

BISCAYNE

May 2013

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Volume 11 Issue 3

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Commentary: LETTERS

Yes, It's a Smaller Herald, but It's Also an Inferior Herald

Erik Bojnansky did a terrific job of researching the ups and downs, the good and bad, the past and present and future of the *Miami Herald* ("Farewell, My Lovely Miami Herald," April 2013). It was, as they say, fair and balanced.

So why did *Herald* honchos and McClatchy executives refuse to be interviewed? Did they fear the worst? Maybe a hatchet job by a competing publication?

Or did they fear that Mr. Bojnansky might unearth the truth? Namely, that for many years the *Herald* was a bloated beast that sheltered and pampered burned-out, unproductive employees while the true journalism stars got out as fast as they could and headed for the *Washington Post* or the *New York Times*.

Instead of offering buyouts to the best and brightest reporters and photographers, the *Herald* should have held onto them at any cost. If you had to lay off people, cut loose the least experienced and least talented.

If the *Herald* had done that, today we'd have a smaller newspaper, yes. But it would be a high-quality newspaper that people would want to read.

Now the *Herald* is small and lousy. Who wants that?

Gerald Q. Johnson
Miami

One Word for the Herald's Decline: Greed

Regarding Erik Bojnansky's story on the *Miami Herald*, it was a good piece, but not great.

The problem that Erik had in analyzing the fall of the *Herald* and the rest of the newspaper industry is that he relied primarily on "expertise" from the very people who orchestrated the debacle. It's like asking the captain of the *Titanic* or the CEO of the White Star Line about the disaster.

More important, the *true* reason for the *Herald's* decline isn't mentioned at all. And it seldom is, because the bandits are still describing the bank robbery.

One example: Closing the *Miami News* in 1988 was *not* (as Mike Lewis, whom I respect, suggests) the precipitating factor with the *Herald's* demise. Indeed, keeping the *News* open for two decades after it basically failed gets closer to the problem. If the scandal-rocked *News* had exited the stage in the 1960s (despite the courageous journalism of Bill Baggs and some others), believe

me, Miami would not have been without a "second voice" — the alleged but despicably dishonest reason for the joint operating agreement (JOA).

An aggressive competitor would have emerged, and the *Herald* would have had to fight for its turf with continued great journalism. With the JOA, the *Herald* continued to be "good," but the *News* truly wasn't competition (financially), and the decline accelerated.

There is some interesting history that preceded this. The original call signs for Channel 7 and 610AM were WCKT and WCKR. "C" for Cox, "K" for Knight. I collaborated with Gene Miller and some others on tracking down why Knight and Cox were stripped of their broadcast licenses. Basically, Cox executives, including James Cox, had bribed a corrupt and alcoholic FCC commissioner to get the licenses. Jack Knight operated at a higher ethical plane than Cox, but both men believed in media monopolies; they wanted to wrap up Miami, undermine any competition (such as Wometco's WTVJ), and then engage in an earlier concept of what became joint operating agreements.

Interesting, at about the same time, the *News* got caught in a circulation scandal, the beginning of its demise. The old *News* building, now called Freedom Tower, was a bold statement to the community, while the *Herald's* old building was buried in the city's back streets. The two events I mention, the scandals involving the FCC licenses and the *News's* circulation problems, were sort of symbolized by buildings the two companies would build. Cox built a new building on the Miami River, hidden from view. And Knight built 1 Herald Plaza, a god-awful eyesore, but one that proclaimed, "We run Miami."

The newspaper industry has failed because of the monopolistic strategies of the chains. Part of what Miller and I were intrigued about was the *Herald/News* JOA. A number of us had deduced that the federal legislation was tainted. It took Ben Bagdikian to uncover the letters from the CEOs of the chains, in which they promised Attorney General John Mitchell unanimous endorsements for Nixon in 1972 in exchange for the administration backing off in opposition to the JOA legislation.

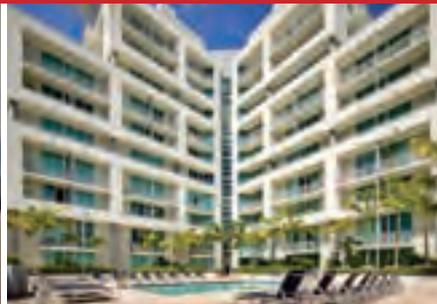
My understanding is that Knight didn't join the cabal, but Cox certainly did, and when it announced that its newspapers would endorse Nixon,

Continued on page 14

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Letters

Continued from page 12

Gregory Favre (then editor at the *Palm Beach Post*) quit and Sylvan Meyer (*Miami News*) was fired.

Thus the protracted campaign for monopolies and consolidation from the 1950s through today with “cross-ownership” is the real reason for the decline of newspapers. As the chains went public, the pressure on bottom lines soared from about 10 percent or 11 percent (what Jack Knight thought was optimum) to 40 percent to 50 percent or more.

Those margins could only be achieved by city monopolies; those monopolies would then be able to slash costs, which always meant gutting content, culminating today in no cop desk at the *Herald* (or, hell, the fact that the *Herald* found out about Miami’s insolvency by getting the news on TV). Readers noticed the changes, and the idea of “we’ll do more with less” was so pathetically false — well, why pay attention to such rags?

Compare Lee Hills (or John McMullan) to the spineless editors at the *Herald* in recent years. During the 2000 election debacle, Florida’s “mainstream” media, notably the *Herald*, focused on the “hanging chad” issues. Trembling at their perceived potency of George and Jeb Bush, daily newspapers avoided the much bigger story, the determined Republican purge of as many as 90,000 legitimate, likely Democratic voters on bogus pretexts.

Only alternative media in Florida (me in Tampa, at least) and a BBC reporter (Greg Palast) seriously paid attention to the story. Today the dailies can’t avoid the truth of the story, so they act as if they broke the news. Put another way, a coup was successfully executed in the United States, and papers such as the *Herald* peed in their pants rather than call it what it was.

Rephrased: The newspaper industry knew decades ago that the era of big factories (printing presses), huge expenses on fleets of gas-guzzling trucks, etc. was going to end. The publishers consciously determined to go for quick profits at the expense of long-term viability.

Please, no “oh, woe” crocodile tears from the publishers. They could have avoided this *Götterdämmerung*, but instead the industry betrayed America’s cities, its employees, itself, and in a real sense, democracy.

John F. Sugg
Blue Ridge, Georgia

Editor’s note: John F. Sugg is a former reporter and editor at the *Miami Herald*, *Tampa Tribune*, and *Atlanta Constitution*. He also worked as senior editor at the Creative Loafing chain of alternative newspapers.

On the Record, Off the Mark

Thanks to Adam Schachner for a well-written piece on the annual Ultra Music Festival and the many benefits that it brings to our local economy (“And the Beats Go On,” April 2013).

The article quotes William Plasencia, a senior staffer for Commissioner Marc Sarnoff, as saying that “the commissioner has gone on the record opposing the second weekend.” Yet Sarnoff voted to allow the second weekend.

Isn’t Commissioner Sarnoff’s vote considered “the record”?

Mark Heffernan
Spring Gardens

Biscayne Landing: An Architectural Insult

Mark Sell’s article “Unnatural Disaster” in the April issue is right on. I could not agree more with his critical assessment of the situation with Biscayne Landing.

It is insulting to the rest of the architecture community that a plan such as the one put together by the Kobi Karp team is placed in front of a planning and zoning board for consideration. Having experienced firsthand the dynamics of how the KK office works, I would agree that “childish” is the accurate description of their operation.

Claudio Salazar
Roots DNA Architecture
Brickell

Biscayne Landing: One More Nail in the Fox’s Coffin

I’m writing in response to Mark Sell’s April article, “Unnatural Disaster.” As someone who has lived in North Miami for almost two decades, I found the piece very disheartening. I remember biking along the Biscayne Corridor in the late 1980s, and back then there was very little development east of the Boulevard, besides the courthouse and a gas station.

What I remember is a barrier of mangroves lining the street. Slowly but surely, strip malls started replacing the greenery. FIU eradicated many more mangroves and built that monstrosity

Continued on page 16

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Miami Children's Hospital is the only hospital in Florida with programs listed in all 10 subspecialty categories nationally ranked by U.S. News & World Report in its 2012-13 "Best Children's Hospitals" rankings.

Commentary: LETTERS

Letters

Continued from page 14

unnecessary Kovens Conference Center.

More green was cut down to build a high school on 151st Street. Now it seems the profit-mongers behind Biscayne Landing want to develop some 190 acres of wetlands, and for what? Car dealerships?

