's nothing there but the dog park," Sanchez says.

She also questions why the county employs an attendant at \$11.28 an hour to collect fees at East Greynolds's main gate on the weekends. During the week, the dollar parking fee is collected by machines.

Kirwin says it's far more cost-effective to treat the two Greynolds as one park. "The primary thing is that

taxpayers don't have to pay for two park managers," he says. Instead staffers have duties at both parks.

The dog area, which occupies less than two of East Greynolds's 57 acres, isn't the park's only feature. There is also a picnic pavilion, a campground, and a pier for fishing or simply gazing at Maule Lake.

East Greynolds didn't always have a dog park. It opened at the same time as big Greynolds Park, in 1936. For decades East Greynolds was used for fishing and camping, particularly by the Boy Scouts, Kirwin says.

When the county commission in 2005 decided to build a two-acre off-leash dog section in East Greynolds, the closest canine-friendly open space was Amelia Earhart Park in Hialeah. The county spent \$215,000 on its construction. The municipalities of North Miami Beach, North Miami, Biscayne Park, Sunny Isles Beach, Aventura, Golden Beach, Bal Harbour, Surfside, and Bay Harbor Islands kicked in resources and supplies.

From the very beginning, some parkgoers criticized the weekend parking fee, which was five dollars back then. Today area residents unwilling to pay the



**Dexter Heromin and Koko: "I don't mind paying six dollars. It's better than seeing it close."**

fee have several dog-park alternatives, including two in Aventura (for residents only), one in Sunny Isles Beach, one at Legion Park in Miami's Upper Eastside, six in Miami Beach, and a sprawling dog park at Haulover.

Howe, the parks spokeswoman, says there is no evidence that the admission fee scares away visitors. She points out

that more than 16,000 people visit East Greynolds on weekdays each year, while another 6000 visit on weekends.

East Greynolds was full of people and dogs when the *BT* visited on a recent Sunday afternoon. The pavilion and campground were filled with people of all ages, while a number of dogs and their masters enjoyed the dog park. Several people, when queried, objected to the six-dollar fee. One of them who did not was Dexter Heromin.

A Florida International University student with a hyperactive white Husky named Koko, Heromin is fine with the cost. He just moved from a Florida town that balked at raising taxes to help support a dog park there. It shut down.

"I don't mind paying six dollars," he says. "It's better than seeing it close."

*The Parks Foundation of Miami-Dade is an independent, nonprofit organization devoted to advocating for and financially supporting public parks in Miami-Dade County. For more information, visit [www.parksfoundationofmiami-dade.com](http://www.parksfoundationofmiami-dade.com).*

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# Your NEW Congressional District 24



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**Dr. Rudolph Moise, D.O., J.D.**

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- U.S. Air Force School of Aerospace Medicine - Degree: Flight Surgeon
- University of Miami School of Law, JD
- Master of Business Administration, MBA University of Miami
- Chicago College of Osteopathic Medicine Doctor of Osteopathy, D.O

### WORK EXPERIENCE

- President/Medical Director Comprehensive Health Center, Inc.
- Chief of Hospital Services Homestead Air Reserve Station Rank: Colonel

### COMMUNITY SERVICES

- National President (former) University of Miami Alumni Association
- University of Miami Board of Trustees
- Florida Memorial College, Board of Visitors
- United Way Board of Directors
- Executive Committee Member, Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce
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PHOTO BY RUDOLPH MOISE DO FOR CONGRESS

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Dr. Rudolph  
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Democrat for Congress  
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**Missing Signs**

Continued from page 48

because of FIU.

It's Biscayne Landing, where events are moving fast. The North Miami City Council on May 23 approved developer Michael Swerdlow's plan to develop the adjacent 184 acres for the Biscayne Landing project. The ten-year, \$500 million project will transform roughly half of the former toxic landfill into an 850,000-square-foot big-box retail complex including Lowe's, Dick's Sporting Goods, Kohl's, and Ross. The developer is Oleta Partners, a partnership between Swerdlow and New York's venerable and well-funded LeFrak Organization. The stores should open in 2017, with a hotel, assisted living facility, and rental construction following.

As the *BT* has reported, Swerdlow says he'd be happy to open a roadway to FIU from 143rd Street and Biscayne Boulevard, although the university would need to shoulder responsibility for running the remaining 1500 feet over state-owned, protected mangroves. Doing that would require FIU to deploy all its lobbying might to get

state permission to run a road over and through mangroves. That would be quite a trick.

Nearby there's another, separate summer brew coming to a boil. It's on the other side of Biscayne Landing, where plans for a "high-end" strip club featuring nude female dancers just west of the FEC railroad tracks have launched a culture war. In late May, the city council considered lifting a liquor ban on nude clubs. The owners of the former Thee Doll House strip club in Sunny Isles Beach want to invest \$2 million to renovate the old Locks & Co. complex at 2050 NE 151st St.

Pastor Jack Hakimian of the Impact Miami Church has led a movement to thwart the club, and has gathered in opposition a growing chorus of neighbors and the management of the almost-adjacent WPBT-Channel 2, home of the *Nightly Business Report*, Big Bird and Elmo. Hakimian says, among other things, that no such club should be within five miles of a school. The site is 0.7 miles west of Alonzo and Tracy Mourning Senior High School, just under a mile from David Lawrence Elementary, and 1.2 miles from FIU's



**This sign, among many others, was unceremoniously yanked out of the ground.**

entrance. Nearly all student foot and bike traffic is east of Biscayne Boulevard.

Galvin, who has said he has no problem with the 151st Street club as long as it is not open during school hours and employs off-duty North Miami police for security, has set himself up for a dunking. Activists and residents who usually support him are hurling beanbags his way. He has decried Hakimian for being

"anti-gay" and attacked Channel 2 for its "shame" in siding with him.

That, in turn, has won Galvin, who is openly gay, the enmity of local activists, who don't like the strip club, either. In one sample, Ellen Abramson e-mailed the following: "My sincere thanks to WPBT2, the home of *Sesame Street*, for helping the citizens of the City of North Miami fight to keep a strip club away from NE 151st Street, within walking distance to the FIU dorms.... This is not a gay issue as Galvin is trying to make it. It is a business situation plain and simple! This environment will bring crime to that area, which will make it unsafe for Elmo and his friends and neighbors. Many thanks for anything Channel 2 is able to do to help us fight this."

Abramson addressed the e-mail to two people: WPBT president Rick Schneider and FIU president Mark Rosenberg.

Rosenberg has requested an appointment to talk with Galvin on July 15. He does not do this kind of thing to talk about the weather. But will it be strip clubs or nature trails?

*Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com*

**Brickell**

Continued from page 52

to other real estate professionals *BT* spoke with. "Why not?" asks Grant Stern, president of Morningside Mortgage, who points out that developer Tibor Hollo and Jorge Perez of the Related Group have contributed to park efforts in the past. "Most [Brickell high-rise builders] want to see a good neighborhood because they're long-term developers. They're not just here for one boom and they're out."

Michael Y. Cannon, executive director of Integra Realty Resources-Miami,

says builders in other cities, such as Charlotte, North Carolina, are encouraged to give land for parks. "It can be done and it's a good idea," says Cannon, a 45-year veteran of South Florida's real estate industry. "Parks enhance the marketability of the neighborhood."

Cannon also thinks Brickell area builders can be encouraged to create parks in exchange for other considerations, such as transferring the development rights from a future park to the builder's main project. "I've been an advocate, from a market-analysis point of view, of transferable development rights for years," he

says. "It's the right thing to do. Not every inch of property should be developed. We need open space in the urban core area."

But what if every vacant parcel in Brickell, instead of becoming a park, is developed? "Then the city loses, the people lose," answers Schrieber, a transplant from North Carolina. Schrieber explains that he developed a passion for urban planning while pursuing his architecture degree in the University of Miami. When he moved to Brickell three years ago, he says he was so struck by the lack of parks that he formed Brickell Green Space with a handful of Brickell

residents and urban professionals.

If more parks aren't created in Brickell during the current development cycle, they may never be created because the area will be completely built out. Brickell might then begin to lose market value to other up-and-coming areas. Schrieber notes that already some people are picking Edgewater as a place to live over Brickell thanks to that neighborhood's Margaret Pace Park.

"Man, this is a great neighborhood," he says, "but there just isn't any open space."

*Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com*

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- Sponsored legislation to remove the term "illegal alien" from official government documents
- Sponsor of the Dream Act in Congress and in the Florida Senate

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# Low-Scale Plans for a Large-Scale Mess

In the city's rush to push through the Upper Eastside Neighborhood Conservation District, nobody wins

By Frank Rollason  
BT Contributor

To paraphrase a familiar cliché: “It’s the process, stupid — not the content!” And so we behold the saga of the proposed Upper Eastside NCD — Neighborhood Conservation District, or as some of the residents have come to call it, the Neighborhood Coercion District.

So what exactly is the intent of this proposed NCD as presented by the applicant, the City of Miami? The proposed district “is intended to protect and promote the low-scale character of the residential and commercial neighborhoods and corridors in the NE area of the city. It is intended to provide a buffer

for the existing historic districts in the area and to protect the low-scale character planned and constructed throughout this NCD between the 1900s and 1960s.

“In addition, the area is host to valuable small-scale industrial properties along the FEC corridor, water-dependent uses along the Little River, the colorful and commerce-rich corridors of Biscayne Boulevard, and NE 79th Street.

“All neighborhoods, districts, and sites within these boundaries exhibit a certain defined low-scale character, architecture, [and] scale worthy of protection and recognized identity to be preserved.”

There is an obvious thread running through the proposed district, and that is low-scale — just look at how many



Biscayne Boulevard Streetscape Vision / MiMo BIC

Two years ago, UM's Chuck Bohl and Jaime Correa imagined MiMo without the 35-foot height limit.

times “low-scale” or “small-scale” is included in the language. Now, I don’t think anyone is in favor of high-rise buildings along the Boulevard or 79th Street, but compromise must come into play at some point, and the current 35-foot height limitation within the MiMo Historic District will ultimately have negative impacts on our surrounding residential neighborhoods.

The elephant in the room is *parking*. As development continues along the Boulevard and 79th Street, parking becomes a premium. Just look at the proposed NCD. It has an entire section dedicated to parking issues. Why? Because the city recognizes you cannot fit ten pounds of building (with parking) into a five-pound box. Either the box gets larger or the surrounding neighborhoods bear the brunt

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of the overflow parking — or worse yet, smart growth grinds to a halt.

The city proposing an NCD at this point in time is truly placing the cart before the horse — *way* before. Not being a highly trained, professional city planner, I can only rely on common sense, which tells me what needs to happen first is a several-day charrette with all the players in the same room. We need the residents, the commercial property owners, the business operators, the architects, public school officials, public safety officials, public works professionals, park professionals, and yes, the planners.

We need to listen to all the players: What are their needs? What are their concerns? What are their long-term visions? How exactly would we like the Upper Eastside to evolve over the next 50 years?

When these types of questions are answered, the planners can begin to develop something that fits the agreed-upon goals and objectives of the charrette. Certainly compromises will have to be a big part of the picture, but at some point goals and objectives would be agreed upon, giving the planners a road map for implementing

those goals and objectives.

Once that happens, then and only then should we start talking about developing a Neighborhood Conservation District to protect the plan and ensure that future growth and development will follow the plan, which should allow for the needed smart growth while protecting not only the low-scale residential neighborhoods, but just as important, improving our quality of life through the business corridors.

This is what the city's zoning master plan, Miami 21, was supposedly designed to do — improve everyone's quality of life and promote smart growth. So now, with Miami 21 a scant two years off the drawing board, the city is pushing an Upper Eastside Neighborhood Conservation District to protect all the things that Miami 21 was intended to do — at a cost to the taxpayers of several million dollars.

And the idea that an NCD for the Upper Eastside is going to give our area some sort of political clout or power is hogwash. We've had two intense public meetings on this issue and it is so important politically that our district commissioner has not attended one of them. That

should tell you how important this idea is politically.

No, we need to get past the rhetoric, get past the individual agendas that appear to drive these types of initiatives. They just don't drop out of the sky, folks. Someone or some entity is pushing this idea, which accounts for the speed with which it is moving forward, though the reason remains unclear.

We need to get past the defensive arguments that the city is not operating in good faith or following the rules of implementation, and get past the stance of pitting the residents against the businesses along the main corridors. We need those businesses and they need us; it's a symbiotic relationship. Remember, as the business corridors go, so go our residential neighborhoods. You want to push out crime? Then we need people on the street. And the people on the street need a reason to be there. It's just that simple.

To bring this venture through a successful process requires leadership at the city level from both our mayor and our district commissioner. We need these two individuals to recognize that the Upper Eastside is worthy of such an investment of time and energy to at least

conduct the charrette and develop the plan. From there it will take time and dollars to begin to provide the infrastructure improvements necessary to accommodate the private sector, which will initiate the development.

To ignore this is pure folly. It's also folly to think that an NCD, which is really nothing more than an ordinance wrapped in a pretty name, will necessarily provide the protections desired by the residents. Remember this: It only takes a couple of meetings and the votes of three of the five commissioners to wipe out whatever gains may have been accomplished with a Neighborhood Conservation District. For it to be successful, there needs to be a plan that survives individual agendas and one that is agreed upon and cherished by all.

So as I see it, the ball is in the court of our elected city officials and administrators. They can start the process over with meaningful dialogue that includes all stakeholders, or they can go full speed ahead with their short-term NCD objective, much to the chagrin of almost everyone I've spoken to. I guess we shall see.

*Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com*



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# Mango Mania

It's the season for falling fruit, damn them all!

By Wendy Doscher-Smith  
BT Contributor

**T**hwap! Thwap! Thwapthwapthwap!  
Bark! Thwap! Wooooooof! The  
Thwap? That, my dear readers, is the  
sound of a plump mango falling from its  
comfortable tree perch ten feet above my  
roof onto the cement patio in my backyard.

That Thwap is loud. That Thwap is  
startling and, on the mango, it produces  
a single split resembling a smile. We  
are servants to the Thwap. And like the  
good li'l Pavlovian pups that we are, that  
Thwap propels all the house inhabitants  
— the dogs and me — into motion.

So goes the morning symphony  
now that it is mango season in Miami.

Although I'm a native and have spent  
nearly my whole life here, I never had  
the pleasure — the blessing and the  
curse, rather — of cohabitating with  
a mango tree. Not that this is my first  
brush with a fruit tree on my premises.  
No, sir.

I grew up with a carambola tree  
(also called star fruit) in what was  
then called Miami and now is known  
as East Kendall, or the Other Side  
of the Universe. The tree, behind my  
parents' townhouse, bore the tangy,  
tart, apple-textured fruit the slices of  
which (when sliced properly) resemble  
stars. As a kid, I made a decent living  
off those things, selling them to long-  
standing gourmet market Norman



BT photo by Wendy Doscher-Smith

Brothers on Galloway Road.

Fast-forward a million years. I could  
make a decent profit off the mangos  
now, too. Better money than I make at  
anything else I do, anyway. They go  
for about 75 cents apiece. But as with  
anything that sounds like a good thing,  
there's always a catch. Here it is: I'd need  
to live in Kansas.

See, Miamians might be mango crazy  
(more on that in a minute), but they will  
not pay for them. Unless they're stupid.  
That's because, even if you do not have a  
mango "connection" here, all you need to  
do is drive around and scout the tops of  
recycle bins. You'll find bags and bags of  
mangos to be had. For free. And why is  
that? *Because they never stop falling.*



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This nonstop mango processional becomes even more complicated if you are a dog owner. Dogs love mangos. (Who knew?) It turns out my dogs love mangos so much they morph into Cujo if I try to take one from them. Even Aspen Fangola, my latest rescue — who is afraid of ice cubes — snapped at me when I attempted to remove a half-decimated fruit from her clutches. Suddenly she was no longer my sweet terrier, my “canine spouse.” With orange pulp dangling from her lips and scruffy beard, she was a rabid she-monster protecting her she-cub fruit.

However, the most disturbing scene involving mangos thus far occurred when our terriepoo Halo attacked our elder cocker spaniel, Anise, aka Granny, simply for walking past Halo’s mango. Granny is nearly 19 years old. That’s like, oh, 140 in people years. The thing is, nobody messes with Granny. She is the Tribe Elder. So to see her on her back, thrashing about while Halo pinned her to the ground, was a bit surreal.

I bounded out of the house, yelling, “Oh no! Absolutely not!” and dragged Halo off Granny. And then, there’s

Gummi Snaps, our foster pug, a.k.a. the Gumfather, who earned his new nickname by getting rotund on the sweet, pulpy goodness of the thin-skinned fruit — only to throw-up four times afterward. You haven’t lived until you’ve met mango vomit.

Of course, the dogs don’t realize mangos are bad for them. So that means one of my new jobs as the Doggie House Mom is to keep them away from the fruit. This, I assure you, is easier said than done. It involves precise timing and acrobatic intervention; neither of which are my fortes. Yet! I refuse to let the mangos win.

Of course, I could let nature take its course. And I do. And it does. The squirrels, for example, are big mango consumers. I recently spent an hour watching one fluffy critter scamper from branch to branch, only to stop occasionally to partake of the sweet flesh. Sometimes the squirrels bite off more than they can chew, literally, and drop a mango. Either that, or they use me as target practice, though, I might add, I have not been hit. Yet.

When the squirrels lose their grip, I see the oh-so-subtle markings of where

their claws were grasping, trying to hold on. But the squirrels can’t keep up with the manic pace of the droppage, so there are remainders which, if not dealt with in a — Snap! Snap! — timely manner, rot outside, attracting many a fruit fly and other uninvited guests.

Naturally, the mango will rot in your house in the same fashion if you don’t address its drama-queen demands quickly. That’s because once those babies are ripe, they are ready to go — *where* is your choice. The garbage, your mouth, the freezer, into a recipe, whatever. You just best do something with them or they’ll come back to haunt you by summoning their good buddies (I suspect from high school, as they seem to go way back), the fruit flies. And the regular houseflies. Apparently, Mango was friends with all the cliques.

My at-first-mango-crazed husband started getting impatient with the demands of the mango early on in the season. Like the second day. He resented coming home from work only to have to chop fruit for two hours. No man-cave time for him! Eventually he went over the edge. And once he fell off the

Happy Mango Cliff, he thumped down a rocky side, smacked his head on a bird’s nest and landed with a Thud next to the Thwapped mangos.

Angry J. (the husband) grew weary of the incessant nag to address the precious mangos’ needs and simply started to unceremoniously chuck them into a garbage bag, without a second thought to the perilous (well, not so much; they’re not penguins) mango’s tumble to mango manhood. This act of rebellion is likely viewed as downright sacrilegious by the mango worshippers.

The mango obsessed love their mangos, but they seem to be a rather inarticulate bunch. Ask them why they love the fruit and in response you get such gems as: “They are delicious.”

Okay. Duh. Anyway, their lack of adjectives does not make them any less devout. In fact, they’re unapologetically loyal, so much so that it makes me wonder: The guy who ate the other guy’s face on the MacArthur Causeway? Perhaps he caught a whiff of mango on his breath?

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

**Robert** **PUNCH #81**

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- Committed to Miami-Dade County, and volunteered for community projects for women, children, and animals.

FOR INTEGRITY ON THE BENCH PUNCH #86

Political Advertisement paid for and approved by Teresa Pooler, non-partisan, for Miami-Dade Circuit Court Judge, Group 49.

# A Case of Puppy Love Gone Bad

A dispute with a dog groomer leads to hurt feelings and a trip to North Miami

By Shari Lynn Rothstein-Kramer  
BT Contributor

**W**e'd been together for a little more than three years. Everything was going fine — great, even. We'd see each other on a regular basis, never really varying from the normal routine. Why should we? There was no need. I was happy. She was happy. It was the perfect relationship. At least *I thought* it was.

Sound familiar? Of course it does. It happens to each of us at least once in a lifetime. You know, you search everywhere and when you're at your wits' end, you find that person — the one who does it like no one else does, or can.

Ah, the tale of love, loss, heartbreak. But mine is different. Mine has a twist. Mine involved my dog groomer.

Now, let's be clear. I wasn't romantically involved with the groomer, so it wasn't *that* kind of break-up. But it was just as bad; this woman was responsible for bathing and styling my Yorkie.

I began bringing Tika to — we'll call her "Jane" for privacy's sake — when Tika was less than a year old. I knew nothing about dogs, as Tika was my first. You're probably thinking, "What, lady? You've never had a dog before? Alrighty then..."