Pretty disgusting. On top of that, there's talk of turning the wooded area at the end of NE 135th Street into an access road to FIU.

Anyway, the reason I'm writing is foxes. I remember biking to classes on the FIU north campus in the early 1990s and occasionally seeing a fox dart into the woods. Well, the other day my girlfriend and I were going for a stroll through Arch Creek when we spotted two foxes running through the brush.

I'd like suggest that *Biscayne Times* write a story on how all the development in the Oleta/Arch Creek area is impacting the fox population. In all my years of living in North Miami, I don't think I've ever seen any media coverage of foxes in that area. I'm pretty sure most residents would be shocked to learn there are foxes are out there.

Anyway, that's my two cents.

*Orlando Rodriguez
North Miami*

Gaspar, Maybe It's Time You Moved to Chicago

Gaspar González says he deliberated carefully before deciding to live in Biscayne Park. Having reassured himself it was the place to be for himself and his family, he began a relentless campaign of trashing it as a *Biscayne Times* correspondent.

Now he's telling us how much better Chicago is, and Pittsburgh, too, than Miami ("Taxi to the Bright Side," April, 2013). And one of his citations is culture and art, which he's decided we don't have here, but which he also seems not to want ("...why not build an...art museum, and worry about the art later," he writes facetiously).

But ask Gaspar to help promote and provide art in Biscayne Park, and he gets surprisingly skittish. Can we count on you for a donation to public art here, in Biscayne Park, and maybe a positive word in *Biscayne Times*, Gaspar? No, I don't like the process, and I don't like the art, and it's raining today.

How about helping us develop a process you like, and finding art that appeals to you, and maybe waiting for a sunny day? No, I don't get mixed up

in activism like that, says Gaspar. I just criticize whatever anyone else does.

It's not clear to me that Gaspar is helping himself, but I can tell you with conviction, he certainly isn't helping anyone else. If he's still grouching, he may be unhappy.

Maybe he'd be happier if he moved to Chicago or Pittsburgh.

*Fred Jonas
Biscayne Park*

Dear Mr. Ross: If We Give You the Needed Ingredients, We'd Like a Piece of the Pie

Frank Rollason ("Pigskin Politics," March 2013) writes about one possibility I've also considered, should the public end up subsidizing improvements for Stephen Ross, the billionaire owner of Sun Life Stadium: Have the county take an equity interest in the stadium's income stream. Good idea! Fat chance of it happening!

However, the bottom line is that tax money should not be used to fund professional sports facilities. The majority of studies I have read conclude that the long-term economic benefits are nil or negative. Isn't Miami an attractive enough venue to earn a Super Bowl every so often without taxpayer money?

Perhaps the reason Norman Braman isn't thrilled about a referendum is that he's had it with the low quality of governance here. There are exceptions, of course, but the ongoing sleaze among public officials in the City of Miami and the county never fails to amaze me. It's far worse than the District of Columbia.

I still would favor having ten Bramans in the mix.

*Sam Rothman
Miami and Falls Church, Virginia*

Dear Mr. Ross: The Answer Is No

Stephen Ross, owner of the Miami Dolphins, is stuffing our mailboxes, asking for millions of taxpayer dollars to subsidize *his* stadium.

Say *no* to corporate welfare. Remember the Marlins! Vote no on May 14.

*Mike Burke
Miami*

An Insightful Christian on Christianity

I really enjoyed reading Christian Cipriani's "Rethinking Religion" (March 2013). What a great read.

Thanks to Mr. Cipriani for being so insightful.

*Karen Leslie
Miami*

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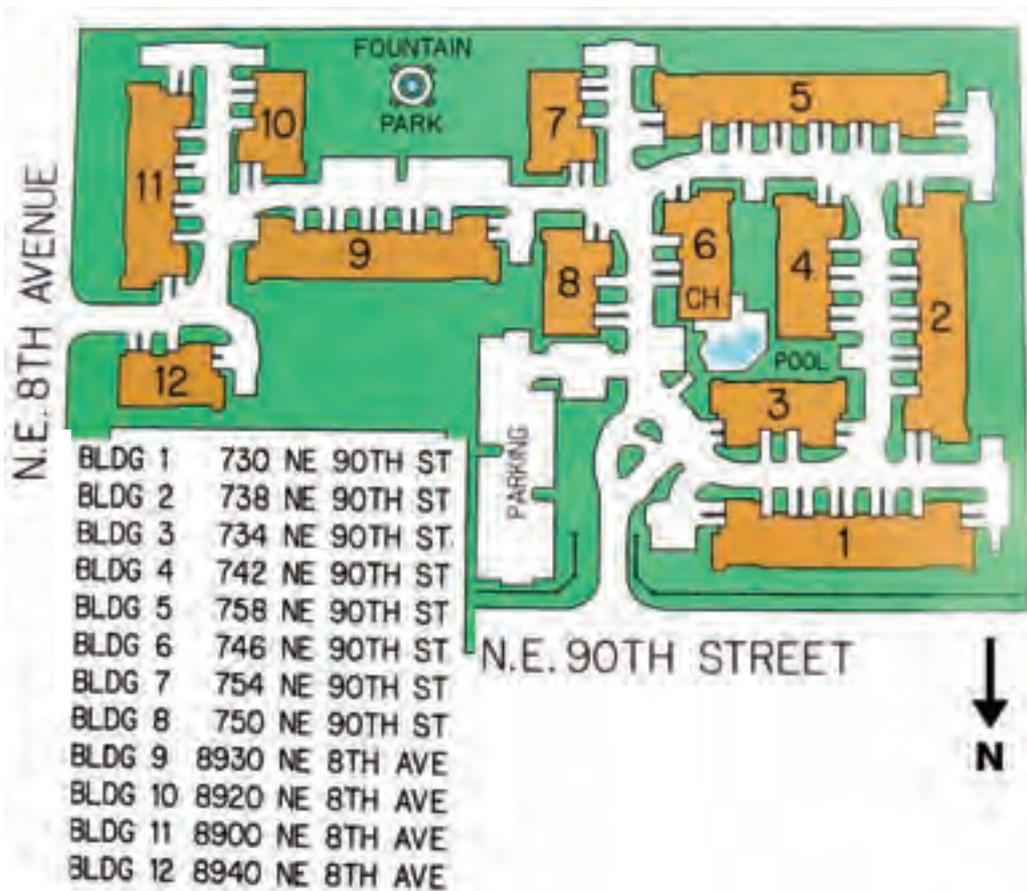
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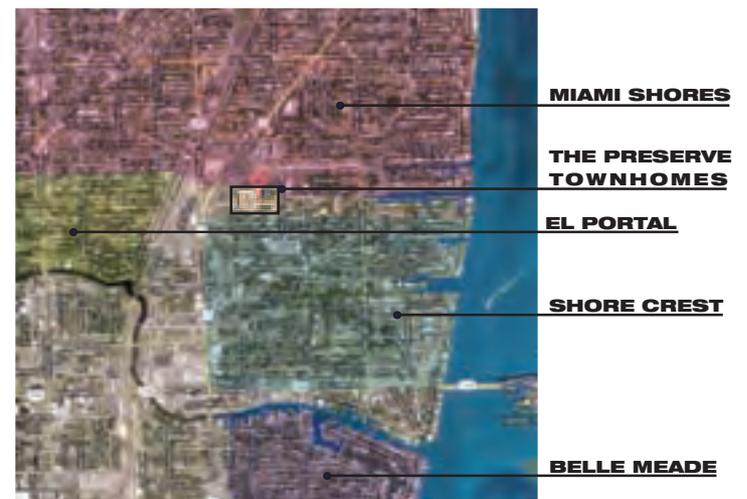
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Car Trouble

Dangerous driving may be the most salient feature of life in Miami

By Gaspar González
BT Contributor

We all know Miami drivers bring their own unique style to the road. There's the "Miami Left," whereby a motorist makes a left-hand turn, not at a 90-degree angle, which would be the proper way to do it, but at something closer to 45 degrees, so that he or she actually cuts across a lane of oncoming traffic before settling into the correct lane.

There's also the "Miami Exit Move," in which a driver who is distracted (texting, applying make-up, trying to wolf down that Taco Bell chalupa) suddenly realizes their highway exit is fast approaching. Problem is, it's three lanes away and traffic is never going to let them get over. In a lot of cities, the driver would simply drive to the next exit, get off, and double back. (Really.) Not here.

Here, they're getting over. No matter what it takes. No matter how many other drivers have to slam on their brakes or swerve to avoid them. It happens daily on roads all over Miami-Dade, perhaps nowhere more frequently than at the point where I-95 southbound meets I-195 and State Road 112. (Why do drivers have such a hard time deciding between downtown, the beach, and the airport? Is it because they fly in their bathing suits?)

Motorists here have elevated bad driving — dangerous driving — to the point that it's no longer just another aspect of life in South Florida. It may well be the defining aspect.

To live in South Florida is to live with the knowledge that you could be plowed into by any driver, on any street, at any time, no matter how unlikely the chances of that may seem. And when it happens, if their car is not disabled by the accident, there's a very good chance they will flee the scene. Because that's also what we do.

Last year, the Florida Highway Patrol revealed, there were 20,000 hit-and-run accidents in Miami-Dade and Broward counties. That translates to about 55 a day, or roughly 2.25 every hour of every day. Keep in mind, those aren't car accidents. Those are *hit-and-runs*. That's as many as in Los Angeles, a city long famous for its vehicular dysfunction.

Many of these involve fatalities: a bystander waiting for a bus, a cyclist out for an evening ride, or, most recently, a chef at a South Beach restaurant, struck and killed by a car driven by a self-described "party princess" as he walked to work in the early-morning hours.

Stefano Riccioletti was thrown 30 feet in the air by the impact. The party princess, Karlie Tomica, whose blood alcohol content was reportedly three times



the legal limit, just kept going, hoping to make it home before anyone could get a good look at her license plate or the make of her car.

In many places, that would rank as an unconscionable, memorably gruesome incident. Here, it will quickly be displaced by the next horrific hit-and-run, which, given the numbers I've cited, will probably occur sometime before you finish reading this.

There's a scene in *Casablanca* in which Major Strasser, the Nazi in charge, issues a thinly veiled threat to the character played by Ingrid Bergman. "Perhaps you have already observed that, in *Casablanca*," Strasser tells her, "human life is cheap." I've often referenced the line when friends in other places ask me if driving — or walking — in Miami is as dangerous as it appears. They usually laugh. I don't.

How cheap is human life here? It's hard to say for sure, though consider two things we apparently value more. One is the freedom to talk on our cell phones — and text — as much as we want, wherever we want, including behind the wheel of a car cruising at 60 mph. That's why Florida is one of only four states (South Carolina, South Dakota, and Montana

are the others) with absolutely no limits on talking or texting while driving. (A bill making its way through the Florida legislature promises to change this.)

The other thing that seemingly trumps public safety is the imperative of having an extra couple of parking spaces. It was recently reported that attempts by Miami-Dade and Coral Gables to build a pedestrian bridge spanning U.S. 1 — at a spot where, since 1989, eight University of Miami students have been struck while trying to cross the street — hit a snag.

The owners of University Centre, the strip mall located on the east side of the street, were unwilling to give up five parking spaces so the project could proceed. This, despite being offered \$1.8 million in compensation.

I don't claim to know the market value of a parking space, but \$360,000 per seems like a fair deal, especially when the purpose of the proposed bridge is to enable a good portion of your customer base to make it safely to the door of your business.

Miami. It's enough to drive you crazy.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com



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The Trouble with Miami International Airport

It's not outgoing director José Abreu, it's politicians who think they're dictators

By Jack King
BT Contributor

Last month José Abreu, the director of Miami International Airport (and, actually, all the airports in the county), retired from the post and went to work in the private sector. I can hardly blame him. He had inherited what could be the worst airport in the nation and somehow turned in to a semi-palatable, semi-efficient operation that could at least get you to your destination.

As good as he was, Abreu couldn't solve all the airport's problems, the largest of which is the Miami-Dade County Commission. Our 13 commissioners truly believe they've been elected dictators of the county and that they're in charge of everything, no matter how little knowledge they have about anything.

At MIA they want to select the vendors and contractors, squeeze campaign contributions from the vendors, get jobs for their relatives and friends, and then hire someone else to straighten out the mess they've created.

A little history here.

It wasn't always like this. In the 1980s, Miami was just emerging as a real city. The commissioners, who were paid very little and had to have a real job outside county hall, generally hired professional directors for big departments like the airport and the seaport. These directors,

and directors for smaller departments, ran their operations with an iron hand, and as long as they didn't make too many waves, they kept their jobs.

How much power did they have? Here's a case in point: Dick Judy was the aviation director from 1971 to 1989, during a time when the county (with federal money) was building the Metro-rail system. There wasn't much to Miami in those days, and the only obvious stops for the Metrorail were downtown and the airport. Both seemed plausible, but Judy objected to an airport link. And he won.

People in Miami were very confused as to why the train didn't go to the airport, but for Judy it was a no-brainer. In those days, there was very little retail at the airport. It was just a place to get on an airplane and go somewhere.

The landing fees the airlines paid were minimal, so Judy had to find another way to increase revenues. His solution: Build parking garage after parking garage. Those garages made money — lots of it — from local travelers who drove their cars to MIA.

In the end, Judy was forced to resign for being too independent and clashing with commissioners. After that, they began to select airport directors who were amenable to their desires, including the selection of vendors that commissioners liked (read: campaign contributors, and jobs for their friends). It wasn't



José Abreu celebrates the north terminal's new baggage-handling system at MIA by demolishing the old one.

long before the commissioners had turned the tables on their airport directors. In essence the tail was now wagging the dog. And wag the dog they did.

They ran this scheme for a number of years at the airport and the seaport, both of which began devolving into really big messes. The county was spending tons of money, but MIA just got worse, a fact noticed by the industry and millions of international passengers — not a good thing for a city aspiring to world-class status. So county commissioners hired Angela Gittens, fresh from cleaning up Atlanta's corrupt airport and a rising star in airport management.

She straightened out the mess, stopped the bribes (oops... I mean campaign contributions), snatched power from the politicians, and ran MIA like a pro. Unfortunately, Miami wasn't quite ready to have something actually run right. The insiders rebelled. After three tumultuous years as director, Gittens was gone and things were back to normal.

Normal meant lots of money pouring through the system but nothing being accomplished. Again county commissioners knew they were in trouble and they hired José Abreu. The rest, as they say, is history.

Abreu left the airport in far better shape than he found it, but it is nowhere near good or completed. The north terminal (American Airlines) is by all guesses about 90 percent complete.

Most of the south terminal was completed 15 years ago and is truly obsolete. It's home to most of the foreign carriers, but customs is half an airport away, with no people mover. You have to walk.

Don't ask about the middle terminal. It is 50 years old and is a complete tear-down.

In late 2010, I interviewed José Abreu at his office (see "You May Now Move About the Airport," January 2011). As I was leaving, he said, "You know, the debt service for the airport is about \$1 million a day." I was stunned.

I added up, as best I could, what the cost could be for the complete airport renovation, Marlins stadium, port facilities, port tunnel, and numerous other projects. It comes to roughly \$20 billion in debt, which translates to some \$3 million in debt service every day for 40 years. And this is for stuff that has a 20- to 30-year shelf life.

Good luck.

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Summer Flings

Some tips for making the most of Miami's most oppressive season

By **Christian Cipriani**
BT Contributor

This year it was on a Sunday, and earlier than usual. Humid air hit me in the face, and an unmistakable film touched my skin, forcing me to use one of my least favorite words — “moist.” We had crossed the line from winter to summer. There is no spring. One day I'm in a cardigan, the next I'm breaking a sweat between the elevator and the car.

Summer in Miami can be a desperate existence, darting from one air-conditioned sanctuary to another, hiding from our very beautiful, very brutal sun. And if you're living life in the concrete jungle, fighting traffic and ready to boil over, you need local escapes to relieve the pressure.

Here is my humble list of essential getaways:

Shark Valley A fellow cyclist once described this place to me and I thought she was joking. What do you mean alligators just lie on the road as you cycle around them? But it's true. Head about 20 miles into the Everglades along the Tamiami Trail and on your left will be Shark Valley, part of Everglades National Park.

Inside you'll find a paved, 15-mile loop just for walking, biking, and tram tours, and it's one of the most remarkable things you will ever see. Make no mistake: The Everglades are *hot* in the

summer. But the heat and sunbathing alligators you inevitably meet along the way are infinitely less dangerous than biking on Miami's death-trap city streets.