But I grew up in a house that always had cats. I brought my first cat home when I was in the second grade. My first apartment, post-college, had two cats (so



they wouldn't be lonely). They were gray and black, to match my color scheme, and low maintenance. Just feed, water, brush, and love.

What else does a shorthair need? A litter box and some toys? Both no-brainers. So the burden of finding the perfect person to "pamper my princess" didn't fall upon me until about three years ago, when my bundle of joy arrived as a fifth-anniversary gift.

There she was, this tiny teddy-bear-looking creature that was so flawless she looked fake. But she ate, licked, peed, and her hair grew. And with that, it was time for a groomer.

I began researching, figuring that if I live in Aventura, options should abound. But like many other things that should be easy to obtain locally, this too proved a bit challenging. Little things like certain

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establishments not being clean enough, or overcrowded, and language barriers (I am not fluent in Spanish, unfortunately) turned me off to more than a half-dozen places.

And then I found Jane's place. It was ideal; a doggie wonderland. Everything seemed right. Jane herself was capable and knowledgeable and the facility inviting and clean. The haircut was always excellent, and my pup could frolic with other dogs. Most important, I knew that she was safe. I trusted Jane. I had found my place.

There was never an issue — until now. The place has become so popular that it's always booked to the hilt and, as a result, appointments are recommended. Seems fair. I called on Thursday. In my world, an appointment equals a specific day, time, and service. But not all worlds are the same. We weren't given specifics — just "Wednesday." And, at the time, that seemed fine.

Services were "the usual" and we'd drop her in the morning. The following Wednesday my husband Ian took the dog and called me shortly thereafter, pretty upset. Jane had mentally prepared for an earlier arrival than we'd executed.

Apparently annoyed, she commented that she'd finish around 7:00 p.m. Ian questioned the timeframe, which led to a chain of misunderstandings, including a "daycare" charge and more.

Perhaps Jane had woken up in a bad mood or her day had started poorly. I asked to speak with her. She told me was cross with Ian for questioning her. She said he always had questions and she didn't like it. I listened to her, giving her a chance to explain her feelings, but in the end, none of it felt right to me.

So be it. Without playing the blame game, I asked if I could have the dog back and we'd reschedule. Now that we knew the rules, at least we could play by them.

As I hung up, I *did* intend to bring the dog back. After all, Tika needed a haircut and there was no one better. And then it hit me. This was personal. It was about my "other half," and I wasn't happy. I loved everything about Jane's

shop, but I will always side with my husband, especially if he did nothing except ask a question or two.

Upon returning home, he rehashed his experience again. That's not like him. He was upset. When I shared Jane's words with him, I saw the look in his eyes. I knew it was time to move on.

Fast-forward two days. So many puppy day spas have come and gone since the last time the search was on. I

**Without playing the blame game, I asked if I could have the dog back and we'd reschedule. Now that we knew the rules, at least we could play by them.**

called and dropped in on several places, spoke with friends and neighbors, went on strategic drive-bys, and

asked the dog her opinion. (Yes, I did.) While no option seemed ideal, when left to the look and feel of the property alone, what sold me on Pet Palace Productions was the owner and her assistant.

The first time I phoned, I spoke with an assistant who chatted easily and probably longer than he'd have liked with me on the telephone. When I called again,

the owner, Elaine, picked up. It was late in the day, but she was gracious and genuine when I asked about popping in for a visit to see if my dog liked it there. She didn't hesitate. "C'mon over," she said with a tone so pleasant that I could pretty much hear her smiling over the phone. "We'll be here for a while."

So I went.

I ventured deep into North Miami — 164th Street — a neighborhood I don't frequent. The shop is small but clean, and when I met Elaine, we connected immediately. She's simply lovely. So warm and friendly. It felt as though I'd known her for years. Naturally, Ian and Tika came along, which was the proverbial icing on the cake. The deal was done. At 10:00 a.m. the following morning my baby-doggie received a dose of pretty from her new "auntie" Elaine, and she looks beautiful!

I went back on my word. I won't be taking my pooch back to Jane next week. As a matter of fact, there's a good chance I won't be seeing her again. And although it makes me sad, change is often for the best.

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# Pioneers, One and All

At North Miami High's 2012 commencement, valedictorian Daniela Pelaez brought everyone out, and everyone together

By **Mark Sell**  
BT Contributor

**N**orth Miami Senior High School's 2012 graduation ceremony was no ordinary commencement.

It was more like a revival meeting, with whoops, stomps, shouts, and calls-and-response on June 8 at Florida International University's U.S. Century Bank arena, 22 miles from North Miami High. TV crews from five stations hovered outside as a biblical rainstorm brewed in the stifling heat.

Miami-Dade Schools Superintendent Alberto Carvalho, who had not been scheduled on the program, gave this exhortation: "I have looked in your eyes

and seen the look, the fierce look of determination, the courage of intellect, the potential that will change our world, our society, our community, and our country!

"I know that during your lifetime, you will find a cure for cancer! You will end world hunger! You will bring democracy to Sudan and Darfur! You shall rebuild Haiti from the ashes of the earthquake! [A huge whoop went up — this class includes survivors from the 2010 quake.] You will be those who will put a woman on Mars, a senator from Haiti in Washington, and you will elect the first woman president!"

It was a little over the top, but this was no ordinary year. It wasn't just the 20-8 football victory over archrival

North Miami Beach High. Nor was it the nationally placed chess team or the debate team's statewide showings.

No, the Pioneers galvanized the national immigration debate and, one could argue, started the process that led to President Obama's June 15 executive order temporarily lifting deportations for 800,000 people in America under age 30 without criminal records and with high school diplomas, GEDs, or military service.

Big things started at this gritty school of 2600, classified as "inner-city" and mostly Haitian-American, and proud it had just climbed from a "D" to a "C" rating. In some of Greater Miami's tonier precincts, this is not regarded as the Home of the Pioneers, but as the Home of the Other.

In late February, Colombian-born valedictorian Daniela Pelaez got notice that she and her sister were to be deported March 28. Daniela has been here since age four and does not remember Colombia.

The popular senior, normally upbeat and a rock and confidante for her friends



BT photo by Mark Sell

**Emily Sell and Daniela Pelaez.**

in the tightly knit International Baccalaureate program, shared the news with tears.

Her fellow Pioneers rallied right away. My daughter Emily, who fights when others get pushed around, told Daniela: "I'm *not* going to let that happen."

Emily and fellow students and teachers wasted no time in coming up with a



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plan. Salutatorian, debate team president, and one of the only non-Hispanic whites in the school, Emily volunteered to initiate a social-media campaign.

She took Wednesday “sick” in her room at home and, unbeknownst to her parents, launched a Facebook page on Daniela’s behalf that ultimately got more than 15,000 signatures from around the world, and plenty of hate mail. She called TV stations and newspapers. On Thursday, when she felt “better,” she was back at school. TV crews were swarming by lunchtime.

The South Florida congressional delegation, Democratic and Republican, immediately scrambled for the limelight on Daniela’s behalf. Sen. Bill Nelson came out with a statement. On Friday, nearly all the school’s students marched around the block in protest, and the national media showed up.

Carvalho, talked up as a potential Miami-Dade mayoral candidate, told Daniela on-camera: “I’ve got your back.” Vice President Joe Biden chimed in a few days later on CNN, saying, “This is so mindless.”

She became the poster child for the Obama administration’s stillborn DREAM Act, which would provide a

path to citizenship for children here illegally through no fault of their own. Republican Congressman David Rivera took on Daniela as his pet project, seeking more restrictive legislation that would give achievers like Daniela a path to citizenship without alienating the Republican Party. Ultimately Rivera brought Daniela and her sister to Washington and came up with the STARS Act, now winding its way through committee. Obama trumped that with the June 15 executive order, buying time for path-to-citizenship legislation.

Daniela and her sister got to stay in the country. Daniela earned a scholarship to Dartmouth, where she plans to pursue studies in molecular biology and medicine. And she delivered the commencement address, which returns us to the graduation event.

Carvalho’s stemwinder primed the audience for Daniela, who thanked everyone from the janitors and cafeteria workers to Michael Lewis, “the best principal on the planet.”

“It was because of your support that I am able to stand here and deliver this farewell,” she said. “Without your

demonstration of kindness and sense of community, I would have been deported.” She reminded everyone that the Statue of Liberty was a gift from the French and therefore an iconic immigrant.

“Stand by your values and carry yourselves with pride,” she said. “In a society rife with violence, racism, and hatred, we have been given the opportunity to rise above the stereotype of being the minority and the underdog... Dr. Seuss once said, ‘Be who you are and say what you feel, because those who mind don’t matter, and those who matter don’t mind.’”

Then came the roll call of the 451 graduates. There were no Smiths or Johnsons in this group, and just one Jones. But there were 12 Josephs, 11 Augustins, 8 Pierres, and first names such as Wiguenson, Frantzill, Erlinx, Xanjaniece, Boothvieen, and Doudyana.

Many, perhaps most, got cheers and whistles. You could tell who had the biggest extended families. One Jessica got a screaming step-dance performance that shook the rear bleachers.

Afterward graduates and families squeezed near the exits as TV crews aiming for “live at five” feeds scurried inside to

escape the drenching thunderstorm.

There were smiles and hugs, but these four years have hurt many Pioneer families. It wasn’t just the usual crime, gang violence, and grinding family pressures. Many lost loved ones in the Port-au-Prince earthquake. The Great Recession struck others like a plague, costing many their homes, credit, savings, confidence, and dreams, scarring families or even tearing them asunder.

But those very families huddled together and stood strong at graduation, chatting away in Kreyol, Spanish, and English, and high-fiving. In Miami-Dade County, after all, six out of ten people were born in another country or speak a language other than English at home. Many came here after losing everything and started over again — one day, one idea, and one dollar at a time.

That’s the spirit that buoys this Class of 2012 and inspires the rest of us like a stiff tonic in rough times: Individual and collective determination, immigrant optimism — and to borrow from Martin Luther King, Jr. — the arc of history bending toward justice.

*Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com*

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# Bean There, Done That

The neighborhood Starbucks is good for unwinding, killing time, and picking up stock tips

By Jen Karetnick  
BT Contributor

June kills me. Annually, it's graduations, birthdays, anniversaries — celebration after celebration, right when school ends (chaos on two fronts, where my kids attend and where I teach). Not to mention mango season in full-production mode (although this year only seven of our trees have fruit).

But this year was pure madness. My son graduated from Miami Country Day Lower School; my daughter is entering high school at MCD; my niece said adieu to her middle school in Georgia; her brother bid good-bye to

secondary education to enter a college for horror-film cosmetics in Pittsburgh; another nephew in Boca Raton finished his senior year and is off on a career in music technology starting at Florida Atlantic University; and my niece in Connecticut is headed to Princeton and their swim team.

Then there's my own seniors' graduation from Miami Arts Charter — always a sentimental time for me, as I've taught some of these kids poetry, fiction, nonfiction, and playwriting for as long as the school has been open.

Speaking of writing, the beginning of June saw the delivery of MAC's third volume of *imMACulate conceptions*,



the award-winning arts anthology, and mid-June marked the final preparations for Tigertail Productions' annual anthology of poetry and flash fiction. I was honored last year when the director of this avant-garde arts nonprofit, Mary Luft, asked me to edit what is the tenth volume of this collection, which includes only writers who have a connection to South Florida.

Among those selected this year — the anthology, titled *Sun-Struck Matches*, publishes in October with a launch

reading at Books and Books in Coral Gables and another reading at the Miami International Book Fair — are some very local writers indeed, including Michael Hettich and Carol Todaro, both of whom live in Miami Shores. They wrote two pieces together, interpreting the theme of "pairings" somewhat geographically.

I suppose that the theme was also rather subliminally apropos, given that my husband and I marked our 20th wedding anniversary at the close of June. In addition to putting anthologies to bed

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by Derek

and celebrating student milestones, we are attempting to renew our vows somewhere this summer.

Who knows if it will happen? My kids emphatically refuse to participate in any sort of ceremony, whether it takes place in everyday Miami Shores or far-flung Morocco, on the grounds that the whole idea "is weird." Plus, we've recently traveled twice as a family, though they haven't exactly been exotic trips. First we went to Orlando for my son's final travel soccer tournament, which was also the weekend of my daughter's 14th birthday, so we took her entourage as well.

Then we were off to Manhattan, to satellite to Connecticut for my niece's graduation and New Jersey for my sister's and father's birthdays and Father's Day. Not liking our midtown Hilton, we considered changing to the Sheraton after hearing that it was celebrating its 50th anniversary with a zillion-dollar renovation.

But given all the commuting, the effort seemed overwhelming. And while we did manage to grab a miniature wedding cake from Ferrara's in Little Italy one night, after sticking the whipped cream, sponge cake, and raspberry filling

confection in the little fridge in our hotel room, we actually forgot to eat it.

The quiet writing life at Mango House had never seemed so good — until, of course, we returned to find the broadband system electrocuted by a storm and out of use. Thanks to some thoughtful students' gift cards, though, I managed to set up shop at the Shores Starbucks and keep myself caffeinated for days.

It's not the first time I've used the neighborhood Starbucks as an urban office. Whether I'm killing time as my son takes piano or guitar lessons at Miss Jane's Music Studio across the street, or I've got a couple of hours while my car is getting fixed at Chuck Orlandi's garage on the corner of NE 2nd Avenue and 98th Street, the Starbucks beckons.

Not only is it the quickest oral fix for the weariness that dogs my life, it's pretty much the only free, unsecured wireless in town. There are even plugs for phone and computer cords, if you jockey successfully for the right seat. And to be honest, there's really no coffee lounge alternative.

Sure, there's the noise of coffee grinding and baristas shouting names. There's

distraction in the music, an eclectic assortment of tunes that every once in a while catches my attention, but usually annoys me, and the occasionally over-loud conversations that don't have enough substance to them to deserve eavesdropping. But it's nothing like the symbiotic pairings in my house, such as hound dogs and landscapers, who have a relationship akin to magnets — where the landscapers go, the dogs follow, barking their faces off. Or my head and my pillow, all too soft when I have hard deadlines.

The real reason to pop into Starbucks, however, is that it's a microcosm of Miami Shores. Every hamlet has one hangout that sees folks from all walks of life, whether they be paths of jagged stone or carpeted with red velvet. This is ours. I've seen nannies with babies, then the moms of those babies, stop in for a treat mere minutes apart. (I've been that mom, too.) Students from Barry University, lawyers brokering deals, housekeepers on the way to the bus stop across the street, resident dentists and physicians, dog walkers, dance teachers. Of course, you never know who might be sipping that skinny mocha nearby. I was once covertly

watching a man with a long, single braid down his back who requested his espresso extra-hot; later that night, I saw him again at an event. He was on stage, swallowing swords and eating fire.

For a writer or someone who relishes gossip, the overheard conversations can be the best part. From an apparent insider, I recently learned that stock options for Starbucks are expected to rise rapidly thanks to the introduction of their new "K-cups" (for the Keurig coffee maker), but then fall as the company has some "ridiculous things coming out in the next few months."

Tuning in to a job interview taking place very loudly next to me, I was offered the point of view that the financial field in South Florida is so crooked that most honest men wind up "working in pest control or replacing windshields."

It's dialogue you just can't make up. And it's a good thing it's so informative, too. Indeed, now that I've learned so much about the economy, Jon and I will probably just renew our vows over some iced caramel macchiato instead of, say, on an island in the Caribbean.

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“La Bestia,” showcasing the work of Isabel Muñoz, now at the CCE.



The inaugural exhibit at the CCE’s new downtown home: “E-CO.”



“Microtheater Miami”: Plays no longer than 15 minutes for no more than 15 people.

## Taking It to the Core

After years in Coral Gables, the Cultural Center of Spain moves to downtown Miami

By Anne Tschida  
BT Arts Editor

Sixteen years ago, the Cultural Center of Spain in Miami, or Centro Cultural Español (CCEM), opened up its doors, the first space of its kind in the United States. A cultural arm of the Spanish government, the CCEM has always been a unique institution. While the huge Spanish-speaking population of Miami-Dade made the area a natural choice for a headquarters in North America, several other elements made it intriguing from the very start.

While there is a cultural and linguistic affinity between Spain and its former colonies, the fact that much of Latin America was conquered territory that then fought for its freedom has always given the relationship an edge. Back in 1996, the first director of CCEM, Guillermo Basso, recognized this tension and

began immediately trying to open dialogue and repair bridges through artistic interactions. But Spain was also in the midst of delivering another message to the world: After decades of dictatorship under Francisco Franco, this part of the Iberian peninsula was now promoting openness, democracy, multicultural diversity, and human rights. A part of this outreach, the Spanish cultural centers were born — in South America, Mexico, and here.

While CCEM’s home in Coral Gables, on the periphery of what could be considered Miami’s Hispanic heartland — Little Havana — seemed a no-brainer, something about the actual building worked against its mission. Outwardly the massive stone structure felt like a fortress; the spaces within, constrained rather than open.

Nonetheless the second director of CCE, Maria del Valle, expanded on

the center’s offerings, with music and literary events combined with visual arts (generated locally, to our south, and in Spain), including increased co-productions and collaborations with Miami-based organizations.

Then in 2011, the CCEM decided to join the cultural hub that has developed around the urban core of Miami, moving to the 1400 block of Biscayne Boulevard. To inaugurate this new center, Spain’s Queen Sofia and the country’s blockbuster pop star, Alejandro Sanz, headlined the opening party. Miami Mayor Tomás Regalado and Emilio Estefan were also in attendance.

**Madrid-based photojournalist Isabel Muñoz has documented three trips she took through southern Mexico on a train called “La Bestia.”**

The new space is about as different from the old one as possible. Situated in a modernist building, two sides of the center are glass walls fronting downtown streets — hard to get more open than that.

The latest director of the CCEM, Maria Palacios, who hails from Madrid and moved here last year (del Valle has since become the director of ArtCenter/South Florida), says the literal transparency of the building was a main reason for the move, as was the rent. “The rental contract was expiring in Coral Gables, and it was time to study options,” she explains, sitting in her new office. “This space was much bigger, and it talked to the street, with all those big glass windows. And it was cheaper.”

(The Biscayne building is owned by Spanish real-estate development company Espacio, which has an interest in bringing people to the burgeoning area.)

While Palacios says there was a risk of losing a dedicated audience from the old neighborhood, the prospects of developing a wider one — owing to the new center’s proximity to the Arsht Center, Wynwood, and the Design District — outweighed that concern.

This summer a photography exhibit shows off the advantages of this expansive space. Large prints shot by Madrid-based photojournalist Isabel Muñoz cover the walls. Best known for her searing images of tattooed Central

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American gang members, Muñoz, this time, has documented three trips she took through southern Mexico on a train called "La Bestia," which is also the name of the exhibit. (*La bestia* means "the beast," which is what tens of thousands of impoverished Central American migrants have called the iron horses that take them to the U.S. border.)

In more than 70 portraits, men, women, and children cram into the freight trains, sit on top of them, or lounge next to them during breaks in the journey. Yes, they are desperately poor or they wouldn't be making this perilous trip, risking violence and rape, but Muñoz captures a beauty and dignity of people who often seem to remain faceless, both in their homelands and eventually — if they make it — in fields and kitchens on our side of the border.

"You have to feel the beast under your legs to know what these people feel," explains Muñoz, whose work can be found at the New Museum of Contemporary Art in New York and the Houston Contemporary Art Museum, as well as in the leading Spanish newspaper, *El País*. Accompanying the exhibit is a video made by two Mexican artists who joined Muñoz on the last leg of her trip.

The powerful display would not have been possible in the smaller Gables space, and certainly the portraits — like the magnificent, larger-than-life photograph of three shirtless young men, staring, unsmiling, at the camera — would not have been visible to pedestrians on the street, as is the case here.

This summer, CCEM also took advantage of its new home by using its backyard patio as a stage for "Micro-theater Miami," an absorbing series of short plays on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday evenings. According to Palacios, the plays are "no more than 15 minutes



Isabel Muñoz's portrait of young Mexican migrants headed for the USA.

long, for an audience of no more than 15 people." Micro on every level.

Throughout the years, CCEM has also brought in music, dance, authors, film, and performance, a tradition that will continue on the Boulevard. In June alone, the center held a series of workshops for seniors, a children's theater performance, a Spanish Short Films night, and a pretty unconventional seminar called "Psychoanalysis in the City." And coming up on Friday, July 6, a collaborative from the

Dominican Republic, El Hombrecito, will combine spoken-word poetry with Dominican rhythms in a free concert at the center.