Out there, on a quiet stretch of pavement, it's possible to feel an almost narcotic sensation of peace and isolation. At the halfway point you can ascend a concrete observation tower that looks down onto gators, fish, and turtles, and take in 360-degree views of this crazy swamp we call home. *Shark Valley, 36000 SW 8th St., Miami; 305-221-8776; www.nps.gov.*

Monkey Jungle Sometimes you just need to get away from people. For that, head to Monkey Jungle. I might be biased, but I love monkeys so much I might get one instead of kids. I don't care if this old gem of a primate zoo is small and expensive (about \$30 a head); it's worth every penny. This is where monkeys run free and humans are caged. Drop a few raisins in a hanging dish and watch a black-capped capuchin discover the pulley.

You can also find plenty of spots where they've dug under or yanked back the fencing, allowing for a more hands-on exchange with man's closest relatives. I suggest splurging on a true face-to-face encounter, and experience the pure joy of feeling dozens of feather-light squirrel monkeys turn your body into a jungle gym. No pun intended. *Monkey Jungle, 14805 SW 216th St, Miami; 305-235-1611; www.monkeyjungle.com.*



Courtesy of Gold Coast Railroad Museum

Gold Coast Railroad Museum Zoo Miami is great, but right next door is a less frequented, far more unusual attraction. The Gold Coast Railroad Museum makes me feel like an overexcited ten-year-old. They have trains. Real trains. *Tons* of them. And they're all linked together and seemingly untouched since the day they went out of commission. You can literally climb aboard at one end and walk through history, each train car dense with a feeling of ghostly nostalgia. It's one of those places you can't believe exists here in South Florida. Added bonus: The people running the museum absolutely love what they do. *Gold Coast Railroad Museum, 12450 SW 152nd St, Miami; 305-253-0063; www.gcrm.org.*

Phil's Berry Farm I admit I haven't been here yet. I normally brave the line at Knaus Berry Farm for their Dunker-made cinnamon buns, but they shut down for the summer, and Phil's sounds like a worthy alternative. I actually got married next door at the Cooper Estate, and they gave my wife a free milkshake while she was getting ready. Now *that's* good karma.

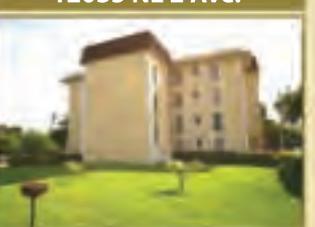
If you're looking to get out of the city this summer, and milkshakes, sweet

monkey bread, handpicked produce, and fresh air sound attractive, Phil's Berry Farm is where you want to be. And if you've never been to the Redland, prepare to forget everything you know about what a strawberry can be. *Phil's Berry Farm, 13955 SW 248th St., Homestead; 305-905-2284.*

34th Street Beach If you don't have a boat — or even better, and *more* Miami, a friend with a boat — the beach is where you'll most likely end up on a summer weekend. But finding the perfect beach with guaranteed parking is a challenge taken up by many and mastered by very few.

I've committed myself to numerous beaches over the years, from Fort Lauderdale all the way to the tip of South Pointe Park, convinced that I was on to something. But in my quest, I've come to the Socratic realization that knowledge simply reveals how much I have yet to learn. That said, I'm currently parking in the public lot at Collins and 34th Street. It'll do for now.

Want to share your summer escape ideas? Send them to letters@biscaynetimes.com

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BizBuzz

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

By Pamela Robin Brandt
BT Contributor

Happy Cinco de Mayo! We were going to say that in Spanish, but May 5, which many people mistakenly think is Mexican Independence Day (actually September 16), is more All-American in origin than May's other major holidays: Mother's Day (conceived by a West Virginia woman in 1905) and Memorial Day, first observed in 1868. Whereas Cinco de Mayo was first celebrated in 1863 — in California.

Though the celebration also known as "Cinco de Drinko" did derive from an Mexican army victory over France in 1862, the impact of the battle in Mexico was minor. Cinco de Mayo isn't even a national holiday in Mexico.

Not so in the USA's Mexican restaurants. In fact all three locations in BT territory of **Lime Fresh Mexican Grill** (14831 Biscayne Blvd., Buena Vista Avenue in the Shops at Midtown Miami, and 7 W. Flagler St.) are stretching the holiday from one day to three (May 3 through May 5) with, appropriately, all-day Drinko specials: \$2 Corona Extra or Light; \$4 margaritas, sangrias, or sangritas.

At seafood specialist **Tuna's** (17850 W. Dixie Hwy., 305-932-0630), a returning advertiser, the chef is Rolf Felhauer, who spent 28 years heading the kitchen at classic continental/Euro eatery La Paloma, so it may seem odd that the place

is having its fourth annual Cinco de Mayo festival. But Drinko de Mayo is popular in Europe, too, and Tuna's is a popular hangout. So enjoy specials like \$3 Coronas and margaritas, plus food served till 2:00 a.m. — as usual. There's a special Mother's Day menu on May 12, too.

On Mother's Day, Miami's first and still favorite izakaya **Yakko-san** (3881 NE 163rd St., 305-947-0064) is offering free champagne and a rose to all moms. For those who haven't been to chef Hiro's long-famous after-hours eatery since its move to larger, sleek new digs in 2011, other changes include lunchtime hours, a sushi bar, and a full liquor bar.

Since the 13th Century, May 15 has been the date of one of Italy's most famous festivals, the Corsa dei Ceri (Candle Race), in Gubbio. **Laurenzo's** (16385 W. Dixie Hwy., 305-945-6381), North Miami's massive market/farmer's market/wine shop/caffe complex, will not attempt to duplicate the actual race, in which teams careen around carrying torches weighing 1000 pounds each. But David Laurenzo will be featuring a special dish from the 700-person feast crowning the Corsa: zuppa di fasolan in salsa piccante. The spicy clam soup will be served 11:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.

You've probably already noticed this one because it's hard to miss, but just in case: **Whole Foods Market** opened a new Art Deco-inspired location on May 1, at 12150 Biscayne Blvd. The prepared



foods department alone features more than 100 offerings (including pizzas from an open-hearth oven, coffee and pasta bars, and tastings from a mobile cart). The new store also offers a wide variety of locally sourced bakery, dairy, frozen foods, produce, and grocery items.

You know those tantalizing "COMING SOON" ads for **Guarapo Juice Bar** (649 NE 79th St., 786-452-1622) that have been running since January? Well, tah-dah! It's open, and serving organic juices and "power smoothies" that are not only tasty but, the menu says, will help fix almost anything that ails you.

And another tah-dah! After literally years of delays, building permits have come through for **Butcher Shop Beer Garden & Grille** (165 NW 23rd St., 305-846-9120). The Wynwood venue, which has already become a popular hangout while operating on a limited basis, will be temporarily closed while owners Fred and Igor Niznik construct the place they've long envisioned: a prime meats butcher shop where patrons can buy to cook at home, or stay and they'll cook for you, while you enjoy artisanal beers and the full liquor bar. We'll alert you about the grand reopening.

At **Fish Fish** (13488 Biscayne Blvd., 786-732-3124), Rebecca Nachias and Melvyn Franks, the married team

that owns the sustainable fresh seafood market/restaurant/lounge, will be cutting back on hours this summer to spend some vacation time with their kids. The good news: Happy hour, formerly Monday-Thursday evenings, is now all day every day, at the bar only. That means 2-for-1 drinks, plus bar bites including must-not-miss tempura-battered rock shrimp with chipotle remoulade.

Speaking of family vacay time, the **Shops at Midtown Miami** (3401 N. Miami Ave., 305-573-3371) is kicking off summer by bringing back its free outdoor Midtown Moonlit Movie series, on Fountain Plaza. Running on alternate Wednesdays through August 21, the schedule so far is: *Wreck-It Ralph* (5/8), *Life of Pi* (5/22), *Parental Guidance* (6/12), and *Diary of a Wimpy Kid, Dog Days* (6/26). We'll let you know the rest ASAP.

Frequent fun family events are also held at **LoudGirl Exchange** (6621 Biscayne Blvd., 305-458-5783), "where families go to trade clothing, art, and ideas," according to the motto of this unique kid consignment shop/educational toy store/art gallery. But note this: Don't go looking for summer fun at LoudGirl's current address. On June 1 the shop is moving to new quarters at 645 NE 79th St.

Continued on page 26



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NORTH MIAMI

KEYSTONE POINT 4 BR 4 BTH

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\$999,000

NORTH MIAMI BEACH

EASTERN SHORES / 3 BR 3 BTH

Great Opportunity - Split floor plan. 2 car garage. Boat elevator, dock, pool, spa. Direct ocean access and minutes and no fixed bridges to Haulover Inlet. 85FT WF.



\$475,000

NORTH MIAMI BEACH

EASTERN SHORES 3 BR 2 1/2 BTH

Nice corner unit waterfront townhome located in the guard-gated community of Eastern Shores. Built in 2000. Over 1,600 SQ FT. High 9FT Ceilings and 8FT doorways. Attached one car garage. Dock space for upto 25ft boat.



\$169,000

THE YACHT CLUB MARINA

AVENTURA 65FT BOAT DOCK SLIP

Aventura 65 FT plus boat dock slip with 22FT beam located in Gated Community/Marina. Great location in Aventura. 24 HR guard-gated.



\$269,000

Corner Unit / Wrap Around Terrace
30 FT BOAT DOCK SPACE

NORTH MIAMI BEACH

EASTERN SHORES / 2 BR 2 BTH

Great direct wide bay views and 30ft assigned boat dock space included. This corner unit is located smack on the Intracoastal waterway and has direct ocean access and no fixed bridges to Haulover Inlet.



\$729,000

MIAMI SHORES

POOL HOME 3 BR 3 BTH

Remodeled spacious 3 BR 3 BTH single family home. All bedrooms have dedicated remodeled bathrooms and walk-in-closets. 2 car garage with hurricane rated door. Heated pool with a screened patio and nice backyard. Open spacious floor plan.



\$1,085,000

NORTH MIAMI BEACH

EASTERN SHORES 4 BR 3 BTH

Beautifully renovated waterfront pool home. Dock your boat. Boat elevator included. Ocean access & no fixed bridges to Haulover Inlet. 2 Car garage has been converted to office/library or can be used as 5th BR. Storm Shutters. 24/7 Guard-Gated Community.



\$1,970,000

NORTH MIAMI BEACH

EASTERN SHORES / 4 BR 3 BTH

plus office

This beautiful waterfront home is located in the 24/7 guard-gated community of Eastern Shores. Huge dock with ocean access that can handle up to 160FT yacht. Tennis court with lights..



\$899,000

SUNNY ISLES BEACH

POINCIANA ISLAND 4 BR 3 BTH Approx 2659 SF

This private island corner townhome has a huge marble backyard. Master suite with balcony overlooking the water. Finger pier included behind unit with boat elevator in place. 1 car garage. Ocean access/no fixed bridges to Haulover Inlet. 24 hr guard gated community.



**Morningside adorable 2be/1ba
condo \$199,000**

Live in Miami's most sought after gated community for under \$200k? It's possible! Don't miss this amazing opportunity and enjoy all the amazing amenities of Miami's largest bay front park: Tennis courts, basketball, bay front pool, boat ramp, kayak. All redone unit with bamboo floors and granite kitchen with SS appliances.

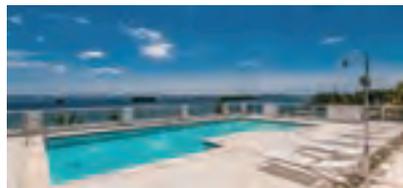
William Harbour 786 247 1185



**Shenandoah Multifamily building
\$649,000**

10-unit multifamily building in great Shenandoah neighborhood, close to Calle Ocho and the Roads. Great location close to shops and highways yet in low density area surrounded with historic single family homes. 100% occupancy, 8% cap rate, great upside potential!

Marie-Charlotte Piro 305 495 6539



**Los on the Bay 2Bedroom corner
\$465,000**

Architectural gem! Ultramoderne 5-story boutique residence right on the bay with a fabulous bayfront pool. This 1398 sq ft cutting-edge corner unit has huge indoor/outdoor living areas with high ceilings and lots of light!

Marie-Charlotte Piro 305 495 6539



**Bay front studio with million-Dollar
location \$175,000**

Direct, unobstructed bay views from this remodeled 400 sq ft studio in the Venetia Condo, just minutes from South Beach via the Venetian Causeway. Located right next to the planned new complex of the Genting Group. Amazing upside potential!

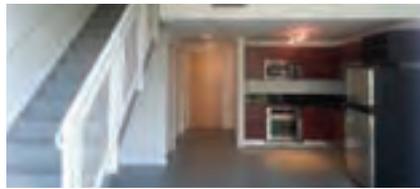
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**Paramount bay 2 bedroom rental
\$3300/month**

Amazing views from this beautiful 1200 sq ft apartment in super luxury bayfront condo. Huge balcony, open kitchen, beautiful white tile floors.

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**Vizcayne 2level loft
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BizBuzz

Continued from page 24

Gotta dance? Or just needing to get in bathing-suit shape for the dog days? Welcome new advertiser **Miami Dance Studio** (222 NE 25th St., 305-572-1119). The studio offers not only all manner of classic and social dance classes, for all ages, but a wide range of exercise/fitness classes. Go to www.miadancestudio.com for a full rundown.

If you're at an age, and/or in a condition, where complete medically based body transformation seems a better idea than tap dancing, check out new advertiser **NuLife Institute** (1040 Biscayne Blvd., 8th floor, 305-400-0005), a medical clinic specializing in hormone-replacement therapy programs that turn you into a healthier, younger-looking you. As well as correcting hormonal imbalances, NuLife provides body treatments (from contouring to detox wraps), non-invasive hydrafacials, and just about everything else needed to reverse degenerative effects caused by age and lifestyle.

Or maybe you're just having a bad hair day. Visit the Miami Beach Convention Center May 18-20, and check out booth 811 to see the "No Flip Balboa Comb," invented by local Kevin Balboa, co-owner of **The Cutting Room** (1666 79th St. Causeway #100, 305-868-8725), to make the non-ergonomic rat tail comb obsolete for sectioning, teasing, and weaving. Or just drop by the salon to buy and/or let pros show you how it's used.

Getting in shape for summer means not just you, but your things — like your pool. If your pool has problems owing to a faulty filter, pool pump, heat pump, or gas heater, make sure you not only get it working but keep it working by shopping for parts at **Pinch-A-Penny** (9071 Biscayne Blvd., 786-518-3193). This pool supply company has a new program providing in-store purchasers of in-ground pool equipment an automatic extended warranty for three years, when combined with manufacturers' guarantees.

If the problem with your pool, however, is that iguanas are swimming and pooping in it, you'll want to contact Tom Portuallo at **Iguana Control** (www.iguanacontrol.com). May is, he advises, the start of hatching season for wild baby iguanas — who grow into destructive creatures over five feet long, that can take over your whole backyard. So this is the season for Iguana Control to take preventative measures, like seeking,

collapsing, and treating nesting burrows.

For many residents, South Florida summers are best enjoyed from inside one's home, looking out at the great muggy outdoors in air-conditioned comfort. So you'll want clean windows. Call **Window Gang** (6006 NW 6th Ave., 305-756-0349), a new advertiser. In addition to washing windows with a protective wash-wax formula, the Gang cleans/restores decks and roofs to eliminate mold/mildew; and declogs gutters to insure seasonal storms don't damage your house.

Cars need protection, too, from the paint-destroying oxidation of summer's sun. You can get that with the special offered this month by **Busy Bee Car Wash** (10550 Biscayne Blvd., 305-891-5889): An intensive "spring cleaning," with a wash and heavy-duty hand wax for \$40 (\$10 extra for SUVs, trucks, vans). "Think of wax as sun-block lotion for your car," explain the Bee boyz.

Still looking for a meaningful Mother's Day gift? Here's one she definitely won't have: One of your own family photos, transferred onto canvas for a personalized artwork. And this month the folks at Canvas Lifestyle (www.CanvasLifestyle.com) makes the gift easier on readers' wallets with a major 30% discount if you use the promo code BISCAYNE30 when ordering from their website.

If mom and you love art but aren't so much into the DIY thing, **Modern Homes 2 Go** (270 NE 39th St., 305-572-1222) has a perfect solution. From May 6-12, the company is offering 20% off on selected contemporary artwork, and an *additional* 20% off exclusively for BT readers who bring the paper to the store. Wow!

Does mom have more exotic artsy tastes? Check out the ad from new advertiser **Oriental Décor** (7226 Biscayne Blvd., 305-576-4727) for photos of some gorgeous décor items. The company's website, www.orientaldecorusa.com, has far more images of museum-quality vases, planters, garden seats, statues, furniture, fountains, and wall hangings. Better yet, drop in at the MiMo District store of Lionel Casey and Keni Chow, a third-generation expert on designer-quality Far Eastern art.

Welcome back to **The Collection German Furniture** (15400 Biscayne Blvd., 305-944-3727), an old friend who is returning with a new collection of spectacular sofas that convert into beds and chaise lounges, like the Roro model visible at the showroom, or the Lady Bug.

You could give one to mom. Frankly, though, it's so perfect for Miami condo-dwellers who need to accommodate guests that we'd keep it.