CCEM will continue to work with local organizations throughout the year, including the Miami International Book Fair, the Miami International Film Festival, and the International Hispanic Theater Festival, which starts later this month.

Furthering this diverse interaction with the community is in keeping with CCEM's move, says Palacios:

"Downtown Miami is transforming into a cultural center, a multicultural center, with a unique character. We want to be part of the development."

"*La Bestia*" runs through August at the Cultural Center of Spain in Miami, 1490 Biscayne Blvd.; 305-448-9677; [www.ccemiami.org](http://www.ccemiami.org).

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##### ALEJANDRA VON HARTZ FINE ARTS

2630 NW 2nd Ave., Miami  
305-438-0220

www.alejandravonhartz.net

Through August 4: Lynne Gelfman

##### ART FUSION

1 NE 40th St., Miami  
305-573-5730

www.artfusiongallery.com

July 2 through September 17:

"Reflections and Passions" with various artists

Reception July 14, 6 to 9 p.m.

##### ART NOUVEAU GALLERY

348 NW 29th St., Miami  
305-573-4661

www.artnouveau.com

Through August 11:

"Apropiações" by Harry Schuster, and Gustavo Zajac

##### ART WORK IN PROGRESS

171 NW 36th St., Miami

305-573-4009, www.jacques-harvey.com

Call gallery for exhibition information

##### ARTSEEN GALLERY

2215 NW 2nd Ave., Miami  
305-237-3559

http://artseenspace.wordpress.com

Call gallery for exhibition information

##### ASCASO GALLERY

2441 NW 2nd Ave., Miami  
305-571-9410

www.ascasogallery.com

Through September 30:

"Color Sobre Color" by Jesús Soto

##### BAKEHOUSE ART COMPLEX

561 NW 32nd St., Miami  
305-576-2828

www.bacfl.org

Call gallery for exhibition information

##### BLACK SQUARE GALLERY

2248 NW 1st Pl., Miami  
786-999-9735

www.blacksquaregallery.com

July 15 through September 5:

"Summer Reading" with various artists

##### BORINQUEN ART GALLERY

100 NE 38th St., Miami  
305-491-1526

www.borinquenhealth.org

Through August 17:

"In Silence, by Memory" by Rafael Valdez

Reception July 14, 7 to 10 p.m.

##### BRIDGE RED STUDIOS / PROJECT SPACE

12425 NE 13th Ave. #5, North Miami  
305-978-4856

www.bridgedstudios.com

Through July 8:

"Martinez/Nicastro/Tan" with Zaydee Martinez, Joe Nicastro, and Laura Tan

Reception July 8, noon to 4 p.m.

##### BUENA VISTA BUILDING

180 NE 39th St., Suite 120, Miami  
Call gallery for exhibition information

##### CALDWELL / LINFIELD GALLERY & STUDIO

8351 NE 8th Ct., Miami  
305-754-2093

www.susannacaldwell.com

Call gallery for exhibition information

##### CAROL JAZZAR CONTEMPORARY ART

158 NW 91st St., Miami Shores  
305-490-6906

www.cjazzart.com

By appointment: carol@cjazzart.com

Call gallery for exhibition information

##### CARIDI GALLERY

758 NE 125th St., North Miami  
786-202-5554

www.caridigallery.com

Ongoing:

Eduardo Caridi

July 3 through 16: "Summer Showcase" by Eduardo Caridi

##### CENTER FOR VISUAL COMMUNICATION

541 NW 27th St., Miami  
305-571-1415

www.visual.org

Call gallery for exhibition information

##### CHAREST-WEINBERG GALLERY

250 NW 23rd St., Miami  
305-292-0411



Rafael Valdez, *Untitled*, oil on canvas, 2012, at Borinquen Art Gallery.

www.charestweinberg.com

Through July 31:

"OLYMPIA" by Jacob Gossett

##### CS GALLERY

787 NE 125th St., North Miami  
305-308-6561

www.chirinosanchez.com

Ongoing:

"Group Show" with various artists

##### CURATOR'S VOICE ART PROJECTS

2509 NW 2nd Ave., Miami  
786-357-0568

www.curatorsvoiceartprojects.com

Call gallery for exhibition information

##### DANIEL AZOULAY GALLERY

Shops at Midtown Miami  
Store # 120 Buena Vista Blvd., Miami  
305-576-1977

www.danielazoulaygallery.com

July 20 through August 31:

"American Seris Part 2" by Daniel Azoulay

Reception July 20, 6 to 10 p.m.

##### DAVID CASTILLO GALLERY

2234 NW 2nd Ave., Miami  
305-573-8110

www.davidcastillogallery.com

Through July 31:

"DCG Open" with various artists

##### DIANA LOWENSTEIN FINE ARTS

2043 N. Miami Ave., Miami  
305-576-1804

www.difinearts.com

Through July 28:

"White Thoughts" by Gye Hoon Park

"Lost for Words" by Daniel Verbis

##### DIASPORA VIBE GALLERY

3938 N. Miami Ave., Miami  
786-536-7801

www.diasporavibe.net

Call gallery for exhibition information

##### DIMENSIONS VARIABLE

3850 NE Miami Ct., Miami  
305-607-5527

www.dimensionsvariable.net

Call gallery for exhibition information

##### DINA MITRANI GALLERY

2620 NW 2nd Ave., Miami  
786-486-7248

www.dinamitrani.com

Through August 31:

"Women's Perspectives" with various artists

##### DORSCH GALLERY

151 NW 24th St., Miami  
305-576-1278

www.dorschgallery.com

Call gallery for exhibition information

##### DOT FIFTYONE ART SPACE

51 NW 36th St., Miami  
305-573-9994

www.doffiftyone.com

Through August 15:

"Discourse of the Non-Representational" with Mauro

Giacconi, Hernan Cedola, José Luis Landet, and Raquel

Schwartz

Reception July 14, 7 to 10 p.m.

##### ELITE ART EDITIONS

46 NW 36th St., Miami  
754-422-5942

www.elitearteditions.com

July 14 through August 10:

"Group Show" with Mauricio Zequeda, Yampier

Sardina, and Luis Kaiulani

Reception July 14, 7 to 10 p.m.

##### ETRA FINE ART

50 NE 40th St., Miami  
305-438-4383

www.etrafineart.com

Call gallery for exhibition information

##### FREDRIC SNITZER GALLERY

2247 NW 1st Pl., Miami  
305-448-8976

www.snitzer.com

Through July 7: "Une Saison en Enfer (A Season in Hell)" by José Bedia

July 14 through August 11:

"Things Beyond Our Control" with various artists

##### 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

Call gallery for exhibition information

##### GALLERY 212 MIAMI CONTEMPORARY ART GALLERY

2407 NW 2nd Ave., Miami  
786-431-1957

www.gallery212miami.com

Call gallery for exhibition information

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#### GALLERY DIET

174 NW 23rd St., Miami  
305-571-2288  
www.gallerydiet.com

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  
July 19 through September 1:

"Astral Weeks" with Liz Deschenes, Brock Enright, Keltie Ferris, Jackie Gendel, Brion Gysin, Corinne Jones, Jon Kessler, Nicolas Lobo, Rory Parks, Genesis P-Orridge Chad Scoville, and Patrick Walsh, curated by Van Hanos

Reception July 19, 6 to 9 p.m.

#### GARY NADER FINE ART

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

www.garynader.com

July 6 through August 31:

"New Acquisitions" with various artists

#### HARDCORE ARTS CONTEMPORARY SPACE

3326 N. Miami Ave., Miami  
305-576-1645

www.hardcoreartsmiami.com

Through July 7:

"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

July 14 through October 6:

"Radical Genealogy: The Decline of Dauphins, Courtesans, and Hounds" by Carlos Gamez de Francisco

Reception July 14, 7 to 10 p.m.

#### HAROLD GOLEN GALLERY

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

www.haroldgolengallery.com

Through July 7:

"The Things We Hold Dear" by Jason Snyder

#### 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 July 21:

"SigfredoChacónDrawings?" by Sigfredo Chacón

#### 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 August 30:

"Summer Solstice" with Mimi Bates, Mira Lehr, Antonio Ugarte, and Soile Yly-Mayry

#### 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

#### LELIA MORDOCH GALLERY

2300 N. Miami Ave., Miami

786-431-1506

www.galerieleliamordoch.com

Through July 28:

"In & Out of Bed" by Leah Poller

#### LOCUST PROJECTS

3852 N. Miami Ave., Miami

305-576-8570

www.locustprojects.org

July 14 through 28:

"The LAB (Locust Arts Builders)" with various artists

Reception July 14, 6 to 10 p.m.

#### 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 July 31:

"MILAGROS: Portal Culture" with Felici Asteinza

Through August 11:

"Emergence & Structure: Nature in Process" with various artists

"Embedded: A Photojournalist Captures Conflict and Resistance" with various artists

Through October 5:

"Shutter: Selected Photography and Film from the CINTAS Foundation Fellows Collection" with various artists

#### MIAMI-DADE COLLEGE, GALLERY NORTH

11380 NW 27th Ave., Miami

305-237-1532

www.mdc.edu

Call gallery for exhibition information

#### MIAM-DADE COLLEGE, HOMESTEAD ART SPACE

500 College Terr., Homestead

305-237-5000

www.mdc.edu/homestead

Call gallery for exhibition information

#### MIAMI-DADE COLLEGE, KENDALL GALLERY

1110 SW 104th St., Miami

305-237-2322

www.mdc.edu/kendall

Call gallery for exhibition information

#### MICHAEL JON GALLERY

20 NE 41st St., Suite 2, Miami

305-760-9030

www.michaeljongallery.com

Through July 28:

"Feelings" with Sayre Gomez, J. Patrick Walsh III, and Bobbi Woods

#### 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

Call gallery for exhibition information

#### NEW WORLD GALLERY

New World School of the Arts

25 NE 2nd St., Miami

305-237-3597

Call gallery for exhibition information

#### NINA TORRES FINE ART

1800 N. Bayshore Dr., Miami

305-395-3599

www.ninatorresfineart.com

Call gallery for exhibition information

#### NORMAN LIEBMAN STUDIO

2561 N. Miami Ave., Miami

305-573-3572

www.norman-liebman-studio.com

Call gallery for exhibition information

#### O. ASCANIO GALLERY

2600 NW 2nd Ave., Miami

305-571-9036

www.oascaniogallery.com

Call gallery for exhibition information

#### OM GALLERY

8650 Biscayne Blvd., Suite 21, Miami

305-458-5085

Through July 31:

"Mid Century Design" by Danielle Quarante

"Om and Art" with various artists

#### 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 July 28:

"Outside the Box" with various artists

#### 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 July 31:

"Salon d' Notre Societe" with various artists

#### SAMMER GALLERY

82 NE 29th St., Miami

305-441-2005

www.artnet.com/sammergallery.html

Call gallery for exhibition

information



Mauro Giaconi, *Sight*, graphite and rubber eraser, 2010, at Dot Fiftyone Gallery.

#### 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

Through July 7:

"Fictional Eyes: The Dreams of Reason" with Sandra Torralba, Stefano Bonazzi, Christopher Lee Donovan, Michel Rajkovic, Serrah Russell, Kaveh Hosseini, Polly Chandler, and Alba Tenas



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**Laura Tan, *Still Life on Green*, oil on linen, 2011, at Bridge Red Studios/Project Space.**

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

**CIFO (Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation)**  
1018 N. Miami Ave., Miami  
305-455-3380  
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 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  
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

**UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI CAS GALLERY**  
1210 Stanford Dr., Miami  
July 6 through 29:  
"Ceramic League of Miami Members Exhibition" with various artists  
Reception July 6, 6 to 9 p.m.

**UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI GALLERY**  
2750 NW 3rd Ave., Miami  
July 9 through 27:  
"Miami Art Museum Staff Show" with various artists  
Reception July 14, 2 to 9 p.m.

**UNIX FINE ART GALLERY**  
2219 NW 2nd Ave., Miami  
305-496-0621  
www.unixfineart.com  
Ongoing:  
Alexis Torres  
Through August 31:  
Eugenio Merino

**WINE BY THE BAY**  
888 Biscayne Blvd., Suite 112, Miami  
305-455-9791  
www.winebtb.com  
Call gallery for exhibition information

**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, Sego, Ligen, Neuzz, Faile, Vhils, Interestni Kazki, Kenny Scharf, Nunca, Shepard Fairey, Aiko, Ryan McGinness, Stelios Faitakis, and avaf

**YELEN ART GALLERY**  
250 NW 23rd St., Unit 306, Miami  
954-235-4758  
www.yelenart.com  
Call gallery for exhibition information

**MUSEUM & COLLECTION EXHIBITS**

**ARTCENTER/SOUTH FLORIDA**  
800 Lincoln Rd., Miami Beach  
305-674-8278  
www.artcenterf.org  
Through August 5:  
"The Afterlife" with Byron Keith Byrd, Alex Heria, and Franklin Sinanan  
Reception July 7, 7 to 10 p.m.

**LOWE ART MUSEUM, UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI**  
1301 Stanford Dr., Coral Gables  
305-284-3535  
www.lowemuseum.org  
Through September 23:  
"Sainly Blessings: A Gift of Mexican Retablos from Joseph and Janet Shein" with various artists  
Through October 21:  
"Introspection and Awakening: Japanese Art of the Edo and Meiji Period, 1615-1912" 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 August 26:  
"Kimssooja: A Needle Woman" by Kimssooja  
Through September 2:  
"Transcultural Pilgrim: Three Decades of Work by José Bedia" by José Bedia

**MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART**  
770 NE 125th St., North Miami  
305-893-6211  
www.mocanomi.org  
Through September 2:  
"Song" by Ragnar Kjartansson  
"On the Road" by Ed Ruscha

**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  
Call gallery for exhibition information

Compiled by Melissa Wallen  
Send listings, jpeg images, and events information to  
art@biscaynetimes.com



### Fun on the Fourth

It used to take some convincing to get people downtown for anything, never mind spend a whole day in a park. But that has changed over the past several years as Miami's urban center and incredible waterfront have reemerged as a popular place to live and play. A great way to check this out — if you haven't already — is by taking the family to **America's Birthday Bash on Wednesday, July 4**, at Bayfront Park (301 N. Biscayne Blvd.). The park as usual is open all day and is free, but music starts at 3:00 p.m., as does the Kids Zone. Fireworks — that staple of the holiday — go off at 9:00 p.m.

### Taking in the Sights at Twilight Time

In summer, the midday Miami heat makes it difficult for most normal mammals to take a stroll, which is why the **Twilight Cityscape Miami River Eco-Tour** runs from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. on **Sunday, July 8**. Brought to you by the good folks at HistoryMiami, the tour includes a visit to the Miami Circle, the ever-changing riverfront, and a view of sunset over the Magic City. Cost is \$20 for members; \$30 for nonmembers. Call 305-375-1621.

### Pickin' and Grinnin' in the 'Grass

Back in March, the bluegrass world lost Earl Scruggs, the phenomenal banjo player who, with his partner Lester Flatt, transformed the sound of bluegrass. So it's an especially good time to remember his spirit and innovation at the **Bluegrass Festival at Greynolds Park** (17530 W. Dixie Hwy., North Miami Beach) on **Sunday, July 8**. From 12:30 to 5:00 p.m., hear local bluegrass bands, but also other music that went into the creation of that particular sound, including Appalachian mountain music and blues. Bring a lawn chair. Admission is free but parking costs \$6 for a car, \$15 for a truck or RV. Go to [www.southfloridabluegrass.com](http://www.southfloridabluegrass.com).

### Drama in the Big House

The opening play in the 27th annual **International Hispanic Theater Festival**, one of the most important Latino theater festivals in the world, leads off with an explosive and daring production that was written decades ago. (Yes, even in today's shock-obsessed culture, some things are still edgy.) Performed by the Urban Theatre Movement from Los Angeles, *Short Eyes* is by Puerto Rican enfant terrible Miguel Piño, who wrote it during his stint in prison, and deals with racial and sexual tensions among prisoners, especially when a child molester is added to the mix. On **Thursday, July 12 and Friday, July 13** at 8:30 p.m., this powerful play comes to the Carnival Studio Theatre at the Arsht Center for the Performing Arts (1444 Biscayne Blvd.). Tickets cost \$30. The festival runs through July 29 at various venues throughout Miami-Dade. Go to [www.teatroavante.com](http://www.teatroavante.com).

### A Midsummer Night's Trio

As part of the **DWNTWN Concert Series**, the Venezuelan Tropical-meets-pop band (and Zumba-class fave) Grupo Treo takes the stage at the Olympia Theater at the Gusman Center (174 E. Flagler St.) on **Friday, July 13**. The doors open at 7:00, concert begins at 8:00. It's free,

but seating is limited; first come, first sit. Visit [www.dwntwnconcerts.com](http://www.dwntwnconcerts.com).

### Mango Madness

A century ago, the botanist David Fairchild collected an assortment of mango trees, among many other plants, and planted them in the park that would carry his name, Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden (10901 Old Cutler Rd., Coral Gables). Twenty years ago, the park decided to celebrate all the varieties of the luscious yellow-red-orange fruit that grow there, and bring in other specimens from around the globe for the annual summertime **International Mango Festival** taking place on **Saturday, July 14 and Sunday, July 15**, from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Over the years, visitors have tasted versions from India and Southeast Asia, as well as new "fiberless" hybrids, while attending lectures, cooking classes, sampling sessions, and a fruit market. Admission for nonmembers is \$25, with \$5 off if you bike, walk, or take public transportation.

### Come See Compas

Maybe because it's free, or perhaps it's the laidback atmosphere with a constant soundtrack of compas music, but both hipsters and families routinely make the scene at **Big Night in Little Haiti**. Produced by the Rhythm Foundation and the Little Haiti Cultural Center, and taking



### Disco Inferno Downtown

Studio 54 was synonymous with disco in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Rich and famous, black and white, straight and gay populated the dance floor during those years, and Broadway's *The Donkey Show* aims to rekindle that atmosphere at the Arsht Center. From **Friday, July 13, through Sunday, August 12**, at times ranging from 7:30 p.m. to as late as 10:30 p.m., the audience is invited to dance along with performers decked out in feathered boas and sparkles, under a canopy of disco balls. Or you can just watch; voyeurs were always part of the scene. Tickets are \$35 to \$50.

place the third Friday of every month, the event combines music, art, food, and after parties. The handsome art gallery is always open, and neighboring restaurants, studios, and eclectic outlets are accessible. On **Friday, July 20**, the festivities run from 6:00 to 10:00 p.m. (with some private venues continuing into the night), in and around 212 NE 59th Terr. Go to [www.bignightlittlehaiti.com](http://www.bignightlittlehaiti.com).

### On Your Toes, Everyone!

Those who love the pointe, adagios, and pirouettes of classical ballet, in particular in the Russian tradition, will be able to study those moves this summer thanks to the Arts Ballet Theatre of Florida's Summer Intensive Program, in conjunction with the St. Petersburg (Russia) Vaganova Ballet Academy. At the culmination of the four-week program, 80 young dancers will twirl their stuff in a **Future Stars of the Ballet** performance, at the Aventura Arts and Cultural Center (3385 NE 188th St.) at 7:00 p.m. on **Friday, July 27**. Tickets cost \$20. See [www.aventuracenter.org](http://www.aventuracenter.org) or [www.artsballettheatre.org](http://www.artsballettheatre.org).

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



### Naked at the Museum

Jack Kerouac and William Burroughs were two of the leading instigators of the 1950s Beat Movement, writing such seminal books as *On the Road* and *Naked Lunch*, respectively. The Museum of Contemporary Art (770 NE 125th St., North Miami) currently is exhibiting an homage to Kerouac from famed artist Ed Ruscha, with paintings that include text from the author's iconic road novel. In tandem with the exhibit, on **Wednesday, July 7** at 7:00 p.m., the museum will screen the 1991 adaptation of *Naked Lunch* (directed by David Cronenberg), as part of the **Film at MOCA** series. Admission to the museum is \$5; screening is included. Info at [www.mocanomi.org](http://www.mocanomi.org).