What an astonishing amount of activity is going on at schools during this month before summer vacation. First, our congratulations to Dr. Sarah Allison, founder/director of **Allison Academy** (1881 NE 164th St., 305-940-3922), a private grade 6-12 school renowned for its small class size, individual attention from teachers, community-oriented environment, and diversity. Both Dr. Allison and the school were honored last month by a proclamation from the City of North Miami Beach.

Congrats also to **W.J. Bryan Elementary Museums School** (1201 NE 125th St., 305-891-0602), which just received the Magnet School of Excellence Award from the Magnet Schools of America. The award is given to schools scoring highest marks nationwide in academic standards, innovation, specialized teaching staffs, and parent/community involvement.

At **Monsignor Edward Pace High School** (15600 NW 32nd Ave., 305-624-8524 x212) there's still time to register your 5th-7th graders for Spartan Boot Camp #2 on May 11, 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. No worries about ancient Greek sword fighting; the workshop is an intensive day of broadcasting, creative writing, and science experimentation. It's free, and lunch is included, too. Sign up at bit.ly/spartanbootcamp2.

And **Miami Country Day School** (601 NE 107th St., 305-761-1713) is gearing up for its summer day camp, which features new elements including yoga, drama, and circus activities. Register your 3-18-year-old now at www.miami-countryday.org/summer.

Learning doesn't stop at school this month. As part of 2013's speaker series from **Unity on the Bay** (411 NE 21st St.), renowned spiritual leader Dr. Michael Beckwith will present a seminar titled "Living from the Overflow: How to Embody a Consciousness of Wealth," on May 30 at 7:00 p.m. Sharing the program: spiritually uplifting singer-songwriter Rickie Byars Beckwith. Tix, \$50, are available at www.unityonthebay.org.

To honor Yom Yerushalayim (Jerusalem Day), both a religious and Israeli national holiday, **Temple Israel of Greater Miami** (137 NE 19th St., 305-573-5900) will present "America's Role in the Arab-Israeli Conflict," with Chaim Shacham, Consul General of Israel to South Florida,

and Daniel Kurtzer, former Ambassador to Israel and Egypt. Tickets to the May 7 event (which begins with a wine/cheese reception at 5:00 p.m.) are \$10 in advance, from americasrole.brownpapertickets.com, or \$18 at the door.

Learn what you need to know about how short sales work, how to avoid foreclosure, how your credit score gets affected by either, and more at a Short Sale vs. Foreclosure Seminar presented by new advertiser Weichert Realtors — Best Beach Real Estate (3933 Biscayne Blvd.) and co-sponsor Miami-Dade College. Register for the event, scheduled for May 10, 1:00-3:00 p.m. at Weichert's office, by calling 305-936-2585; the fee is \$45.

Whether your real estate transaction is a residence or commercial property, new advertiser **MiMo Title Services** (7001 Biscayne Blvd., 2nd floor, 305-759-9997), a full-service company, can handle your closings and refinancing. Barbara Gimenez, who heads the company, actually owns property in the MiMo District and is on the board of the MiMo Biscayne Association. As an active local as well as an attorney, she knows her way around these often-delayed and otherwise frustrating situations. Mention this issue's ad for a special settlement fee.

Since we're discussing real estate, we must mention that, though the attractively understated ad from another new advertiser, attorney **Andrew Dickman** (305-758-3621), mentions only land use, zoning, and environmental laws as specialties, he has also, since 1989, been a true White Knight in his work with homeowner associations, especially when they're battling individuals, development companies, or government bodies from whom they fear harm. Get a less overly modest scoop at www.andrewdickman.us.

Finally, for those who think that top real estate agents do nothing but sell/buy real estate, especially at a company as successful as **Majestic Properties** (35 NE 40th St., 305-677-5055), South Florida's premier luxe real estate firm, there's proof to the contrary in the full-service boutique firm's newest service: "Majestic Mondays," a once-a-month happy hour event at the Design District's Oak Tavern. The first party (featuring hors d'oeuvres, drinks, and a DJ) is scheduled for May 6, 5:00-8:00 p.m. Go party, network, maybe buy a house.

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A handy guidebook reveals Miami through its architecture





.....

The *Pocket Guide to Miami Architecture* is the third in a series of architectural guides to U.S. cities written by Chicagoan Judith Paine McBrien, with illustrations by John F. DeSalvo. Following a guide to her hometown of Chicago, that great architectural city, and Los Angeles, where the fantasy of moviemaking is translated into architecture, Ms. Paine's exploration of Miami, Miami Beach, and Coral Gables may seem an unusual third installment, but, she says, "Miami and Miami Beach are two of the most interesting cities in the world. They're young, dynamic, diverse cities set by the sea in a very dramatic landscape."

In her introduction to the book, which was published last year, McBrien elaborates: "Unlike many cities that evolved as trading or transport hubs, Miami and Miami Beach are sudden, intentional urban constructs. Miami and Miami Beach were invented as tourist destinations; Coral Gables as an ideal City Beautiful. From the very beginning their success depended upon being, and being perceived as, physically attractive."

Buildings included in *Pocket Guide*, with rare exceptions, are accessible to the public. "The book is about neighborhoods and history, as well as pure architecture," says McBrien. "The idiosyncratic buildings tell us about the personality of the city and community by humanizing the built environment." And so there are a range of building types: hotels, churches, banks, courthouses, and that Miami Beach phenomenon — highly designed parking garages.

The buildings are a variety of ages, spanning Miami's somewhat brief

history. There are some great idiosyncratic choices, a few of the buildings are ugly even, and some obscure. Some represent significant architects. Some don't.

For the most part, buildings are near enough to each other to be organized into tours, says McBrien, "to encourage readers to walk, experience the buildings firsthand, and see the city up close." The idea of walking the city, beginning with Chicago, is continued here, although a couple of the five tours (Coral Gables and Coconut Grove, two in Miami, and two in Miami Beach) do require a car, or at least a bicycle.

A few of the entries are not individual buildings, but instead coordinated architectural assemblages. John F. DeSalvo, an architect, created a crisp line drawing for each. The result is a distilled look at Miami's architecture, with 102 original line drawings of slightly more than 102 buildings, and text written for the casual tourist and the serious architecture nerd alike.

What follows is a sampling of the two Miami tours, with an emphasis on older buildings, evidence that Miami does indeed have a past, even if it didn't really begin until the 20th Century. Instead of drawings, the buildings

presented here have been portrayed in their contemporary context by *Biscayne Times* photographer Silvia Ros.

These excerpts from *Pocket Guide to Miami Architecture* are copyright © 2012 by Judith Paine McBrien, reprinted with permission of the publisher, W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.

— Sean McCaughan

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**TEXT BY JUDITH PAINE MCBRIEN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY SILVIA ROS**

1. Ingraham Building
25 SE 2nd Avenue
Schultze and Weaver, 1927
Renovation: Rodriguez, Khuly, Quiroga, Architects 1990

The 13-story, 200,000-square-foot Ingraham Building is a fitting tribute to its namesake, engineer James E. Ingraham: handsome, efficient, and richly attired. The U-shaped cube rises from the corner of SE 2nd Avenue and SE 1st Street as a Bedford limestone block divided by cornices and belt courses into three main horizontal sections: a base, a midsection with regular-spaced fenestration, and a penthouse level above the 11th floor with arched bifora windows. A truncated hip roof covered with Spanish tiles

supported by a bracketed cornice tops the composition. But it is the lobby's scale, colorful vaulted ceilings, and colossal limestone Doric columns that give the Ingraham Building its cachet. Ingraham first visited Florida in 1874 to see his grandfather, then rector of Trinity Episcopal Church in St. Augustine. After working for railroad entrepreneur Henry Plant, he joined Henry Flagler's Florida East Coast Railway Company, rising to become vice president as well as president of Flagler's real estate firm, the Model Land Company. When Ingraham died in 1924, Miami was booming. Construction of a Class A office building in his honor made sense, especially since noted architectural firm Schultze and Weaver was available, with several other projects underway nearby.