# Biscayne Crime Beat

Compiled by Derek McCann

## Burglar Believes in Safety First

900 Block of NE 80th Street

Gardener noticed a suspicious man wearing a motorcycle helmet repeatedly entering and leaving residence. When approached, the suspect said, "I am moving in here with my girlfriend." However, it seemed the only moving he was doing was "moving out," as the suspicious man was seen removing items from the home and placing them inside a pillow case and blankets. A relative of the homeowner's was actually in the house, but didn't realize anything was amiss. Suspect would later flee in a white pick-up truck. Not to worry, though — a man wearing a motorcycle helmet without having an actual motorcycle shouldn't be hard to spot.

## Thirsty Decorator Cuts Corners

900 NE 79th St.

A night employee was working inside a restaurant when he heard the sound of the front gate crashing down. He ran outside and saw a man grabbing two pieces of carpet from the parking lot and running away. The employee called police and gave them a description of the man. Soon thereafter, police saw a man matching this description drinking a beer in front of the nearby Tropical Food Market. Police transported the witness to the location and an ID was made. Beer guzzler was immediately arrested. The carpet is still missing. This is a good thing, as there is nothing worse than beer stains and odors on a carpet.

## What's Mine Is Mine, What's Yours Is Mine

600 Block of NE 85th Street

Maybe we're just too passionate in South Florida. When a person breaks up with someone, you expect some acrimony — but burglary? In this dwelling, the side window of the living room was damaged, and many items were removed from the home. A witness saw the ex-girlfriend of the victim leaving the home earlier that day. The ex-girlfriend and victim had been broken up for 10 months. The ex-girlfriend has not been arrested as of press time, but the victim is surely going to want to do some extensive background checks for his next relationship.

## Laptop Filched From Table Top

8600 Block of Biscayne Boulevard

Woman left her MacBook on a table and proceeded to walk away from it, engaging in conversation with other customers and employees. Inexplicably, she also ordered



lunch, leaving the laptop behind and not paying any attention to it. (With consumers like this, we are beginning to understand those long lines at the Apple store.) Computer was missing upon her return to the table. Witnesses saw a male walking around the establishment around the time of this incident. However, the "description" of the suspect is that he is between 10 and 20 years old. In other words, he



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is either a little boy or a grown man. No wonder so many crimes go unsolved.

### Weird Even By Our Standards

*14000 Block of Biscayne Boulevard*

Victim was driving home and stopped when he saw the local skateboarder, JD, whizzing by his car. They two spoke for about 30 minutes and victim invited JD over to his apartment. When JD arrived, he sat at the kitchen table and smoked marijuana. He then took a shower because he felt “sweaty.” After showering, he asked the victim if he wanted a massage, which sounded like a good idea to the victim. JD suggested the victim take a shower first. After the victim took his shower, JD began choking him, causing the victim to lose consciousness. JD left the apartment shortly afterward with the victim’s laptop. In this stoner’s case, sitting in a corner listening to Bob Marley is apparently not appealing enough. Either that, or what he was smoking was *really* good stuff.

### Woman Loses Job, Then Her Mind

*2000 Block of Biscayne Boulevard*

Many of us have had the “leaving on bad terms” experience with an employer. This

person took it to the next level. Already fired from her position, she decided that she really didn’t want this work experience on her resume. She entered the store, screaming and hollering, and promptly stole the manager’s cell phone, proudly waving it for the manager and the store’s patrons to see, before making her way out of the store. Guess a stretch in the Miami-Dade County jail will explain that little gap in her work history.

### A Lesson in North Miami Vernacular

*1700 Block of NE 127th Street*

Woman was sitting inside the Wildcat Center using her Gateway laptop — no Apple computer for this particular report, as we’re in North Miami — and was approached by a man who said, “Imma need that.” Confused by his butchering of the English language, she asked him to repeat himself. Once again, he said, “Imma need that.” (This is the exact spelling from the police report.) The subject then punched the woman in the nose with a closed fist, causing lacerations, and stole the laptop and a cell phone. Emergency personnel

transported the victim to Aventura Hospital for treatment.

### I Know, Let’s Play Hide the iPhone!

*1600 Block of Biscayne Boulevard*

Victim met the subject on Grindr (an online dating service for gay men) and the two agreed to have drinks in the lobby of this hotel, to see if there was a connection. (Isn’t it hard to meet nice guys in this city?) Apparently there was, because they went upstairs to the victim’s room for a nightcap. While they were both in bed, the subject instructed the victim to lie on his side and cover his eyes. As the hopeful victim waited, he heard the door close. He turned over and saw that his iPhone was missing. He chased after the subject, grabbing his shirt, but his would-be life partner nevertheless managed to run off. Oh, well. Back to the Apple store, where they were already expecting you.

### If the Shoe Fits...

*NE 1st Avenue and 71st Street*

The victim, a homeless male, foolishly left two suitcases sitting on the

sidewalk and walked away. While standing across the street, he saw a man opening one of the suitcases and removing a pair of shoes. The man then put the shoes on and walked away. Victim knows this suspect, as they have had verbal altercations in the past. We gather the suspect has been eyeing those shoes for a while and just had to have them. Move over Jimmy Choo, you have some street-style competition.

### What’s Wrong with Five Guys?

*1600 Block of Biscayne Boulevard*

A woman hailed a cab on the Beach and asked the driver to take her to Checkers in Miami. That request alone should have been a harbinger of things to come, because, as we all know, Checkers equals drama. Upon their arrival, the woman told the driver she had no way to pay the \$19 fare. When police were called, she bluntly told them she wasn’t “going to pay for a cab from the Beach.” Determining there was a premeditated refusal to pay the fare, police arrested the woman.

*Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com*



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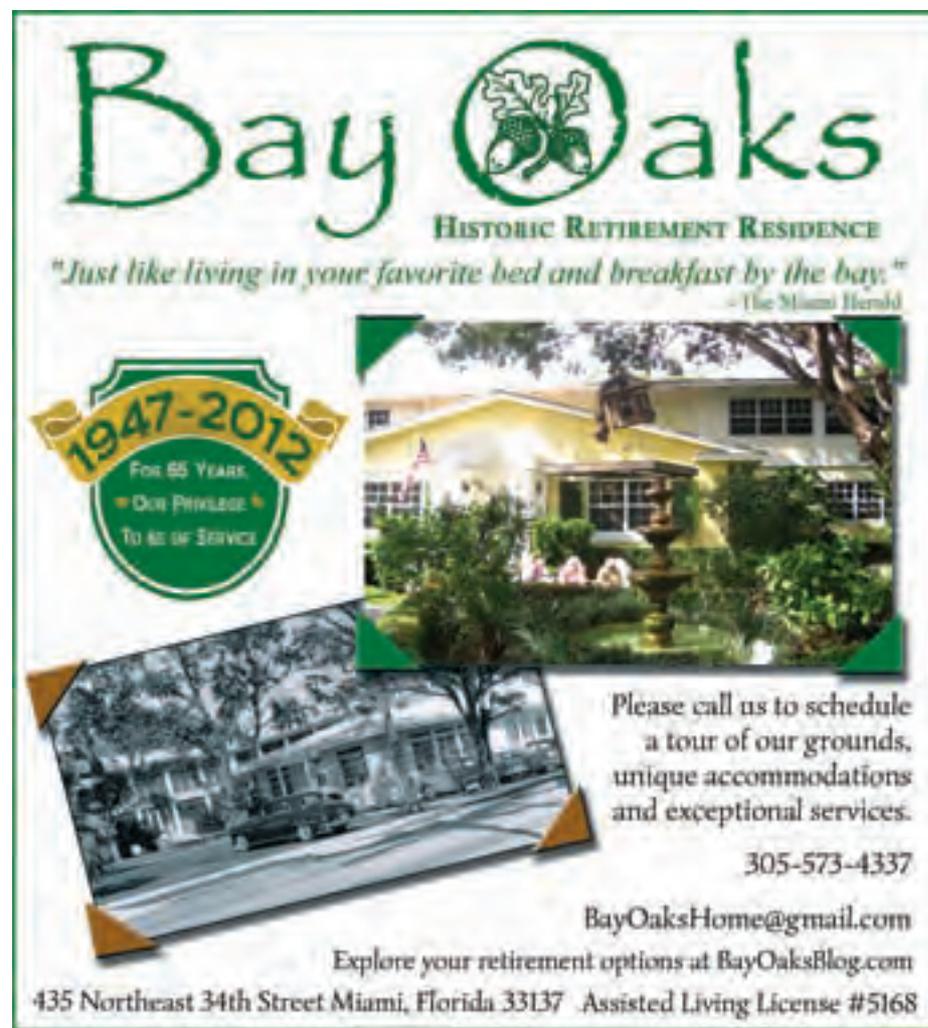
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# A Tale of Two Spaces

Commerce Park and Pocket Park are both near the Little River — that’s where the similarities end

By **Jim W. Harper**  
BT Contributor

**S**trip joint, check. Ghetto-fabulous Laundromat, check. World’s largest crack house, check. Shady corner park that is permanently closed, check.

This ‘hood and its tiny, forlorn park on the northern edge of Little Haiti has attracted the destitute and prostitutes. Too many homeless. Too many drugs. And then there was the sex gang. In the 1990s, this quarter-acre lot earned the nickname “TV Park,” a sanctuary for working transvestites who had been booted out of downtown’s Bicentennial Park. For concrete-jungle queens, NE 80th Terrace and NE 2nd Avenue was the last stop before the funeral home.

Little River Commerce Park (no joke, actual name) is a bundle of mature oak trees and benches languishing behind chain-link fencing and overshadowed by a huge, abandoned building across the street, where drug addicts and their ilk are known to gather. City of Miami spokesperson Lara De Souza says the park remains closed owing to issues related to drugs and homelessness.

Concerned BT reader PJ Mills has driven past this *parquecito* daily for

seven years and has not seen a soul inside. Mills simply wants a place to walk the dog and relax in the neighborhood. Can anybody help?

Behind the ten-foot fence, the park appears in adequate shape; in fact the City of Miami recently painted and replaced some rotten benches. Someone appears to appreciate the new digs, as evidenced by the constant presence of sleeping bags and associated rags beneath the pavilion.

While this park remains shuttered, another small park has opened nearby. Push your shopping cart down busy 79th Street, east across Biscayne Boulevard, and hang a right on 10th Avenue to find brand-new Little River Pocket Park. Because the Shorecrest area lacks services for children — no schools, no playgrounds — empty lots here had become the only place sexual offenders could live after being released from prison. (Miami-Dade County prohibits sex offenders from living near a school, park, or other place where children gather. These rules earned international attention in recent years because they forced offenders to live under a Julia Tuttle Causeway bridge.)

Similar in name and size to Commerce Park, but in every other way its opposite, Pocket Park was created with the support



BT photos by Jim W. Harper

**The name refers to the neighborhood, not the river.**

of Miami City Commissioner Marc Sarnoff for the express purpose of banning sexual offenders from living in this neighborhood, and it seems to have worked.

Can I get a what is going on here? One park opens to discourage illicit sex, while another park nearby remains closed for similar reasons? What about the children living near Commerce Park? Shouldn’t their park remain open so that sexual predators don’t settle into *their* neighborhood?

The City of Miami says it is investigating the possibility of reopening Commerce Park next year, if it can find the funds to install domino tables and other amenities to discourage unwanted elements from frequenting the park.

When the park opens, here is what you would get: shady trees and a pavilion, a water fountain, handicapped access, an outdoor coffee table fashioned from a giant stone, green benches, and quiet corners. While small in stature, this park

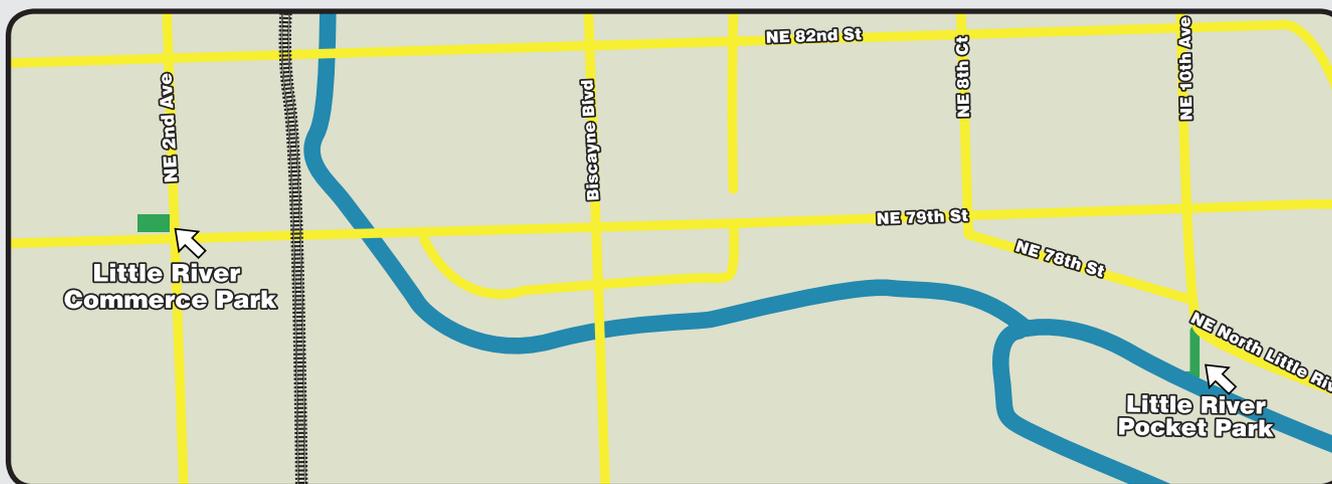
would make a huge difference to the tone of the neighborhood.

Across the street is a daycare center (okay, so they don’t need the park to enforce the sexual-offender rule). These and other nearby businesses could support the park, but they are likely intimidated by the empty monolith on the corner — the abandoned AT&T building, surrounded by barbed wire and heavy security.

This forgotten building and covered parking lot is so ugly that even the iguanas flee in terror. Why is this moldy behemoth still standing, especially when across the street are shiny new housing complexes? Remove this beast at once. Better yet, let’s have a Las Vegas-style implosion party! Bring down the House of Crack. Say farewell to the Bad Ol’ Days.

While Commerce Park has a trashy history, it deserves a clean future. But this urban wasteland sits on the wrong side of the FEC train tracks. Despite its name, the

## LITTLE RIVER COMMERCE PARK & LITTLE RIVER POCKET PARK



### Park Rating



**Commerce Park:** 181 NE 80th Terr., Miami, 305-461-7213

**Pocket Park:** 10th Avenue and NE Little River Drive, Miami, 305-461-7213

Hours: **Commerce:** closed;

**Pocket:** Sunrise to sunset

Picnic tables: **No**

Barbecues: **No**

Picnic pavilions: **Commerce only**

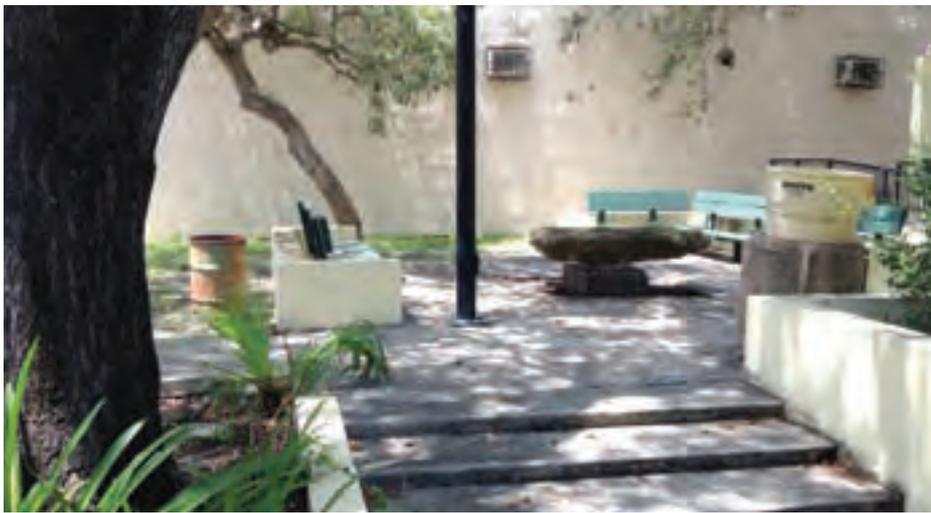
Tennis courts: **No**

Athletic fields: **No**

Night lighting: **Yes**

Swimming pool: **No**

Playground: **Pocket only (barely)**



**Shady oak trees and tranquil seating areas beckon.**

river is nowhere in sight, though the neighborhood itself is known as Little River.

On the other hand, Pocket Park has no past, but it does have the waterfront. Beautiful homes on the river can see Biscayne Bay. Over the chain-link fence of this eastside *parquecito*, a new mansion rises.

Homes along the Little River block public access, and for this reason alone the park should remain, no matter how political its origins. Its most notable feature

appears to be grabbing the river. Over the water, giant branches of two intermingling trees fan out for 30 feet in all directions, as if they were preparing to snatch a manatee.

The City of Miami spent \$8000 on upgrades to the former dead-end street. One element in need of immediate repair is the chain-link door on the seawall intended to separate the park from the private home to the east. Any child could easily swing the fence open.



**Little River Pocket Park, a bulwark against ex-cons.**

Otherwise the park has unfinished sod, one big tree, and two bouncy toys in a sandpit — a dinosaur and a tiny horse. If you stand at a certain angle, it appears that bouncy, green T-Rex is eating my springy pony.

So close, so close, and yet so far, these two parks are nonidentical, mini-me twins of Miami. Fast-tracked into existence by Commissioner Sarnoff, Pocket Park is east of the Boulevard/train track

dividing line. Commerce Park, west of the Boulevard of Broken Windows, is stuck in District 5 with Commissioner Michelle Spence-Jones.

Sex got one park to open, and sex, drugs, and poverty keep the other park closed. Children can play on the bouncy toys by the river, but near the other, darker place, they best stay indoors.

*Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com*

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# Miami Beach Home of Irving Collins: September 1926

A view of our past from the archives of HistoryMiami

By Paul S. George  
Special to the *BT*

The mighty hurricane of September 17-18, 1926, affected many parts of sprawling Dade County, none more so than Miami Beach, which felt the storm's fury first.

From Miami Beach, the storm, with winds in excess of 130 miles per hour, continued west, smashing into downtown Miami, Riverside (today's East Little Havana), and Coral Gables before crossing into the hinterland and across the Everglades.

More than 100 Dade County residents lost their lives to the storm;

thousands were left homeless; an untold number of buildings suffered severe damage and even destruction.

In this photograph, taken in the immediate aftermath of the storm, the beautiful two-story masonry home of Irving Collins, standing at 5011 Pine Tree Dr., Miami Beach, was badly damaged. Collins was one of three sons of John Collins, the founder of modern Miami Beach, who moved south from New Jersey in the early 1900s to help their father develop his vast holdings. Designed by Russell Pancoast, a prominent architect and Irving Collins's nephew, the home stood just north of John Collins's extensive avocado grove.



Photo courtesy of Miami News Collection, HistoryMiami, #1989-011-7763

Built at the outset of the 1920s, the home's "ideal" location on two waterways (the Flamingo Waterway is in the foreground of the photograph and Indian Creek is in the center), made it especially vulnerable to water surges resulting from high winds.

The damaged home was quickly rebuilt by Irving Collins, as were many other structures in a stricken community

that responded quickly and positively to a grave crisis.

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

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## VALET PARKING AVAILABLE

# Tropical Transplants

Two species of decorative plants, *Aglaonema* and *Dieffenbachia*, are well-suited for our South Florida climate

By Jeff Shimonski  
BT Contributor

From a horticultural point of view we had a great winter this year, with warmer temperatures and lots of rain. This is really evident with all the flowering trees we've been seeing for the past few months.

In fact, without a distinct dry season to make all the deciduous trees drop their foliage completely before they flower, we're seeing both flowers and foliage on trees. Perhaps the foliage blocks the flowers from view a bit, but those lush green leaves can really make the colorful flowers stand out. Just check out the royal poincianas throughout the city or on top of the parking garage at Jungle Island. That deep orange-red color is striking against the green foliage.

This has been one of the best years in my memory to see *Plumeria rubra*, or frangipani trees, in bloom. There are only a handful of species of this distinctive and fragrantly flowered tree, but with the common frangipani that we see in many home landscapes, the flowers come in red, orange, yellow, and combinations of these colors.