2. Alfred I. duPont Building
169 East Flagler Street
Marsh and Saxelbye, 1939

Few downtown skyscrapers were built in Miami after the 1926 hurricane or during the Great Depression of the 1930s, so the construction of the 17-story Alfred I. duPont Building in 1937 signaled

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3



Steel, Stone, Glass

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renewed faith in the future of the “Magic City.” Built as the headquarters of the Florida National Bank, which Alfred I. duPont (1864-1935) had organized in 1931, the duPont Building is also the only Art Deco/Depression Moderne high-rise in downtown Miami. The black granite banding of the first-floor retail, the sleek stone façade, the setbacks facing NE 2nd Avenue, and the ornate stylized interior details are hallmarks of this architectural style. Note especially the palm trees on the brass elevators, the ceiling of the second-floor banking room with wooden cedar beams painted with motifs derived from Seminole Indian designs, and the ornate teller grillwork. DuPont left Delaware for Jacksonville, Florida, in 1926 and began a second successful investment career. William Mulford Marsh (1889-1946) and Harold Frederick Saxelbye (1885-1964) led the most prolific architecture firm in Jacksonville and had already designed duPont’s 25-room Epping Forest Mansion on the St. Johns River. When the time came to choose architects to design a skyscraper honoring Alfred I. duPont, they were the obvious choice.

3. Dade County Courthouse 73 West Flagler Street

**A. Ten Eyck Brown and August Geiger, 1925
Restoration of Courtroom 6-1: M. C. Harry & Associates, 2006**

For decades the 27-story Miami-Dade County Courthouse dominated Miami’s

skyline. And no wonder: its height, symmetry, setbacks, and roofline made it visibly iconic from every angle. Like the Los Angeles City Hall and Nebraska’s State Capitol, the Courthouse also expressed a new way of thinking about what a major civic structure should look like. From now on skyscrapers, not just domed and columned buildings, could signify public use. The courthouse occupies a full city block and rises from a double square base. The first three stories are faced with Stone Mountain granite and decorated with six colossal fluted Doric columns flanked by two pilasters. Above them is an entablature and attic story. The second 3 stories are set back and include six double-story pilasters with Egyptian capitals surmounted by a balustrade. The 7th to the 20th floors form a tower. The slab then changes to an octagonal shape and a further setback occurs at the 24th floor. Topping the courthouse is a 3-story pyramidal roof. Originally the building housed not only courtrooms but also City Hall, county and city jails, and attendant governmental offices. City Hall moved out in 1954, but the courtrooms remain. Note especially Courtroom 6-1, recently restored.

4. Seybold Arcade 36 NE 1st Street Kiehnel and Elliott, 1921-25

Flagler Street Arcade entrance: Robert Law Weed, 1939

German pioneer John Seybold (1872-1940) was among Miami’s most energetic entrepreneurs. He first ran a



restaurant, then a famous bakery, developed an exclusive residential neighborhood, now the Spring Garden Historic District, widened part of Wagner Creek to become a canal he named after himself, and hired one of South Florida’s leading architectural firms, Kiehnel and Elliott, to build the 2-story Seybold Arcade in 1921 with a grand entrance on 1st Street. As business boomed, he

asked the architects, who were completing the Scottish Rite Temple, to add an additional 8 stories. The exterior consists of a horizontal band of ten windows regularly spaced between rounded pilasters and grouped within six vertical piers that rise the full length of the structure. This pattern is repeated

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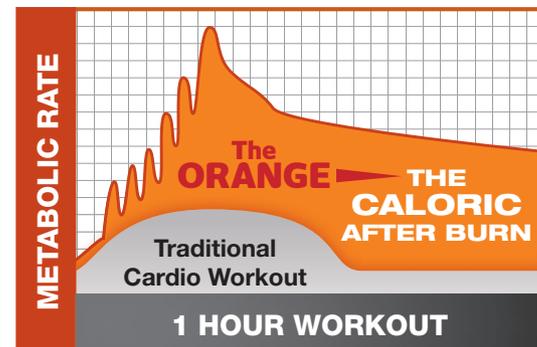
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Steel, Stone, Glass

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across the entire façade. A decorative band of icicle-shaped terra-cotta forms mark the third story. Architect Robert Law Weed (1897-1961) added the 3-story Flagler Street entrance in 1939. At first the new addition housed professional offices, but for the past 40 years it has become a leading center for the jewelry trade. Arcades were a popular retail shopping form when enough property could be assembled to create a through-street corridor in dense downtowns.

5. Shoreland Arcade 120-136 NE 1st Street Pfeiffer and O'Reilly, 1925

Flagler Street façade renovation: Robert Law Weed, 1939

The 2-story Shoreland Arcade was clearly designed for curb appeal. Its crisp masonry façade is divided into 8



storefront bays with generous windowed arches to invite customers inside. Pilasters dividing the bays add further detail as do the colorful medallions symbolizing events in Florida's history. The interior lobby is more elaborate. The ceiling is coffered, the tile floors are set within terrazzo, and the walls are rusticated masonry. Moreover, care is taken

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Steel, Stone, Glass

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to repeat the scale and style of the exterior arched display windows on the 5 bays leading to the elevator core. Could it be that there is more to this story than shopping? Indeed, the Shoreland Company, known for developing Miami Shores, the Venetian Causeway, and Biscayne Boulevard, originally planned the building not as a stand-alone arcade but as the retail base of its planned 20-story headquarters. The sudden collapse of the real estate market in 1926 abruptly ended that scheme. The next year, the Shoreland Company went bankrupt. But the arcade, which once extended to Flagler Street as well as to NE 1st Avenue, was already finished and has remained nearly intact through the years. Today it is among the last surviving examples of its kind in Miami.



6. Old U.S. Post Office and Courthouse
100 NE 1st Avenue
Oscar Wenderoth, 1914; addition, Kiehnel and Elliott, plans, 1937
Renovation: Architectural Design Consultants, 2002

The old limestone United States Post Office and Courthouse is a prime example of the neoclassical style, the dominant aesthetic for public buildings in America a century ago, especially in self-conscious cities that aspired to be beautiful. The harmonious proportions of the 3-story façade, the quality of materials, and the numerous exquisite details give this simple form a dignity worthy of Miami's first federal building. Note the underside of the tiled hipped roof revealing the wooden brackets once brilliantly polychromed, the layered entablature atop the pilasters, and the repeating dentil, and egg and dart, patterns that add richness to the simple connection between vertical and horizontal planes. Oscar Wenderoth (1871-1938) executed these classical elements with confidence. Wenderoth, named supervising

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Steel, Stone, Glass

Continued from page 34

architect for the U.S. Treasury Department in 1912, had previously worked for the federal government before joining the distinguished New York firm of Carrère & Hastings, designers of the New York Public Library. But three years after the appointment to his prestigious post, he suddenly resigned; by 1920 he was completely blind. In 1937 the loggia was enclosed when the building was converted to a bank. In 1948, Kiehnel and Elliott's 1937 plans were followed, adding 2-story wings to the east and south elevations.

7. David W. Dyer Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse

300 NE 1st Avenue

Paist & Steward with Marion Manley, 1933
Expansion: Spillis Candela & Partners, 1983

The construction of the U.S. Post Office and Courthouse was an important project for downtown Miami in the early 1930s during depressing economic times. Amid the gloom arose this large, 3-story limestone structure with an



7

exterior of classical elements mixed with Mediterranean design and an elaborate interior featuring marble, gilt, leather doors, and crystal chandeliers. More restrained than its earlier counterpart, the exterior features a 2-story central bay



8

that projects slightly and is composed of Corinthian columns that support a simple entablature and alternate with two levels of fenestration. At each end of the colonnade are bays with paired Corinthian columns. The north and

south façades follow a similar rhythm with pilasters used instead of columns. The third floor is recessed and has smaller paired windows. Terra-cotta tiles cover a shallow hipped roof. The interior includes an open courtyard with arched entryways and a 2-story gallery. A 1983 addition that extended the building to a full city block includes a second courtyard. The building was renamed in honor of Judge Dyer, a former chief justice of the Southern District, in 1997. But today the structure lies abandoned, the result of air-contamination issues that forced tenant evacuation in 2008.

8. Freedom Tower

600 Biscayne Boulevard

Schultze and Weaver, 1925

Renovation: Rodriguez & Quiroga Architects, 2003

Historic name: Miami Daily News Tower

Looking for inspiration when his firm received major commissions in South Florida in the 1920s, designer Leonard Schultze was clearly taken by the Giralda Bell Tower in Seville, Spain, not once, but three times: the Freedom Tower, the

Continued on page 38




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Steel, Stone, Glass

Continued from page 36

Biltmore Hotel in Coral Gables, and the Roney Plaza Hotel in Miami Beach (demolished). The Freedom Tower came first and is the most elaborate. It was developed as the headquarters and printing plant of the *Miami Daily News*, Miami's oldest newspaper, after former Democratic presidential nominee James Cox purchased the paper in 1923. The entrance is marked with an arched doorway flanked by two columns that support a swan's-neck pediment with a richly decorated arched window set in-between, above, and a decorative stone escutcheon below. Set on a 3-story base, the 12-story tower is 3 bays wide and 3 bays deep with a 2-story setback at the upper level that is topped with an octagonal tower. In the 1960s, after the newspaper had moved out, this tall beacon on the bay became the site offering services for thousands of Cuban refugees. It was renamed Freedom Tower to honor that purpose. Today it is the home of Miami-Dade College. Don't miss the New World mural inside.