It's a great plant for a sunny balcony or patio. At the park, we just planted a really good red frangipani cultivar below one of our raised covered trails, so the flowers can be seen from above. There is another species, *Plumeria obtusa*, that looks like a large succulent. I've seen them grow up to ten feet tall with very distinctive white flowers. This tough,

attractive plant seems to grow well in containers, too.

Some of the other plants that benefited from a warm, wet winter were the *Aglaonemas*. This member of the malanga family is from the warmest, wettest parts of Asia and definitely does not like the cold. The 40 or so known species of this plant have been hybridized and some very colorful cultivars have been selected for the ornamental plant industry.

This is a great foliage plant for low-light situations. At Parrot Jungle we had quite a collection of wild *Aglaonema* species and their cultivars. The problem every winter was remembering to protect them if the temperatures got into the 40s. It got to the point that we mainly grew them in containers heeled into the ground so that, when necessary, we could just pull them out of the ground and get them out of the cold for a few days.

The flowers of *Aglaonema* are fairly inconspicuous, but the patterns or light-colored variegation on the foliage makes this a valued ornamental plant. There are some species with red or yellow leaves, petioles (the stalk that attaches the leaf to the stem), and even stems.

Most are easily grown from cuttings and can last for years in a pot. They are from wet, low-light, high-humidity forests, so make sure the potting soil has good drainage, but do not let them dry out. I found that, when they dry out to where the foliage begins to wilt, they will become much more susceptible to insect problems.



BT photo by Jeff Shimonski

The cold-hardy *Aglaonema* "Manila" growing at Jungle Island.

Because *Aglaonemas* need high humidity, they will not grow well in windy locations. Keep them protected in the garden or indoors. One other thing to note: The sap of all plants in this family can cause skin irritation, so handle with care.

The photo that accompanies this article is an *Aglaonema* that was collected in the Philippines in the 1970s and brought back to the U.S. for cultivation by the ornamental plant industry. The fellow who collected it eventually decided it was not a good product for the industry and gave all his plants to Parrot Jungle.

Over time I found that it was the toughest and most cold-hardy of all the *Aglaonemas* I'd ever grown. We called it *Aglaonema* "Manila." We still grow it at Jungle Island and it's still the hardiest of these plants.

Sometimes people will confuse *Aglaonema* with a closely related and similar-looking plant group called *Dieffenbachia*, or dumb cane. The dumb-cane appellation comes from the caustic nature of the plant's sap. (You never want to eat it!)

*Dieffenbachia* species are generally much larger than *Aglaonema* species, but they are just as sensitive to cold and require the same growing conditions — high humidity and low wind.

The *Dieffenbachias* came through this past winter quite well and are enjoying the rainy days. One of my favorites is a *Dieffenbachia* that can grow up to seven or eight feet tall and has large, thick leaves. Its only drawback is the sap, of course. When the foliage or a stem is broken, the plant smells like a skunk, but it still makes an excellent potted indoor plant.

If you have a low-light situation that needs a nice size plant with attractive variegated leaves, give *Dieffenbachia* or *Aglaonema* a try.

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

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# Fido's on Facebook!

Dogs have invaded the world of social media

By Lisa Hartman  
BT Contributor

There is a long-running history of people pretending their dogs are people. Of course, as a dog trainer and behavior counselor, I try to discourage this to a certain extent.

Attributing a human agenda to dogs — he's doing it just to "spite" me — when they pee on the carpet or dig out the yard after you take their favorite toy away will not train them otherwise. Nor will the dirty looks you give them to shame them from their natural dog behaviors.

But there is an epidemic in this country that shows no sign of stopping. And now, mainly for work purposes, I have succumbed to it.

My dog Saffy just got her own Twitter "hash tag" (#welovesaffy). The reason? With so many projects on the burner — new book, training, events, company — my friend Dr. Cindy thought I needed to be on Twitter, tweeting my public. (Of course, as I'm new to Twitter, I only have a following of 34.)

Facebook is a different story. I've been on Facebook for a few years and have around 4600 "friends." My Facebook friends are some of the most



interesting, funny, and sweet people I have come across. They "like" my pictures and postings. They leave kind comments about my daily training exploits and pet causes.

My Facebook friends are dogs. Yes, the dogs write me, comment, and leave

encouragement for me to carry on my mission. The dogs on Facebook have their own pet lingo, a cute canine language all their own. Even I had no idea dogs were so talented! I also didn't know what dogs sounded like when they spoke human until Facebook.

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As an example, here is a message I received from my friend Molly McDoodle: "Awe Miff Wisa, thank you for helping da puppies at da shelta I used to reside at. I wuff you. Licks and kisses, Molly."

As I was leaving for work the other day, my friend Fluffy Von Flufferton instant-messaged me — these animals have computer skills, too — and wished me a "pawsitively purrrfect" day! How nice!

I regularly interact on social media with my other friends: Woody Alava, a teeny apricot poodle who is the mascot for our new canine camp endeavor in the Hamptons; and Bocker Labradoodle, the handsome canine who stars in many commercials and films.

I find it interesting that not only are the dogs talking to and interacting with humans, they are also uploading and editing photos, attending parties, and hobnobbing with celebrities. But what I find most interesting is that there are human ventriloquists behind the scenes giving prose to these animals. It's funny to know that it's not kids who are posting pages on social media sites for their dogs and cats, but rather people who are usually 40 years old or older!

Now, I do admit that I come up with ideas of what my hairless Chinese Crested might be thinking; she always has a sparkle in her eye, making me believe she is plotting something fiendish, like how to catch the bunny in the yard. My Dalmatian, however, is a dog of few words and less deviousness. He wears his heart on his sleeve (spots?) and thus I don't imagine him speaking much, except maybe for a quick "Thanks, Mom!" when he kisses me after the beach or meals. I have not gone to the extent yet of writing posts for my dogs on Facebook. Not that there is anything wrong with that.

Or is there? It's funny the role that dogs are playing in our lives. They are our surrogate children, our friends, and our personal cheering squads. We really get a glimpse of owners, what they personally need and want, from social media — straight from the dog's mouth.

**We really get a glimpse of owners, what they personally need and want, from social media.**

As my friend Sir Wolfy Da Wigglebutt wrote recently about his mom: "Oh boy, I have da best mummy eva! She make me yummy tweets and lets me snuggle in da bed wif her!"

Another canine friend wrote that their daddy "rocks" and thanked him for rescuing them and giving them "the best life eva!" What appreciative dogs we have! And while I chuckle about the idea of dogs on social media, I *am* carrying

on a dialogue with these dogs.

And so while my little dog Saffy does not post on Facebook (she

can't, because for one thing, she uses curse words when frustrated), she *is* on Twitter. She is a junior camp counselor at canine camp in the Hamptons when she's not assisting my dog training classes, modeling at photo shoots for one of my endeavors, or just "being seen" around town. She doesn't speak; rather, we just "discover her," as the Twitter lingo goes,

following her daily exploits.

I believe people posing as their dogs on social media is good, clean, harmless fun. The people who write for their dogs seem to love them very much and certainly seem to take care of them. These dogs have lots of "friends" (Bocker Labradoodle has over 5000, thus requiring him to have a fan club and be referred to as a "public figure").

They hang out at beaches and hip restaurants with their wonderful owners. They go for hikes through national parks and swim in lakes, then have the pictures uploaded to prove it. In this regard, social media compels pet owners to do things with their dogs, and that, again, is a good thing.

Overall, I think Facebook might help our pets lead better lives. That is, as long as they don't spend too much time on the computer.

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

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# That Sinking Feeling

It's time for local educators to teach our children that sea-level rise is a reality, and what to do about it

By **Jim W. Harper**  
BT Contributor

The first day of school is terrifying — for a new teacher. I remember riding the bus from Manhattan into the South Bronx in 1990, headed toward Intermediate School 162, and taking advice from the guy sitting next to me. “Play a game,” he said. Those words saved me on Day One.

Good teachers plan weeks and months ahead, like a northern squirrel gathering nuts, so that they never run out of sustenance for the little ones. This summer, educators of all stripes have to gather and choose nuggets of knowledge about the most important issue of the century, and it's not the economy.

Teachers also need wisdom to see that spending more time teaching about the environment now offers insurance against the woes, both natural and economic, that will surely confront our children in the future.

Will our children acquire the necessary skills and knowledge to adapt to a rapidly changing climate? Last century we taught children to hide under desks in preparation for a nuclear attack from the Soviet Union. This century we need to teach children how to climb onto the roof when the floods come.

Sound absurd? Some parents will mock teachers for playing the role of Noah, the prophet of destruction, but those teachers will get the last, morbid

laugh. Principals and teachers across South Florida must begin transmitting this harsh truth: Our home is slowly sinking underwater. Within our students' lifetimes, and possibly within ours, the sea will rise and permanently flood our flat state. We can resist foul weather and rising temperatures, but the rising tide cannot be stopped.

Hurricane Andrew, anyone? While we sigh a breath of relief each November at the end of hurricane season (with fingers crossed for this year), the slow-motion destruction of sea-level rise has no foreseeable end. It has been measured for 80 years, adding up to nine inches in South Florida, and the rate of rise keeps getting faster and faster. Current estimates for Florida show sea-level rise up to two feet within 50 years. Once we start measuring sea level in feet, say goodbye to South Florida. Hello, swampland.

The good news about this bad news is that we have time to educate and prepare our children for the coming transition. Why is this happening? Whose fault is it? Why didn't we prevent this from happening?

Frankly, children, Americans — and Floridians, in particular — are like the masses who laughed at Noah while he built the ark. We didn't believe it could happen to us, to our world, to our home. We couldn't believe that the places we return to day after day could be so easily washed away. To us, the place we called home felt so permanent.



We have seen the enemy and the enemy is invisible. Called greenhouse gases, this enemy is released every time you start a car or turn on a computer. Because these activities happen across the globe billions of times a day, every day, the cumulative effect is choking our planet and changing the climate at an unnaturally rapid rate.

We were taught that climate is stable. That is so last century.

If I were riding the bus and sitting next to a couple of new teachers today, I wouldn't tell them to frighten the children with doomsday statistics and Mayan-calendar countdowns. Yet they shouldn't avoid the truth, either. I'd suggest a game that involves going outdoors. Ask the children to find a leaf or to invent a name for a bug. Ask them to compare the humidity outside to the air-conditioned world inside.

Principals: Establish a week to study the ocean or the Everglades. Embrace energy-saving challenges from local nonprofit Dream In Green. Launch a recycling club. Create a task force to transition your school and community to alternative, nonpolluting energy sources.

Show your students that you care about the changes taking place that will make their lives a challenge in the future. Show them that, even if we end up losing South Florida to the flood, the rest of the planet is worth saving.

Are we really going under? Yes, even if we can't see it. We know that, historically, South Florida has alternated between being underwater and being drier than today. A natural cycle might take us underwater in a thousand years or so, but an unnatural cycle puts the time frame at decades instead of centuries.

The wrench in this prediction is that something very unexpected could happen within the next 50 years to divert our attention from the sea-level issue. We cannot wait for that catastrophe to happen — for a bomb to drop — before we take action. The climate should not be changing, but it is. We have to start expecting the unexpected.

Our side won the Cold War. Now our teachers must guide us with diligence into the battle of the Hot War.

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

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# No Pool? No Problem!

Some suggestions for cooling off with the kids this summer

By Crystal Brewé  
BT Contributor

In Scottsdale, Arizona, where I spent my childhood, *everyone* had a swimming pool. My family spent three years with an enormous muddy hole in our backyard that recalled the final scene in *Poltergeist*.

My parents built our beautiful house, but the construction of our swimming pool was halted due to cash flow. When the monsoon rains came through, I could swear there were headstones and caskets floating in the murky depths of our “swimming hole.”

Summer temperatures regularly lingered above 110 degrees and, without a periodic dip between Popsicles and water balloons, the season could be brutal. My brothers and I became skilled at “pool hopping” — friends’ pools, recreation centers, hotels, and even vacationing neighbors’ pools were all fair game. We had a rating system, certain towels for certain pools — so we matched the natives — and code words for quick escapes. We were pros.

I wouldn’t recommend this behavior as a good example for your children, but many of my friends and neighbors in Miami don’t have swimming pools, and while temperatures rarely climb above 100, the summer is no less brutal than in Arizona. Sure, the ocean is always nearby, but the idea of packing up the kids, the sand toys, the sunscreen, an umbrella, and making the pilgrimage for

a parking spot only to combat riptides, Portuguese Man-of-War, and sand fleas seems like too much work for the payoff.

Ignore hotel pools. That hidden world of tropical, palm-fringed blue water in the shape of paisleys, kidneys, and lagoons can be tempting, but even if you manage to avoid being arrested in front of your children or getting kicked to the curb by hotel management, you will likely end up broke after the \$21 hot dogs and \$17 lemonades.

At most area luxury hotels, a family of four sticks out like a sore thumb next to the reality TV stars, models, and Euro-debauchees. Just let the *untz, untz, untz* trance rhythms be a warning to you that only registered guests may enter.

With insatiable aquanaut kids, I took a recent poll on what our friends without pools do to cool off in the summer:

Flamingo Park is a beautifully landscaped, state-of-the-art aquatic facility so popular with the little ones that it can sometimes be difficult to get in. The water playground is a zero to 15-inch depth, and there’s an interactive/play pool and locker rooms with showers, lounge chairs, and Sunbrellas. The small fee for non-Miami Beach residents is totally worth it, but it’s imperative to make it there early on weekends as the throngs of residents have made the Flamingo Park pool as popular as Liquid nightclub was in the 1990s. See: [www.miamibeachfl.gov/parksandrecreation](http://www.miamibeachfl.gov/parksandrecreation).

My girls regularly gush about the princess qualities of the 820,000-gallon



Venetian Pool in Coral Gables. Created in 1923 from a rock quarry, the pool is fed with spring water from an underground aquifer. The waterfalls are a great scenic backdrop, as are the grottos, which provide a fun, fantasy-island experience. If your kids are under the age of three, though, don’t even think about making the jaunt. They are ferocious enforcers of the age limit. For info: [www.VenetianPool.com](http://www.VenetianPool.com)

If you’ve driven on Biscayne Boulevard north of the MiMo Historic District, one of your children in the backseat has probably screamed, “I want to go *there!*” They’re talking about Miami Shores Village Shipwreck Cove.

We arrived in Miami five years ago and quickly discovered this beacon on the Boulevard is open only to Miami Shores residents. The sad discovery came when my two-year-old daughter Matilda and I were expelled by the 16-year-old lifeguard.

Matilda was in the throes of a full-fledged tantrum on the hot asphalt parking lot when a benevolent Miami Shores resident and her well-behaved two-year-old took mercy on us and brought us in as their guests. In retrospect, this woman must have been a siren, allowing us a

taste of the forbidden fruit so close to our own neighborhood, but so out of reach. Details: [miamishoresvillage.com/rec/ac](http://miamishoresvillage.com/rec/ac).

Depending on the ages of your children, there are a couple of other highly rated water parks in the Greater Miami area: Rapids Water Park ([www.rapidswaterpark.com](http://www.rapidswaterpark.com)) and Grapeland Water Park ([www.miamigov.com/parks/pages/grapeland](http://www.miamigov.com/parks/pages/grapeland)).

Finally, while trekking the 300 acres of Zoo Miami might not seem an attractive outing for the family on a July afternoon, the zoo formerly known as “Metro” has strategically placed misters throughout the grounds for cooling off during your visit. The kids love running from sprinkler to sprinkler and dancing in the mist, or pedaling the four-person bicycles directly under the poles for a spritz. Zoo Miami also features several water play areas. We never make a zoo trip without the bathing suits! Use the old web address: [www.miamimetrozoo.com](http://www.miamimetrozoo.com).

For some, options may be limited to an inflatable in the backyard, but where there is a will and a creative parent, there is a cooler, wetter way.

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# Wines to Grill and Chill With

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

By Bill Citara  
BT Contributor

Yes, it's that time of year again. Time for the ritual Charring of the Flesh, the American male's annual rite of passage from indolent, red-blooded sofa tuber to Lord and Master of the Backyard Incinerator, Desiccator of Innocent Animal Protein, Consumer of Multiple Chilled Adult Beverages, Igniter of Noisy Combustible Devices Known to Annoy Neighbors and Frighten Dogs and Small Children.

In other words, it's time for Dad to kick off the summer season by firing up the grill for the Fourth of July barbecue. But it doesn't sound quite so grand when you put it that way, does it?

Whatever your skill at the grill (or lack of same), whether your patriotic repast more resembles charcoal chicken sushi than dinner at Arthur Bryant's in Kansas City, it's likely your first choice for an appropriate chilled adult beverage is that four-letter word beginning with "b." And though your average, mass-produced corporate behemoth American beer is better suited to putting out grease fires than, you know, drinking, there are some pretty fine beers out there.

But let us instead consider wine. It not only tastes great and is less filling, but it goes with just about any food. It also allows you to save any beer you might have lurking around in the fridge for dousing your five-alarm napalm burgers

before the fire department arrives.

A fine example is one of my new favorite wines, the **2010 Kendall-Jackson Summation**. Mostly Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay, Viognier, and Pinot Blanc, it's damn near the perfect summertime white. It's got a lovely nose of tropical fruit, honeysuckle, and melon aromas, with a palate to match, plus a little orange, peach, lime, and spice. Full body, creamy texture, lingering finish — what's not to like?

A little more acid, a little less fruit, but still tons of flavor is the deal with the **2010 A to Z Oregon Pinot Gris**. Take one whiff and you get the idea — there's some mango and pear in there, some honey, lemon-lime, a bracing shot of minerality. It's still young and taut, with a tangy grapefruit finish, but between nose and back palate, you get all that rich, tropical melon and citrus fruit.

Provence is to rosé what the Napa Valley is to Cabernet Sauvignon, so no big surprise that the **Domaine de Paris 2010 Côtes de Provence Rosé** is as natural a partner to grilling as quality hardwood charcoal. A pretty reddish-gold in the glass, it smells of ripe strawberries and fresh oranges — tastes of them, too — in a crisp, refreshing, light-bodied package that makes for easy sippin' by itself or a pleasant companion to grilled fish or chicken.

On the earthier, more rustic side is **Marqués de Cáceres 2010 Rioja Rosé**. The strawberries and raspberries, tangy

lemon, and orange are all in there, but there are also muskier notes of olives and leather. Juicy and earthy, light- to medium-bodied, it splits a few differences.

Now we come to the big boys, the beefy reds that can stand up to meats tricked out with all the smoke, sauce, and char a good grill master can impart. Here's a tip: Immediately run out and buy the **2010 Tapeña Garnacha**. Do that today. It costs all of ten bucks, and you can get it at Publix. With loads of ripe, fresh-tasting red- and black-cherry fruit, a spice cabinet's worth of aromatic cloves and fennel, a hint of earth, and a dash of minerals, it's one of the most complex and pleasant inexpensive wines I've tasted in a while.

Another run-out-and-buy wine is the **Bodegas Salentein's 2010 Portillo Malbec**, from Argentina's Mendoza wine region. Many Malbecs have a rough, woody edge that I can do without, but this one is smooth and fruity and easy to like. Think blackberry and blueberry fruit, dried figs, anise, and cloves in a big, mouth-filling gulp, yet with enough acidity and soft tannins to keep all that fruit honest.

Finally, if you like old-vine Zinfandels, but don't like your palate



The excellent Tapeña Garnacha and Bodegas Salentein Malbec can be found at the Biscayne Commons Publix (14641 Biscayne Blvd., 305-354-2171) for \$9.99 and \$10.99. Across the Boulevard, Total Wine has the A to Z Pinot Gris for \$11.99. ABC Fine Wine & Spirits (16355 Biscayne Blvd., 305-944-6525) has the Domaine de Paris Rosé for \$9.99, the Bramblewood Zin for \$10.99, and the Kendall-Jackson Summation for \$11.99. The Marqués de Cáceres Rioja Rosé is at Crown Wine and Spirits (12555 Biscayne Blvd., 305-892-9463) for \$9.99.

sandblasted with overripe fruit and vodka-style alcohol levels, check out the terrific **2010 Bramblewood Old Vines Zin**. A J. Lohr product from Lodi in California's Central Valley, it delivers bracing aromas of dried fruit and olives and toast and black pepper — all without that syrupy, port-like texture of many old-vine Zins, and with only 13 percent alcohol.

Now, that's something even the Lord and Master of the Backyard Incinerator can't screw up.

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# Open, Almost Open, Open to Suggestions

Food news we know you can use

By **Pamela Robin Brandt**  
BT Contributor

Promises, promises. If I had a nickel for every time a Miami restaurant opening was scheduled for a certain date and didn't happen till months, even years later, I could actually afford to eat at all of them, even the fanciest.

Which is a fancy way of saying that, though several openings have been expected recently, there haven't been many real recent restaurant openings in BT territory. Prime among the anticipated is **Shokudo**, a pan-Asian place from the World Resource folks, projected to open just north of the Design District in April.

Another is **Brother Jimmy's BBQ**, which was supposed to open in Brickell mid-May, then mid-June, now mid-July with a preview block party July 4. We'll see...

But there have been even fewer recent closings we could find — none, if you don't count the eight **Bayside Market-place** establishments shut down by state health inspectors for infractions including live roaches and rodent poo in the kitchen. After some frantic scrubbing and spraying, all of them reopened the next day.

## OPENINGS

**Tiny Thai House** (12953 Biscayne Blvd., 305-895-1646). In the space that once housed Carolina Lowcountry Caribbean fusion chef Marvin Woods's M Woods,

this just-opened Thai/sushi place is run by veterans of a locally well-known similar spot. However, their name must not be mentioned for mysterious legal reasons.

The menu is still being tweaked, but the house's specialties are the Thai dishes. As the big-screen TV implies, it can double as a sports bar, but is, most of the time, serene.

**Iron Side Café** (7600 NE 4th Ct., 305-795-0551). Iron Side is not really new, but it's so hidden away — with weird hours, to boot — that I missed its opening earlier this year. The restaurant is nevertheless such a fun place to spend a summer Saturday night that I want to clue in everyone else who hasn't found it.

In the newly and optimistically named "Industrial Business District" just west of the MiMo Historic District, the café is secreted inside a sprawling, sustainably green, "mixed-use campus" of adjoining warehouses developed by Ofer Mizrahi, founder of Coverings Etc., arts patron, innovator.

The indoor/outdoor café itself offers global dishes using local ingredients, brought to you by chef Nuno Grillon and partner Fernando Nascimento, both formerly of Metro Organic Bistro, and it fits right in with the eco-friendly theme of the campus. Hours are lunch-only on weekdays, then Saturday night from 8:00 p.m. on, when the menu changes to BBQ (featuring grass-fed beef from nearby Gaucho Ranch) and the ambiance to Bohemian party.



Courtesy of Iron Side Café

**Saturday night at Iron Side Café: Bohemian barbecue bash.**

## SIDE DISH

At **The Federal Food Drink & Provisions** (5132 Biscayne Blvd., 305-758-9559) "bar wench" Ani Meinhold and "puppet master" Alejandro Ortiz will be presenting "Women Who Wine," a series of Saturday-evening tastings for women only, all summer long. Classes, which begin at 4:30 p.m., include five wines and paired nibbles for \$35 per person; call 305-758-9559 to reserve. (Sorry, guys. But women do choose and buy eight out of every ten bottles of wine drunk at home, according to Ani. So you'll benefit from her increased savvy.)

Starting July 5, customers at almost 5600 Taco Bell joints throughout the USA will get to sample some serious Miami Latin eats, via an upscaled Cantina Bell menu created by local chef **Lorena Garcia** (a *Top Chef Masters* contestant and owner of Lorena Garcia Cocina at MIA). The more health and quality-conscious new menu, featuring items like citrus/herb-marinated chicken and a burrito bowl, is already being compared to Chipotle's. But Garcia points out that it's more affordable, with items costing several dollars less.

What to expect at the **Upper East Side Farmers Market** this month (every Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Biscayne Blvd. and 66th St.): From farms here in scorching South Florida, fewer veggies but lots of tropical fruit, including both yellow and purple passion fruit for taste testers. Herbs do just fine, too, says Yorkys Rodriguez Mojica of Bodhi's Garden; you'll find her booth behind Urban Oasis Project's main produce stand.

Tip: Grab a papalo (Bolivian coriander) plant. These ancient precursors to cilantro, reputed to also control blood pressure, go fast. And those for whom summer means corn and tomatoes, both out of season here, needn't worry. While the market favors local farms, it does get some veggies from northern Florida and the Carolinas during the dog days. There's even one plus, says market manager Art Friedrich: All imports are certified organic.

Finally, see this issue's "**BizBuzz**" (page 30) for more restaurant news from BT advertisers Adelita's Café, Bagels & Company, Barrel Wine Cantine, Café 46, Il Piccolo Café, Kitchen 305, Mike's at Venetia, and Turnberry Isle.

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# Dining Guide

## Restaurant Listings

The Biscayne Corridor's most comprehensive restaurant guide. Total this month: 308.

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 rijsttafel, 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 haloumi, 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 space as its "casual hotel restaurant," many consider it a more spectacular dining setting than the upscale Azul, upstairs, opting 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,

### MIAMI

#### BRICKELL / DOWNTOWN

**D-Dog House**  
50 SW 10th St., 305-381-7770

While it has become increasingly common to find servers at upscale restaurants utilizing computerized POS (point of service) systems to take orders, this high-tech hole-in-the-wall trumps them by replacing servers – and in-house entertainment, too – with iPads that accept not just food orders and credit cards but music requests. You can web surf or game, too, while waiting for your choice of the house specialty: supersized hot dogs, most overloaded with internationally inspired toppings. To accompany, hand-cut fries are a must. And have a cocktail. There's a full liquor bar. \$-\$\$

**Dominique Bistro-Club**  
1451 S. Miami Ave., 305-371-8859

At typical restoulounges, the "resto" part often gets the short end of the stick. But not at this chic but friendly spot, where Gerardo Barrera, an alumn of Paris's Le Cordon Bleu, plus his wife Dominique and her brother José Sigona, welcome diners with France's best-known bistro classics: coquilles St. Jacques (tender scallops in mushroom/white wine sauce); a precision-cooked entrecôte rib-eye with Bearnaise or complex Café de Paris butter; crème brûlée (from scratch) or macaron cookies (from heaven). No velvet ropes, and club music isn't cranked till 11:00 p.m. \$\$\$

#### MIDTOWN / WYNWOOD / DESIGN DISTRICT

**El Bajareque**  
278 NW 36th St., 305-576-5170

Dozens of little Latin American eateries, all looking almost identically iffy, line 36th Street. But this family-owned "bajareque" (shack) is one where you definitely want to stop for some of Miami's most tasty, and inexpensive, Puerto Rican home cooking, from mondongo (an allegedly hangover-curing soup) to mofongo, a plantain/chicharron mash with varied toppings plus garlicky mojo. Housemade snacks are irresistible, too, and great take-out party fare: pork-studded pasteles, similar to Cuban tamals but with a tuber rather than corn masa dough, or empanadas with savory shrimp stuffing. \$

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 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. \$\$\$

**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:

### UPPER EASTSIDE

**RiverShack**  
620 NE 78th St., 305-758-2929

After deciding that today's trends favor creative, chef-driven restaurants, rather than ethnic cuisines, Gigi and Liza Meoli (famed for their Greek eateries) closed their Anise Taverna and, with chef/partner David Long, reopened in the same riverside shack as a gentrified, slightly Hispanic-influenced rural American gastropub. Hope lingers that the chef may feel driven someday to revive even one mixed meze platter, but fare like shrimp and grits with goat cheese, brisket empanadas, pesto-buttered grilled corn, and banana bacon bread pudding seem right for the rustic Old South setting. \$\$

### NORTH MIAMI

**Il Piccolo Café**  
2112 NE 123rd St., 305-893-6538

Talk about a neighborhood institution. The owners of this longtime Italian eatery remember frequent visits from Miami native Michelle Bernstein and her parents – when the celebrity chef was a kid. The place is still child-friendly, and though the "piccolo" space is indeed small, portions are prodigious. Most dishes will evoke nostalgia, including our own favorite white-wine-sauce-drenched sin – lemony egg-battered veal piccata with capers and artichokes. But there are surprises not found at most old school red-sauce joints, too, like lunchtime's surprisingly tasty Cuban sandwich. \$\$

### NORTH MIAMI BEACH

**KoneFood**  
387 NE 167th St., 305-705-4485

Cones contain ice cream. Kones, however, contain anything and everything edible – at least at this eatery, locally founded (though the original concept of ultimate portable convenience meals, in sealed flatbread cones, came from Italy). In their melting-pot American version, kone fillings range from breakfast items like huevos rancheros to Thai chicken, chicken curry, coconut shrimp, kones kon lechon (slow-roasted pork with mojo), various pizzas, BBQ, chicken Florentine, healthy green salads, more. There are even desserts like a flambéed apple Kone à la Normande. Authentic Belgian frites, too. \$

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 ambience 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. \$\$

**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

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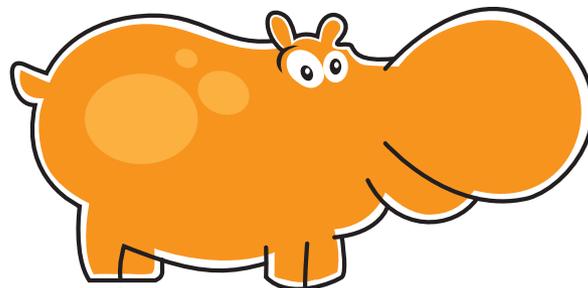
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find it. (Hint: The mysterious "Avenue of the Americas" is really Biscayne Boulevard Way. Don't ask.) Downtown's db is an absentee celeb chef outpost, but on-site kitchen wizard Jarrod Verbiak flawlessly executes dishes ranging from the original NYC 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 *méthode Champenoise* brew). But for those favoring solid snacks, tasty global smallish plates include fried fresh zucchini with dip (cheese recommended); chorizo with homemade cilantro Mayo; or steak tacos, served Mexican-style with onions, cilantro, and spicy salsa. Sadly for breakfast-brew enthusiasts, the DRB isn't open that early. But it is open late – till 5:00 a.m. \$\$

#### Dolores, But You Can Call Me Lolita 1000 S. Miami Ave., 305-403-3103

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

#### Edge, Steak & Bar 1435 Brickell Ave., 305-358-5355

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 crisply beer-battered moist cod, served with hand-cut fries and "mushy [mashed] peas," plus housemade 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 horseradish 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 historical 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. \$\$

#### Frattelli Milano 217 SE 1st St., 305-373-2300

Downtown isn't yet a 24/7 urban center, but it's experiencing a mini explosion of eateries open at night. That includes this family-owned ristorante, where even newcomers feel at home. At lunch it's almost impossible to resist panini, served on focaccia or crunchy ciabatta; even the vegetarian version bursts with complex and complementary flavors. During weekday dinners, try generous plates of risotto with shrimp and grilled asparagus; home-made pastas like seafood-packed fettuccine alla scogliolo; or delicate Vitello alla Milanese on arugula. \$\$-\$\$\$

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

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

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

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

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

This expansive indoor/outdoor Brazilian eatery is sleekly contemporary, but no worries. The classic sword-wielding

## Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

gauchos are here, serving a mind-reeling assortment of skewered beef, chicken, lamb, pork, sausages, and fish. And included in the price (dinner \$47, lunch \$34) is the traditional belly-busting buffet of hot and cold prepared foods, salad, cold cuts, and cheeses. A pleasant, non-traditional surprise: unusual sauces like sweet/tart passion fruit or mint, tomato-based BBQ, and mango chutney, along with the ubiquitous chimichurri. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

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

As with South Beach's original Half Moon, you can get wraps or salads. But it's this snackery's unique take on Argentine-style empanadas that makes it seem a natural for national franchising. The soft-crust, doughy crescents – baked, not fried, so relatively guilt-free – are amply stuffed with fillings both classic (beef and chicken, either mild or spicy) and creative: the bacon cheeseburger, the pancetta/mozzarella/plum-filled Americana, and several vegetarian options. At just over two bucks apiece, they're a money-saving moveable feast. \$

#### 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

Its location 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 the 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. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

#### 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 alternative 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 quiets the munchies like a Crazy Burger, a Colombian take on a trucker's burger: beef patty, bacon, ham, mozzarella, lettuce, tomato, and a fried egg, with an arepa corn pancake "bun." While this tiny place's late hours (till 6:00 a.m. Friday and Saturday) are surprising, the daytime menu is more so. In addition to Colombian classics, there's a salad Nicoise with grilled fresh tuna, seared salmon with mango salsa, and other yuppie favorites. \$-\$\$

#### La Provence 1064 Brickell Ave. 786-425-9003

Great baguettes in the bread basket, many believe, indicate a great meal to come. But when Miamians encounter such bread – crackling crust outside; moist, aromatic, aerated interior – it's likely not from a restaurant's own kitchen, but from La Provence. Buttery croissants and party-perfect pastries are legend too. Not so familiar is the bakery's café component, whose sandwich/salad menu reflects local eclectic tastes. But French items like pan bagnats (essentially salade Nicoise on artisan bread) will truly transport diners to co-owner David Thau's Provençal homeland. \$\$

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## Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

### **La Sandwicherie** 34 SW 8th St., 305-374-9852

This second location of the open-air diner that is South Beach's favorite après-club eatery (since 1988) closes earlier (midnight Sunday-Thursday, 5:00 a.m. Friday and Saturday), but the smoothies, salads, and superb Parisian sandwiches are the same: ultra-crusty baguette stuffed with evocative charcuterie and cheeses (saucisson sec, country pâté, camembert, etc.) and choice of salad veggies plus salty/tart cornichons and Sandwicherie's incomparable Dijon mustard vinaigrette. Additionally the larger branch has an interior, with a kitchen enabling hot foods (quiches and croques), plus A/C. \$-\$

### **Le Boudoir Brickell** 188 SE 12th Terr., 305-372-233

At this French bakery/café, mornings start seriously, with choices ranging from quality cheese, charcuterie/pâté, or smoked salmon platters to chic Continental and complete American breakfasts. At lunch, generously salad-garnished, open-faced tartines are irresistible. But sophisticated salads and homemade soups make the choice tough. And do not skip dessert. Superb sweets include rich almond/fresh raspberry or properly tangy lemon tarts, traditional Madeleines, airy layered mousses, and addictive mini-macaron sandwich cookies with daily-changing fillings. \$-\$

### **Lime Fresh Mexican Grill**

1 W. Flagler St., Suite 7, 305-789-9929  
(See Midtown / Wynwood / Design District listing.)

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

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

### **LouLou Le Petit Bistro** 638 S. Miami Ave., 305-379-1404

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

### **Martini 28** 146 SE 1st Ave., 305-577-4414

This stylish little lunch-only spot, a labor of love from a husband-wife chef team, serves what might well be the most impressive meal deal in town. From an ambitious, daily-changing menu of fare that's geographically eclectic but prepared with solid classic technique, diners get a choice of about ten entrées (substantial stuff like steak au poivre with Madeira cream sauce and roasted potatoes, or pignolia-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 week-day lunch special of jerk chicken with festival (sweet-fried cornmeal bread patties), but even vegetarians are well served with dishes like a tofu, carrot, and chayote curry. All entrées come with rice and peas, fried plantains, and salad, so no one leaves hungry. \$

### **Mint Leaf** 1063 SE 1st Ave., 305-358-5050

Part of London's famous Woodlands Group, this stylish spot, like its Coral Gables parent, serves the sort of upscale Indian food rarely found outside Great Britain or India. More interestingly, the menu includes not just the familiar northern Indian "Mughlai" fare served in most of America's Indian restaurants, but refined versions of south India's scrumptious street food. We've happily assembled whole meals of the vegetarian chaat (snacks) alone. And dosai (lacy rice/lentil crepes rolled around fillings ranging from traditional onion/potato to lamb masala or spicy chicken) are so addictive they oughta be illegal. \$\$\$

### **Miss Yip Chinese Café** 900 Biscayne Blvd., 305-358-0088

Fans of the South Beach original will find the décor different. Most notably, there's an outdoor lounge, and more generally a nightclub atmosphere. But the menu of Hong Kong-style Chinese food, prepared by imported Chinese cooks, is familiar. Simple yet sophisticated Cantonese seafood dishes rock (try the lightly battered salt-and-pepper shrimp), as does orange peel chicken, spicy/tangy rather than overly sweet. And a single two-course Peking duck (skin in crepes, stir-fried meat and veggies with lettuce cups) makes mouthwatering finger food, shared among friends. \$\$\$

### **Naoe** 661 Brickell Key Dr., 305-947-6263

Chances are you've never had anything like the \$85 prix-fixe Japanese dinners at chef Kevin Cory's tiny but nationally acclaimed oasis, transplanted from its original Sunny Isles space with its supreme serenity intact. By reservation only, in two dinner seatings of just eight people each, and omakase (chef's choice) only, meals include a seasonal soup, a four-course bento box, eight pieces of sushi, and three desserts. Cory personally does everything for you, even applying the perfect amount of housemade artisan soy sauce mix and fresh-grated wasabi to each mind-reelingly fresh nigiri. Few eating experiences on earth are more luxuriant. \$\$\$

### **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. \$\$\$

### **Novecento** 1414 Brickell Ave., 305-403-0900

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

### **Oceanaire Seafood Room** 900 S. Miami Ave., 305-372-8862

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

### **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. \$\$\$

### **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. \$-\$

### **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. \$\$

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## Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

### 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. \$\$

### Pier 94

94 SE 1st St., 305-379-5652  
Tucked into "The Village," a collection of courtyard eateries far from any waterfront, this ceviche bar specializes in fresh seafood dishes from chef/owner Alex Del Corral's native Peru, but also features famous Peruvian meat and poultry dishes (including a refined aji de gallina, chicken in aji pepper-spiced cream sauce). Emphasis is particularly strong on Peru's penchant for fusion food, including traditional Chifa (Chinese-Peruvian) rice or noodle stir-fries. But the chef also fuses classic and creative influences. Try contemporary causas, combining Peru's favorite starch, potatoes, with unique new sauces. \$\$

### 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 fraffe, 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 buffalo 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 Lucanica sausage and a balsamic reduction. Or maybe an even more evocative Roman ice cream tartufo? Mangia! \$\$\$

### Soi Asian Bistro

134 NE 2nd Ave., 305-523-3643  
From the owners of Calle Ocho's hip Mr. Yum and 2B Asian Bistro, Soi sports similar casual-chic ambiance and eclectic Thai/Japanese cuisine. Traditional Thai curries and familiar sushi rolls are prepared with solid skill and style. But most intriguing are new inventions adding Peruvian fusion flair to the Asian mix, such as a spicy, tangy tangle of crisp-fried yellow noodles with sautéed shrimp plus slivered peppers and onions – mod mee krob, with jalea-like tart heat replacing the cloying sweetness. \$\$

### Soya & Pomodoro

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

### Sparky's Roadside Restaurant & Bar

204 NE 1st St., 305-377-2877  
This cowboy-cute eatery's chefs/owners (one CIA-trained, both BBQ fanatics nicknamed Sparky) eschew regional purism, instead utilizing a hickory/apple-wood-stoked rotisserie smoker to turn out their personalized style of slow-cooked, 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? \$\$

### 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. \$\$

### Trapiche Room

1109 Brickell Ave., 305-329-3656  
With multiple Marriott hotels in Brickell and downtown, one of them housing high-profile db Bistro, it's not surprising that this small, second-floor restaurant is something of a "best kept secret." But it deserves discovery. Chef Maria Tobar hasn't Daniel Boulud's fame, but she does have classic European-type technical skills, combined with contemporary creativity that turns even ultimately old-fashioned items, like a pork/cabbage strudel, into 21st century fine-dining fare. Both décor



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## Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

and service, similarly, are swlegant, not stuffy, and the room's intimacy makes it a romantic spot for special occasions. \$\$\$

### Tre Italian Bistro 270 E. Flagler St., 305-373-3303

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

### Truluck's Seafood, Steak, and Crabhouse 777 Brickell Ave., 305-579-0035

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

### 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-reelingly multidimensional oyster pan stew, or tartare of tuna and burblingly 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 house-made 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's take on tostones), rich meal-in-a-bowl soups packed with seafood or meat and veggies, and more. \$

### Barrel Wine Cantine 3622 NE 2nd Ave., 305-576-7775

This boutique wine market/wine bar, featuring French small plates, sounds just like this address's former occupant, W Wine Bar, when it first opened. The difference: Instead of W's rotating chefs (including, sometimes, servers), Barrel's head honcho is Victor Passalacqua, a Miami fine-dining vet originally schooled by French stars like Paul Bocuse. Charcuterie selections feature imported cheeses and cured meats hard to find outside France (like rosette de Lyon salami) plus housemade prepared salads and an incomparably sinful foie gras terrine. Changing entrées include moules frites, if you're lucky. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

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

### Bin No. 18 1800 Biscayne Blvd., 786-235-7575

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

### Blue Piano 4600 NE 2nd Ave., 305-576-7919

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

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

If a neighborhood eatery like this one — which serves supremely satisfying bistro food — were within walking distance of every Miami resident, we'd be a helluva hip food town. Like true Parisian bistros, it's open continuously, every day, with prices so low that you can drop in anytime for authentic rillettes (a rustic pâté) with a crusty baguette, steak with from-scratch frites, salmon atop rata-touille, 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/

## Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

host Mario Rubeo, plus most kitchen staffers, are Joe Allen veterans. Revisit faves like matzo meal-crusted 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 discernable binder. At one South Beach Wine & Food Festival, Martha Stewart proclaimed it the best she'd ever had. Our own prime pick: melt-in-your-mouth ginger sea bass antichuchos, so buttery-rich we nearly passed out with pleasure. \$\$

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Some still come for the inexpensive, hearty American breakfasts and lunches that this honey hole-in-the-wall has served for more than 30 years. Since about 1990, though, when owner Pearlina Murray ("Ms. Pearl" to regulars) and cook Gloria Chin began emphasizing their native Jamaican specialties, the intensely spiced jerk chicken has been the main item here. Other favorites: savory rice and pigeon peas; eye-opening onion/vinegar-flavored escovitch fish; sweet plantains; and cabbage that redefines the vegetable. \$

### Crumb on Parchment 3930 NE 2nd Ave., 305-572-9444

Though located in a difficult spot (the Melin Building's central atrium, invisible from the street), Michelle Bernstein's bakery/café packs 'em in, partly due to Bernstein's mom Martha, who makes irresistible old-school cakes: German chocolate with walnuts, lemon curd with buttercream frosting, more. Lunch fare includes inspired sandwiches like seared rare tuna with spicy Asian pickles and kimchi aioli. And for morning people, the savory chicken sausage, melted cheddar, kale, and shallot sandwich on challah will convince you that breakfast is the most important meal of the day. \$\$\$

### The Daily Creative Food Co. 2001 Biscayne Blvd., 305-573-4535

While the food formula of this contemporary café is familiar – sandwiches, salads, soups, breakfast food, and pastries, plus coffee and fruit drinks – a creative concept differentiates the place. Signature sandwiches are named after national and local newspapers, including Biscayne Times, giving diners something to chat about. Sandwiches and salads can also be do-it-yourself projects, with an unusually wide choice of main ingredients, garnishes, breads, and condiments for the creatively minded. \$

### Egg & Dart 4029 N. Miami Ave., 786-431-1022

While co-owners Costa Grillas (from Maria's, a Coral Gables staple) and Niko Theodorou (whose family members have several Greek islands restaurants) describe their cuisine as "rustic Greek," there is surprising sophistication in some dishes: an especially delicate taramasalata (cod roe dip); precisely crisp-fried smelts (like a freshwater sardine); galactobourico, an often heavy and cloyingly vanilla-saturated dessert, here custardy and enlivened by orange flavor. Extensive lists of mezze (snacks) and creative cocktails make the expansive, invitingly decorated space ideal for large gatherings of friends who enjoy sharing. \$\$\$

### Egyptian Pizza Kitchen Shops at Midtown Miami Buena Vista Avenue, 305-571-9050

Pizza, pita – hey, they're both flatbreads. So while many pizzas do indeed, as this halal place's name suggests, have initially weird-seeming Middle Eastern toppings, it's really not surprising that the Giza (topped with marinated lamb, feta, olives, peppers, and pungently spiced cumin sauce) works at least as well as Italian classics. Additionally the menu includes interesting Middle Eastern fare like fowl, a hummus-like but lighter Egyptian dish of fava, tahini, garlic, lemon juice, and olive oil. A brick oven makes both pizzas and homemade pitas superior. \$\$

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

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

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

At the Fed, expect what locals know to expect from sommelier/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. \$

### 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. \$\$\$

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

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

### Harry's Pizzeria 3918 N. Miami Ave., 786-275-4963

In this humble space (formerly Pizza Volante) are many key components from Michael's Genuine Food & Drink two blocks east – local/sustainable produce and artisan products; wood-oven cooking; homemade everything (including the ketchup accompanying crisp-outside, custardy-inside polenta fries, a circa 1995 Michael Schwartz signature snack from Nemo). Beautifully blistered, ultra-thin-crust pizzas range from classic Margheritas to pies with house-smoked bacon, trugole (a subtly flavorful – fruity, not funky – Alpine cheese), and other unique toppings. Rounding things out: simple but ingenious salads, ultimate zeppoles, and Florida craft beers. \$\$

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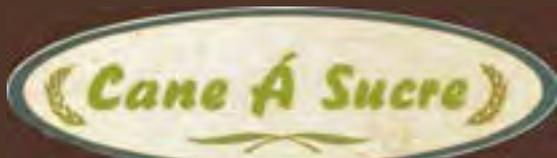
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Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

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? \$\$\$

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

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

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

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

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

La 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, yuppies/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-crusted 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 mesh of mussels in lemony wine broth is, with Mandolin's fresh-baked flatbread, almost a full meal in itself. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Mario the Baker  
250 NE 25th St., 305-438-0228  
(See North Miami Beach 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; shoestring fries that rival Belgium's best; mouthwatering maple-basted bacon; miraculously terrific tofu (crispy panko-crusted and apricot/soy-glazed); even a "voluptuous grilled cheese sandwich" — definitely a "don't ask, don't tell your cardiologist" item. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

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

At NoVe, the 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. \$\$\$-\$\$\$



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### 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, fiocchi pouches filled with pears and cheese), and house-baked pastries. \$

### Pasha's 3801 N. Miami Ave., 305-573-0201 (See Brickell/Downtown listing)

### Pieducks 3500 N. Miami Ave., 305-576-5550 (See Brickell / Downtown listing)

**Primo's**  
1717 N. Bayshore Dr., 305-371-9055  
The imposing, cavernous lobby of the Grand doesn't have that "do drop in" locals' hangout vibe. But this lively Italian spot is actually a great addition to the neighborhood. The pizzas alone – brick-oven specimens with toppings ranging from classic pepperoni to prosciutto/arugula – would be draw enough. But pastas also please: diners' choice of starch, with mix-and-match sauces and extras. And the price is right, with few entrées topping \$20. The capper: It's open past midnight every day but Sunday. \$\$\$

**Primo Pizza Miami**  
3451 NE 1st Ave., 305-535-2555  
Just a few years ago, chain pizza joints were dominant most everywhere. Today many places now offer authentic Italian or delicate designer pizzas. But a satisfying Brooklyn-style street slice? Fuhgedit. Thankfully that's the 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 izakaya (in Japan, a pub with food) than a sakaya (sake shop). But why quibble about words with so many more intriguing things to wrap your mouth around? The concept takes on street-food favorites from all over Asia, housemade daily from quality fresh ingredients. French Culinary Institute-trained Richard Hales does change his menu, so we'd advise immediately grabbing some crispy Korean chicken wings and Chinese-inspired, open-faced roast pork buns with sweet chili sauce and homemade pickles. \$\$\$

### Sake Room 275 NE 18th St., 305-755-0122

Sake takes a back seat to sushi – and sophisticated décor – at this small but sleek restolounge. Among the seafood offerings, you won't find exotica or local catches, but all the usual sushi/sashimi favorites, though in more interesting form, thanks to sauces that go beyond standard soy – spicy sriracha, garlic/ponzu oil, and many more. Especially recommended: the yuzu hamachi roll, the lobster tempura maki, and panko-coated spicy shrimp with hot-and-sour Mayo and a salad. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

### Salsa Fiesta 2929 Biscayne Blvd., 305-400-8245

The first stateside offshoot of a popular Venezuelan mini chain, this "urban Mexican grill" serves health-conscious, made-fresh-daily fare similar in concept to some fast-casual competitors. But there are indeed differences here, notably pan-Latin options: black beans as well as red; thin, delightfully crunchy tostones (available as a side or as the base for a uniquely tasty take on normal nachos). Other pluses include weekday happy hours with two-for-one beers – and free parking. \$\$\$

### S & S Diner 1757 NE 2nd Ave., 305-373-4291

Some things never change, or so it seems at this classic diner. Open since 1938, people still line up on Saturday mornings, waiting for a seat at the counter and enormous breakfasts: corned beef hash or crab cakes and eggs with grits; fluffy pancakes; homemade biscuits with gravy and Georgia sausage – everything from oatmeal to eggs Benedict. The lunch menu is a roll call of the usual suspects, but most regulars ignore the menu and go for the daily blackboard specials. \$\$\$

### Sra. Martinez 4000 NE 2nd Ave., 305-573-5474

No Biscayne Corridor resident needs to be told that this lively tapas bar is the second restaurant that Upper Eastside homegirl Michelle Bernstein has opened in the area. But it's no absentee celebrity-chef gig. Bernstein is hands-on at both places. Her exuberant yet firmly controlled personal touch is obvious in nearly four dozen hot and cold tapas on the menu. Items are frequently reinvented. Keepers include wild mushroom/manchego croquetas with fig jam; white bean stew; crisp-coated artichokes with lemon/coriander dip; and buttery bone marrow piqued with Middle Eastern spices and balanced by tiny pickled salads. \$\$\$

### Sugarcane Raw Bar Grill 3250 NE 1st Ave., 786-369-0353

This chic indoor/outdoor space is an offspring of Lincoln Road's SushiSamba Dromo and a sibling of Sugarcane lounges in NYC and Las Vegas, but more informal than the former and more food-oriented than the latter, as three kitchens – normal, raw bar, and robata charcoal grill – make clear. Chef Timon Balloo's LatAsian small plates range from subtle orange/fennel-marinated salmon crudo to intensely smoky-krill short ribs. At the daily happy hour, select dishes (like steamed pork buns with apple kimchi) are discounted. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

### Tapas y Tintos 3535 NE 2nd Ave., 305-392-0506

With about 50 different generously sized traditional tapas plates, from simple (imported Spanish cheeses and cured meats; varied croquetas, including beautifully smooth spinach) to sophisticated (crisp-fried soft-shell crab with aioli dip; the witty Popeye y Olivia, garlicky wine-sauced chickpeas with spinach and olive oil) plus complex salads, paellas, and charbroiled meat and seafood entrées, all add up to entertaining eating even without this tapas/wine bar's live entertainment. This second T&T feels less nightclub and more neighborhood than the South Beach original. Great for dates, business lunches, or very happy hours. \$\$\$

### Tony Chan's Water Club 1717 N. Bayshore Dr., 305-374-8888

The décor at this upscale place, located in the Grand, looks too glitzy to serve anything but politely Americanized Chinese food. But the American dumbing-down is minimal. Many dishes are far more authentic and skillfully prepared than those found elsewhere in Miami, like delicate but flavorful yu pan quail. Moist sea bass fillet has a beautifully balanced topping of scallion, ginger, cilantro, and subtly sweet/salty sauce. And Peking duck is served as three traditional courses: crêpe-wrapped crispy skin, meat sautéed with crisp veggies, savory soup to finish. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

### Vintage Liquor & Wine Bar 3301 NE 1st Ave. #105, 305-514-0307

Gentrified ambiance, a remarkably knowledgeable staff, and a hip stock (including global beers as well as liquor and wine, plus gourmet packaged foods to accompany), and self-service wine dispensers for sampling make this an enjoyable retail shop. A wine/cocktail/tapas bar, open from 4:00 p.m. daily, makes it an enjoyable neighborhood hangout, too. Tapas include beef carpaccio, bruschetta cones, varied salads and empanadas, a daily ceviche, and fresh-made sandwiches. And remember to ask about special events: karaoke Thursdays, monthly wine dinners, tastings, more. \$\$\$

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

### Wynwood Kitchen & Bar 2550 NW 2nd Ave., 305-722-8959

The exterior is eye-popping enough, with murals from world-famous outdoor artists, but it's the interior that grabs you. Colorful and exotic work by Shepard Fairey, Christian Awe, and other acclaimed artists makes it one of the most striking restaurant spaces anywhere. As for food, the original menu has been replaced with Spanish/Latin/Mediterranean-inspired favorites from chef Miguel Aguilar (formerly of Alma de Cuba): gazpacho or black bean soups; shredded chicken ropa vieja empanadas with cilantro crema; grilled octopus skewers with tapenade; plus fingerling potato-chorizo hash and other seasonal farm-to-table veg dishes. \$\$\$-\$\$\$



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## Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

### 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. \$\$

#### 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 pork-stickers 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. \$\$

#### 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 tails, New Orleans po'boys, Jersey shore cheese Trollers (pork roll), Baltimore crab cake sandwiches, and naturally, Phyllys of all sorts – cheese steak and beyond. \$\$\$

#### East Side Pizza

731 NE 79th St., 305-758-5351

Minestrone, sure. But a pizzeria menu with carrot ginger soup? Similarly many Italian-American pizzerias offer entrées like spaghetti and meatballs, but East Side also has pumpkin ravioli in brown butter/sage sauce, wild mushroom ravioli, and other surprisingly upscale choices, including imported Peroni beer. As for the pizza, they are classic pies, available whole or by the slice, made with fresh plum tomato sauce and Grande mozzarella (considered the top American pizza cheese). Best seating for eating is at the sheltered outdoor picnic tables. \$

#### 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. \$

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

#### 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 restorlounge, or like anything else in Miami. Forbidding from the outside, on the inside it's like a time-trip to a cabaret in pre-WWII Berlin: bordello-red décor, romantically dim lighting, show-tune live piano bar entertainment, and to match the ambiance, elegantly updated retro food served with style and a smile. For those feeling flush, home-style fried chicken is just like mom used to make – in her wildest dreams. \$\$\$

#### Metro Organic Bistro

7010 Biscayne Blvd., 305-751-8756

Big changes have come to Karma the car wash, the first being a separate new name for the revamped restaurant: Metro Organic Bistro, an all-organic fine-dining restaurant where simple preparations reveal and enhance natural flavors. An entirely new menu places emphasis on grilled organic meat and fish dishes. Try the steak frites – organic, grass-fed skirt steak with organic chimichurri and fresh-cut fries. Vegetarians will love the organic portabella focaccia. Dine either inside the architect-designed restaurant or outdoors on the patio. Beer and wine. \$\$\$

#### Michy's

6927 Biscayne Blvd., 305-759-2001

Don't even ask why Michele Bernstein, with a top-chef resumé, not to mention regular Food Network appearances, opened a homey restaurant in an emerging but far from fully gentrified neighborhood. Just be glad she did, as you dine on white almond gazpacho or impossibly

## Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

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 or cheese items, based on soy proteins, that satisfy even confirmed carnivores. Particularly impressive on the regular menu: a superior Sloppy Joe made with mushroom confit, braised homemade seitan, spinach, and rich almond romesco sauce; and cannelloni de verdura, homemade crepes stuffed with spinach and cashew "ricotta." Do check the daily specials, too. \$\$-\$\$\$

### Moonchine 7100 Biscayne Blvd., 305-759-3999

Like its Brickell-area sibling Indochine, this friendly Asian bistro serves fare from three nations: Japan, Thailand, and Vietnam. Menus are also similar, split between traditional dishes like pad Thai and East/West fusion creations like the Vampire sushi roll (shrimp tempura, tomato, cilantro, roasted garlic). But it also carves out its own identity with original creations, including yellow curry-spiced fried rice. Nearly everything is low in sodium, fat, and calories. A large rear patio is inviting for dining and entertainment. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

### Moshi Moshi 7232 Biscayne Blvd., 786-220-9404

This offspring of South Beach old-timer Moshi Moshi is a cross between a sushi bar and an izakaya (Japanese tapas bar). Even more striking than the hip décor is the food's unusually upscale quality. Sushi ranges from pristine individual nigiri to over-the-top maki rolls. Tapas are intriguing, like arabiki sausage, a sweet-savory pork fingerling frank; rarely found in restaurants even in Japan, they're popular Japanese home-cooking items. And rice-based plates like Japanese curry (richer/sweeter than Indian types) satisfy even the biggest appetites. \$\$-\$\$\$

### Namaste 7420 Biscayne Blvd., 786-536-9050

With food served from steam-table-type stations, plus plastic utensils and plates, this neighborhood Indian place is definitely no frills. But it's also excellent value for the money, especially if you go for the all-day \$8.99 special, which includes two entrée items plus sides for which most Indian restaurants charge extra: rice, choice of bread (garlic naan recommended), and refreshing raita. Invest some of your savings in BhelPapri chat, a savory snack featuring crisp chips topped with cilantro-spiked chickpeas, onions, potatoes, yogurt, and piquant tamarind sauce. \$\$-\$\$

### News Lounge 5582 NE 4th Ct., 305-758-9932

Mark Soyka's new News is, as its name suggests, more a friendly neighborhood hangout and watering hole than a full-fledged eatery. Nevertheless the menu of light bites is — along with other lures like an inviting outdoor patio and rest rooms that resemble eclectic art galleries — part of the reason visitors stay for hours. Especially recommended are fat mini-burgers with chipotle ketchup; a brie, turkey, and mango chutney sandwich on crusty baguette; and what many feel is the original café's Greatest Hit: creamy hummus with warm pita. \$

### Red Light 7700 Biscayne Blvd., 305-757-7773

From the rustic al fresco deck of chef Kris Wessel's intentionally downwardly mobile retro-cool riverfront restaurant, you can enjoy regional wildlife like manatees while enjoying eclectic regional dishes that range from cutting-edge (sour-orange-marinated, sous-vide-cooked Florida lobster with sweet corn sauce) to comfort (crispy-breaded Old South fried green tomatoes). Not surprisingly, the chef-driven menu is limited, but several signature specialties, if available, are not to be missed: BBQ shrimp in a tangy Worcestershire and cayenne-spiked butter/wine sauce, irresistible mini conch fritters, and homemade ice cream. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

### Revalas Italian Ristorante 8601 Biscayne Blvd., 305-758-1010

Owned by two couples (including former Village Café chef Marlon Reyes), this eclectic eatery occupies the former space of Frankie's Big City Grill, and fulfills much the same purpose in the neighborhood as an all-day, family-friendly place with affordable prices. The menu includes wraps and elaborate salads of all nations. But simple yet sophisticated Italian specialties like spaghetti ai fume (with pancetta, tomato, garlic, basil, and a touch of cream) or yellowtail française (egg-battered, with lemon-caper-wine sauce) are the must-haves here. \$\$-\$\$\$

### Royal Bavarian Schnitzel Haus 1085 NE 79th St., 305-754-8002

With Christmas lights perpetually twinkling and party noises emanating from a new outdoor biergarten, this German restaurant is owner Alex Richter's one-man gentrification project, transforming a formerly uninviting stretch of 79th Street one pils at a time. The fare includes housemade sausages (mild veal bratwurst, hearty mixed beef/pork bauernwurst, spicy garlicwurst) with homemade mustard and catsup; savory yet near-greaseless potato pancakes; and, naturally, schnitzels, a choice of delicate pounded pork, chicken, or veal patties served with a half-dozen different sauces. \$\$-\$\$\$

### Soyka 5556 NE 4th Court, 305-759-3117

Since opening in 1999, Soyka has often been credited with sparking the Upper Eastside's revival. 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 focchi 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 café/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 home-made 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 Beach 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. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

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## Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

### Shuckers Bar & Grill

**1819 79th St. Causeway, 305-866-1570**  
“Cheap eats and a million-dollar view” is the sound bite manager Philip Conklin uses to describe this outdoor beach bar, hidden in back of a bayfront motel. The joint dates from South Beach’s late 1980s revival, but the kick-off-your-shoes vibe couldn’t be farther from SoBe glitz. The food ranges from classic bar favorites (char-grilled wings, conch fritters, raw or steamed shellfish) to full dinners featuring steak, homemade pasta, or fresh, not frozen, fish. \$-\$\$

### Sushi Siam

**1524 NE 79th St. Causeway, 305-864-7638**  
(See Miami / Upper Eastside listing)

### Trio on the Bay

**1601 79th St. Causeway, 305-866-1234**  
Several ventures have failed in this expansive indoor/outdoor waterfront space, but that’s hard to imagine once you’ve experienced this stunning incarnation as an exciting yet affordable restaurant/nightclub where food definitely doesn’t play second fiddle to entertainment. Former Crystal Café chef Klime Kovaceski created the original menu, and among his dishes still available is the filet mignon atop surprisingly pistachio-studded béarnaise sauce. Now there is a range of Mediterranean offerings as well, from grilled calamari steaks to mahi picatta. \$\$\$

## 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 focchio 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 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, steaks, 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 ambience. There isn’t any. But when friends from the Pacific Northwest, where foodies know their fish, tout the seafood’s freshness, we listen. There are some surprisingly imaginative makis, like the Maharaja, featuring fried shrimp and drizzles of curry Mayo. And where else will you find a stacked sushi (five assorted makis) birthday cake? \$-\$\$

### Miami Shores Country Club

**10000 Biscayne Blvd., 305-795-2363**  
Formerly members-only, the restaurant/lounge facilities of this classy 1939 club are now open to the public – always, lunch and dinner. Not surprisingly, ambience is retro and relaxed, with golf course views from both bar and indoor/outdoor dining room. The surprise is the food – some classic (steaks, club sandwiches) but other dishes quite contemporary: an Asian ahi tuna tower; a lavish candied-walnut, poached-pear, grilled chicken salad; and fresh pasta specials. Prices are phenomenal, with dinner entrées \$9 to \$17; drinks average \$3 to \$4. \$\$

### 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 crusted, oozing-with-goosey-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. \$-\$\$

### 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, pillowy 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. \$\$

### 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 ajijaco. 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 mid-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



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## Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

authentically Mexican, and possibly the best thing that ever happened to dark beer. \$-\$-\$

**Chef Creole**  
13105 W. Dixie Hwy., 305-893-4246  
(See Miami listing)

**Flip Burger Bar**  
1699 NE 123rd St., 305-741-3547

Casual-chic burger bars, everywhere in South Beach, are still rare farther north. One reason this easy-to-miss venue is a must-not-miss for North Miami locals: The hefty half-pounders on fresh brioche buns include a scrumptious patty with Gruyere, mushrooms, and onion marmalade. The Fireman is a jalapeño/chipotle scorcher. There are even turkey and veggie variations. Other draws are hand-cut fries, beer-battered onion rings, a top-drawer beer list, budget-priced combo specials, conversation-friendly acoustics, and a South Beach rarity: free parking. \$-\$

**Giraffas**  
1821 NE 123rd St., 786-866-9007

Festooned with eye-poppingly colored panels and giraffes – subtler but everywhere – this first North American branch of a wildly popular, 30-year-old Brazilian fast/casual chain is the flagship of a planned 4000 U.S. Giraffas. Given that the steaks, especially the tender, flavorful picanha, rival those at the most upscale rodizio joints – and beat the sword-wielding grandstanders for custom cooking (because staff asks your preference) – we'd bet on giraffe domination. Overstuffed grilled sandwiches, salads, even tasty veggie options are all here, too. The cheese bread is a must. \$

**Happy Sushi & Thai**

2224 NE 123rd St., 305-895-0165

Grab a booth at this cozy eatery, which serves all the expected Thai and sushi bar standards, including week-day lunch specials. But there are also delightful surprises, like grilled kawahagi (triggerfish) with seasoned Japanese mayonnaise. This intensely savory/sweet "Japanese home cooking" treat satisfies the same yen as beef jerky, except without pulling out your teeth. Accompanied by a bowl of rice, it's a superb lunch. For raw-fish fans, spicy, creamy salmon tartare (accompanied by hiyashi wakame seaweed) is a winner. \$-\$-\$

**Here Comes the Sun**

2188 NE 123rd St., 305-893-5711

At this friendly natural foods establishment, one of Miami's first, there's a full stock of vitamins and nutritional supplements. But the place's hearty soups, large variety of entrées (including fresh fish and chicken as well as vegetarian selections), lighter bites like miso burgers with secret "sun sauce" (which would probably make old sneakers taste good), and daily specials are a tastier way to get healthy. An under-ten-buck early-bird dinner is popular with the former long-hair, now blue-hair, crowd. Frozen yogurt, fresh juices, and smoothies complete the menu. \$-\$

**Le Griot de Madame John**

975 NE 125th St., 305-892-9333

When Madame moved her base of operations from her Little Haiti home to a real restaurant (though a very informal one, and still mostly take-out), she began offering numerous traditional Haitian dishes, including jerked beef or goat tassot and an impressive poisson gros sel (a whole fish rubbed with salt before poaching with various veggies and spices). But the dish that still packs the place is the griot: marinated pork chunks simmered and then fried till they're moistly tender inside, crisp and intensely flavored outside. \$

**Little Havana**

12727 Biscayne Blvd. 305-899-9069

In addition to white-tablecloth ambiance, this place features live Latin entertainment and dancing, making it a good choice when diners want a night out, not just a meal. It's also a good choice for diners who don't speak Spanish, but don't worry about authenticity. Classic Cuban home-style dishes like mojo-marinated lechon asado, topped with onions, and juicy ropa vieja are translated on the menu, not the plate, and fancier creations like pork filet in tangy tamarind sauce seem universal crowd-pleasers. \$\$\$

**Mama Jennie's**

11720 NE 2nd Ave. 305-757-3627

For more than 35 years this beloved red-sauce joint has been drawing students and other starvation-budget diners with prodigious portions of lasagna, spaghetti and meatballs (the latter savory yet light-textured), veal marsala topped with a mountain of mushrooms, and other Italian-American belly-busters. All pasta or meat entrées come with oil-drenched garlic rolls and either soup (hearty minestrone) or a salad (mixed greens, tomatoes, cukes, brined olives, and pickled peppers) that's a dinner in itself. Rustic roadhouse ambiance, notably the red leatherette booths, add to Mama's charm. \$-\$

**Pastry Is Art**

12591 Biscayne Blvd., 305-640-5045

Given owner Jenny Rissone's background as the Eden Roc's executive pastry chef, it's not surprising that her cakes and other sweet treats (like creamy one-bite truffle "lollipops") look as flawlessly sophisticated as they taste – perfect adult party fare. What the bakery's name doesn't reveal is that it's also a breakfast and lunch café, with unusual baking-oriented fare: a signature sandwich of chicken, brie, and caramelized peaches and pecans on housemade bread; quiches; pot pies; even a baked-to-order Grand Marnier soufflé. The pecan sticky buns are irresistible. \$

**Petit Rouge**

12409 Biscayne Blvd., 305-892-7676

From the mid-1990s (with Neal's Restaurant and later with Il Migliore), local chef Neal Cooper's neighborhood-oriented Italian eateries have been crowd-pleasers. While this cute 32-seat charmer is French, it's no exception, avoiding pretense and winning fans with both classic and nouvelle bistro fare: frisée salad with lardons, poached egg, and bacon vinaigrette; truite Grenobloise (trout with lemon/caper sauce); consommé with black truffles and foie gras, covered by a buttery puff pastry dome; perfect pommes frites, and equally perfect apple or lemon tarts for dessert. \$\$\$

**Rice House of Kabob**

14480 Biscayne Blvd., 305-944-4899

Since 2006, South Beach's original Rice House has been serving up mountainous platters of basmati rice and Greek salad topped with Persian-style marinated/char-grilled meat, poultry, seafood, or veggie kabobs – for very little money. This branch of what is now a growing chain has the same menu (which also features wraps, for lighter eaters) and the same policy of custom-cooking kabobs, so expect fresh, not fast, food. Sides of must-o-keyar and must-o-mooseer (thick yogurt dips with herbed cukes or shallots) are must-haves. \$

**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. \$

**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. \$-\$

## 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

to rillas stuffed with chipotle-marinated steak or chicken chunks, bolder shredded beef barbacoa, or herb-scented pork carnitas. But these bites contain no evil ingredients (transfats, artificial color/flavor, antibiotics, growth hormones). And the food, while not the authentic Mex street stuff dreams are made of, is darned tasty, too. \$

**Cholo's Ceviche & Grill**

1127 NE 163rd St., 305-947-3338

Don't be misled by the mini-mall location, or the relatively minimal prices (especially during lunch, when specials are under \$6). Inside, the décor is charming, and the Peruvian plates elegant in both preparation and presentation. Tops among ceviches/tiraditos is the signature Cholo's, marinated octopus and fish in a refined rocoto chili sauce with overtones both fiery and fruity. And don't miss the molded causas, whipped potato rings stuffed with avocado-garnished crab salad – altogether lighter and lovelier than the tasty but oily mashed spud constructions more oft encountered in town. \$-\$

**Christine's Roti Shop**

16721 NE 6th Ave., 305-770-0434

Wraps are for wimps. At this small shop run by Christine Gouvela, originally from British Guyana, the wrapper is a far more substantial and tasty roti, a Caribbean mega-crepe made from chickpea flour. Most popular filling for the flatbread is probably jerk chicken, bone-in pieces in a spiced stew of potatoes, cabbage, carrots, onions, and more chickpeas. But there are about a dozen other curries from which to choose. Take-out packages of plain roti are also available; they transform myriad leftovers into tasty, portable lunches. \$

**Duffy's Sports Grill**

Intracoastal Mall

3969 NE 163rd St., 305-760-2124

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

**Empire Szechuan Gourmet of NY**

3427 NE 163rd St., 305-949-3318

In the 1980s, Empire became the Chinese chain that swallowed Manhattan – and transformed public perceptions of Chinese food in the NY metropolitan area. Before: bland faux-Cantonese dishes. After: lighter, more fiery




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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. \$\$\$

### 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 nik-kei (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 Renaissa. Their menu's mix-and-match option allows diners to pair their choice of meat, poultry, fish, or vegetable with more than a dozen regional sauces, from familiar Indian styles to exotica like satkara, flavored with a Bangladeshi citrus reminiscent of sour orange. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

### Jerusalem Market and Deli 16275 Biscayne Blvd., 305-948-9080

Specialties like shawarma, spinach pies, kebabs, hummus, and kibbeh (a savory mix of ground lamb and bulgur) are native to many Middle East countries, but when a Lebanese chef/owner, like this eatery's Sam Elzoor, is at the helm, you can expect extraordinary refinement. There are elaborate daily specials here, like lemon chicken or stuffed cabbage with a variety of sides, but even a common falafel sandwich is special when the pita is also stuffed with housemade cabbage and onion salads, plus unusually rich and tart tahina. \$\$\$

### Kabobji 3055 NE 163rd St., 305-354-8484

This place makes a very good tahini sauce. In fact that alone is reason enough to visit. We prefer ours with this bright, cheery eatery's delightfully oniony falafel or a veg-garnished wrap of thin-sliced marinated beef schwarma. They also do a beautifully spiced, and reassuringly fresh-tasting, raw kibbi naye (Middle Eastern steak tartare). It's hard to resist putting together a grazing meal of starters and wraps, but there's also a roster of full entrées (with soup or salad plus starch), including tempting vegetarian and seafood meals for noncarnivores. \$\$

### Kebab Indian Restaurant 514 NE 167th St., 305-940-6309

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

### King Palace 330 NE 167th St. 305-949-2339

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

### Lime Fresh Mexican Grill 14831 Biscayne Blvd., 305-949-8800

(See Midtown / Wynwood / Design District listing)

### Laurenzo's Market Café 16385 W. Dixie Hwy., 305-945-6381

It's just a small area between the wines and the fridge counters – no potted palms, and next-to-no service in this cafeteria-style space. But when negotiating this international gourmet market's packed shelves and crowds has depleted your energies, it's a handy place to refuel with eggplant parmesan and similar Italian-American classics, housemade from old family recipes. Just a few spoonfuls of Wednesday's hearty pasta fagiolo, one of the daily soup specials, could keep a person shopping for hours. And now that pizza master Carlo is manning the wood-fired oven, you can sample the thinnest, crispiest pies outside Napoli. \$\$\$

### Little Saigon 16752 N. Miami Ave., 305-653-3377

This is Miami's oldest traditional Vietnamese restaurant, but it's still packed most weekend nights. So even the place's biggest negative – its hole-in-the-wall atmosphere, not encouraging of lingering visits – becomes a plus since it ensures fast turnover. Chef/owner Lily Tao is typically in the kitchen, crafting green papaya salad, flavorful beef noodle pho (served with greens, herbs, and condiments that make it not just a soup but a whole ceremony), and many other Vietnamese classics. The menu is humorous. \$\$\$

### Mario the Baker 14691 Biscayne Blvd., 305-891-7641

A Miami institution in its North Miami location since 1962, this original Mario's changed location in 2012. But no worries. The menu of Italian-American (not Italian-Italian) favorites is the same – spaghetti and meatballs, hot and cold subs, etc. No arugula, imported bufala, or other chichi stuff on the NYC street-style medium thin-crust pizzas, either; top topping here is savory homemade sausage. And no one leaves without garlic rolls, awash in warm parsley oil and smushed garlic. \$

### 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 Bannigan'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" (slight 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 cheng 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 mini-potato pancakes ever – eight per order, served with sour cream and applesauce. \$\$\$

### Sang's Chinese Restaurant 1925 NE 163rd St., 305-947-7076

Sang's has three menus. The pink menu is Americanized Chinese food, from chop suey to honey garlic chicken. The white menu permits the chef to show off his authentic Chinese fare: salt and pepper prawns, rich beef/turnip casserole, tender salt-baked chicken, even esoterica like abalone with sea cucumber. The extensive third menu offers dim sum, served until 4:00 p.m. A live tank allows seasonal seafood dishes like lobster with ginger and scallion. Recently installed: a Chinese barbecue case, displaying savory items like crispy pork with crackling attached. \$\$\$

### Shing Wang Vegetarian, Isee & Tea House 237 NE 167th St., 305-654-4008

At this unique, mostly Taiwanese eatery, all seafood, poultry, and meats used to be skillfully crafted and delicious vegetarian imitations. These are still here, plus there's now a wider choice of dishes, some featuring real meat. Try the authentic-tasting Vietnamese banh mi sandwiches (available with a variety of meat and mock-meat fillings). Bubble tea is the must-not-miss drink. The cold, refreshing boba comes in numerous flavors, all supplemented with signature black tapioca balls that, sipped through straws, are a guaranteed giggle. \$

### Siam Square 54 NE 167th St., 305-944-9697

Open until 1:00 a.m. every day except Sunday (when it closes at midnight), this relatively new addition to North Miami Beach's "Chinatown" strip has become a popular late-night gathering spot for chefs from other Asian restaurants. And why not? The food is fresh, nicely presented, and reasonably priced. The kitchen staff is willing to customize dishes upon request, and the serving staff is reliably fast. Perhaps most important, karaoke equipment is in place when the mood strikes. \$\$\$



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## Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

### 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 Cubbie Comfort: spicy tuna, soft-shell crab, shrimp and eel tempura, plus avocado, jalapeños, and cilantro, topped with not one but three sauces: wasabi, teriyaki, and spicy Mayo. Hawaiian King Crab contains unprecedented ingredients like tomatoes, green peppers, and pineapple. Boutique wines, artisan sakes, and cocktails are as exotic as the cuisine. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

### Sushi Sake 13551 Biscayne Blvd., 305-947-4242

Chic Asian-accented décor, video screens, 99-cent drink deals, and late-night hours make this hip hangout not just a sushi bar but sort of a neighborhood bar, too. That said, the sushi is impressive, mainly because seafood is delivered daily and all except the shrimp is fresh, not frozen (as is customary at most Miami sushi places). Also notable: All sauces are housemade. Cooked makis like a crunch-topped Miami Heat are most popular, but it's as sashimi that the fish's freshness truly shines. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

### 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 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

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 tasted a "Philly cheese steak" sandwich on the toughest of critics – an inflexibly burger-crazy six year-old. She cleaned her plate. \$\$

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

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

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

At Roman-native Flaminia Morin's casual, family-friendly eatery, the specialty is pasta yo ur way. Choose one of seven fresh or dried pastas (including gluten-free options), then one of 15 sauces ranging from traditional carbonara to inventions like Mozzarella Filante (creamy tomato sauce with melted cheese); à la carte meat, seafood, or veg add-ons are also available. Build a full Italian feast with antipasti, salads, six secondi (entrées), and desserts. Budget diner alert: Check out Monday-Friday lunch specials, two courses plus drink for \$8.

## BAY HARBOR ISLANDS

### Asia Bay Bistro 1007 Kane Concourse; 305-861-2222

As in Japan's most refined restaurants, artful presentation is stunning at this Japanese/Thai gem. And though the voluminous menu sports all the familiar favorites from both nations, the Japanese-inspired small plates will please diners seeking something different. Try jalapeño-sauced hamachi sashimi; toro with enoki mushrooms, bracing ooba (shiso), tobiko caviar, and a sauce almost like beurre blanc; rock shrimp/shitake tempura with a delicate salad; elegant salmon tartare with a mix-in quail egg. And spicy, mayo-dressed tuna rock makis are universal crowd-pleasers. \$\$\$

### Caffe Da Vinci 1009 Kane Concourse; 305-861-8166

After renovations in 2010, this old favorite (since 1989) reopened with a hip new lounge – but no fixes to what ain't broke, notably 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 pimientos. This classic (whose carb components make it satisfying without à la carte sides, and hence a relative bargain) isn't on the menu anymore, but cooks will prepare it on request. \$\$\$\$

## AVENTURA / HALLANDALE

### Anthony's Coal Fired Pizza 17901 Biscayne Blvd., 305-830-2625

When people rave about New York pizzas' superiority, they don't just mean thin crusts. They mean the kind of airy, abundantly burn-bubbled, uniquely flavorful crusts that can only be consistently produced by a traditional coal (not wood) oven – like those at Anthony's, which began with one Fort Lauderdale pizzeria in 2002 and now has roughly 30 locations. Quality toppings, though limited, hit all the major food groups, from prosciutto to kalamata olives. There are salads, too, but the sausage and garlic-sautéed broccoli rabe pie is a tastier green vegetable. \$\$\$

### Bagel Cove Restaurant & Deli 19003 Biscayne Blvd. 305-935-4029

One word: flagels. And no, that's not a typo. Rather these crusty, flattened specimens (poppy seed or sesame seed) are the ultimate bagel/soft pretzel hybrid – and a specialty at this bustling Jewish bakery/deli, which, since 1988, opens at 6:30 a.m. – typically selling out of flagels in a couple of hours. Since you're up early anyway, sample elaborately garnished breakfast specials, including unusually flavorful homemade corned beef hash and eggs. For the rest of the day, multitudes of mavens devour every other delectable deli specialty known to humankind. \$\$\$

### BagelWorks 18729 Biscayne Blvd., 305-937-7727

Hard as it is for old-time NYC expats to believe, there's evidently a younger generation that doesn't equate the Jewish deli experience with loudmouthed servers and the smell of 75 years of fermenting pickle juice in the flooring. This cleanly contemporary place attracts this younger generation with the full range of classics, including many varieties of hand-sliced smoked fish, but also healthy options, most notably a wide array of substantial salads with grilled protein add-ons. Bagels, while machine-made rather than hand-rolled, are freshly baked all day. \$\$\$

### 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 Rd., 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). \$\$

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## Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

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

**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 table and let La Estancia do the cooking -- anything from tapas and elegant miga mini-tea sandwiches to hefty grilled parrillada plates. Most irresistible, though, are the savory and sweet baked goods, especially elaborately frosted layer cakes and delicately crusted empanadas plumply stuffed with hand-cut flank steak, mushrooms in onion sauce, much more. \$\$\$

**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 Maltese), 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  
Enconced 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. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

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

**Mr. Chef's Fine Chinese Cuisine & Bar**  
18800 NE 29th Ave. #10, 786-787-9030  
Considering our county's dearth of authentic Chinese food, this stylish eatery is heaven-sent for Aventura residents. Owners Jin Xiang Chen and Shu Ming (a.k.a. Mr. Chef) come from China's southern seacoast province of Guangdong (Canton). But you'll find no gloppily sauced, Americanized-Cantonese chop sueys here. Cooking is properly light-handed, and seafood specialties shine (try the spicy/crispy salt and pepper shrimp). For adventurers, there's a cold jellyfish starter. Even timid taste buds can't resist tender fried shrimp balls described this way: "With crispy adorable fringy outfit." \$\$\$-\$\$\$

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

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

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

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

## 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 flour-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 bikani chana (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 home-away-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 majorly 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. \$\$\$

**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; meltingly tender braised short ribs; an impeccable market-driven meat and cheese platter. \$\$\$

**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 ravioli 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, and for dessert, peach Melba or strawberries Romanoff. \$\$\$

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