9

9. Bacardi USA
2100 Biscayne Boulevard
Tower: Sacmag International, 1963; Annex: Ignacio Carrera-Justiz, 1973
 Bacardi USA is quintessential Miami. It combines the young city's Mid-century Modern style with the artistic



10

expressionism of its Latin culture. The complex consists of two structures linked by a plaza: an 8-story reinforced-concrete tower faced on the narrow north and south sides with 28,000 blue and white floral tiles designed by Brazilian artist Francisco Brennand (b. 1927) and

a 2-floor square structure built ten years later by architect Ignacio Carrera-Justiz that is covered with a glass façade mural based on a painting by Johannes Dietz. The Bacardi Corporation valued fine design: its Mexico City offices were by

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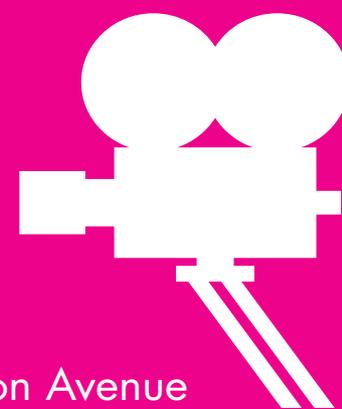
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Steel, Stone, Glass

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River. William English acquired the land and brought slaves from North Carolina who were skilled stonemasons to construct the 95-by-17-foot 1-story building and a 2-story mansion (since demolished), both made of oolite rock, a kind of soft limestone found along the Florida coast. When the army returned during the Third Seminole War (1855–1858), the slave quarters became soldiers' barracks. In 1891, Miami pioneer Julia Tuttle bought the property, moved into the mansion, and renovated the barracks as tourist accommodations. The nearby Wagner Homestead (1855-58), originally on Wagner Creek, is the oldest known home still standing in Dade County. In 1979 the Dade Heritage Trust and the City of Miami moved it to the park.

12. Miami Tower
100 SE 2nd Street
Pei Cobb Freed & Partners, 1987
Formerly CenTrust, Bank of America at International Place

Built originally for CenTrust Bank, Miami Tower is an elegant solution for a small, complicated site. First of all, the 37-story, 600,000-square-foot skyscraper had to be built atop an existing 10-story garage that abutted the elevated tracks of the Metromover. It also had to incorporate



an elevated Metromover rail station, connect to the James L. Knight Center, and create a distinctive presence on the skyline without frontage on either Biscayne Bay or the Miami River. The architects' plan was to use only part of the garage roof as the base for the tower. Thus, the tower would not directly face the rail line and the remaining space could be used for a rooftop park. A handsome marble lobby on the 11th floor serves as a connecting hub for transit riders, office workers, and convention visitors. Three cascading curving sections facing southeast give the glass tower identity; the backside of the building is straight. The pièce de résistance is a clever lighting system that allows each of the three tiers to be programmed differently. Colorful display options used for seasonal and other celebratory events continue to make Miami Tower a favorite city landmark. Attractive by day, it looks best at night.

13. Riverwalk and M
88 SE 4th Street at Riverwalk Metromover Station
R&R Studios, 1996

Fort Dallas Park: Miami Riverwalk, ongoing
One of the most historic, and accessible, sections of Miami's riverfront is Fort Dallas Park. Blessed with a spectacular seaside setting, Miami was slow to

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14

Steel, Stone, Glass

Continued from page 42

see the 5.5-mile-long Miami River as a public amenity. But improvement plans spearheaded by the Miami River Commission and its partners are changing that perception. Today more than half of the public Miami River Greenway is either constructed or has fully funded plans to become so. The goal is to provide a continuous pedestrian pathway along the Miami River or adjacent roadway from the river's mouth at Biscayne Bay to the river's terminus at the Miami International Airport. The Riverwalk Metromover Station references that effort. A colossal red "M" designed by Roberto Behar and Rosario Marquardt marks the location of Miami's founder Julia Tuttle's home and doubles as a monument of Miami's centenary. This 45-by-19-by-6-foot sculpture is an excellent example of the Miami-Dade County Art in Public Places program. It humanizes the 8-story Metromover access by offering a pedestrian pathway through the legs of the M and by its traditional, but oversized, pocket watch clock. The M is also symbolic and meant to encourage people to extend the letter into words of their choice.

**14. Flagler Worker's House (Royal Palm Cottage)
 Fort Dallas Park, 60-64 SE 4th Street
 Joseph A. McDonald, c. 1897**

This little yellow house on Miami's Riverwalk is easy to miss in the shadow of high-rise developments all around it.



15

Yet the building is a significant link to Miami's early days. It was one of at least 30 cottages built to house workers constructing the grand, exclusive Royal Palm Hotel (1897) being developed by railroad entrepreneur Henry Flagler the year after Miami became a city. Canadian Joseph McDonald (1842-1918), who oversaw construction of the Royal Palm Hotel, likely had these cottages built as well. The 2-story clapboard structure is a common nineteenth-century American vernacular housing type but now so rare in Miami that this building is the last known example. Three bays wide, with a gable roof, the house includes a 1-story porch and windows with 6-over-6 lights on the front and 2-over-2 lights on the side flanked by shutters. In 1980, to prevent demolition, it was moved to Fort Dallas Park. This park was once the site of the United States military post established in 1836 on the plantation of Richard Fitzpatrick. Fort Dallas became the site for Miami's early development when pioneer Julia Tuttle renovated one of the fort's abandoned properties as her home.

**15. The Atlantis on Brickell
 2025 Brickell Avenue
 Arquitectonica, 1982**

The Atlantis on Brickell is clever, colorful, and bold. It not only put the young firm of Arquitectonica on the international map but also helped rebrand the city of Miami itself: every week the

Continued on page 46

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Miami Herald

Continued from page 44

Atlantis was featured in the opening credits of the hit television show Miami Vice, symbolizing Miami as a cool, hip place. The façade can be understood as signage. First is the striking 37-foot rectangular hole cut out of the middle of the 20-story glass and steel façade that jolts our visual expectations and arrests our attention. Paradoxically, this void is meant to be seen: the walls are painted a vivid yellow, a red staircase spirals through the space, and a gigantic palm tree seems planted in the air. Next, the use of bold colors continues with the placement of a large red triangle on the east side of the roof balanced by four yellow triangular awnings on the lower floors and by four red columns supporting the entrance canopy. The north façade has a colossal blue grid overlaying the surface, equally emphasizing the horizontal and vertical elements that comprise the plan. Completing this graphic composition of primary colors and shapes is a full-height glass curve facing Biscayne Bay.

16. Commodore Ralph Middleton Munroe
Miami Marine Stadium
3501 Rickenbacker Causeway
Architect: Pancoast, Ferendino, Skeels, Grafton and Burnham
Engineer: Digmun Engineers, 1963

Cuban-born Hilario Candela (b. 1938) was just a youngster at Pancoast, Ferendino, Skeels, Grafton and Burnham when the city of Miami chose the firm to design a marine stadium for spectator water sports in the early 1960s. Yet he designed a modern masterpiece. Inspired by Latin American architects who were exploring concrete as an expressive form maker, including Max Borges in Havana, for whom he briefly worked, Candela understood the dramatic possibilities of poured-in-place concrete. Working with engineer Jack Meyer, he created a 6,566-seat open-air stadium sheltered by a 64-foot cantilevered folded plate roof that is only 6 inches thick. The roof consists of a series of hyperbolic paraboloids, a twisting shape that follows a convex curve about one axis and a concave curve about the other — a type favored for spanning large areas because its lightweight form requires fewer columnar supports and its curvature discourages water retention. Here, only eight slanting piers support the long roof, while diagonal members provide additional stability on the back. The stadium's waterfront setting overlooking downtown Miami is equally spectacular. Unfortunately, despite no evidence of serious damage, the city closed the stadium after Hurricane Andrew in 1992. New funding promised for renovation offers preservationists hope.

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Curb Your Dog or Pay the Price

For many, it's time to get serious about dog poop at Pace Park

By Wendy Doscher-Smith
BT Contributor

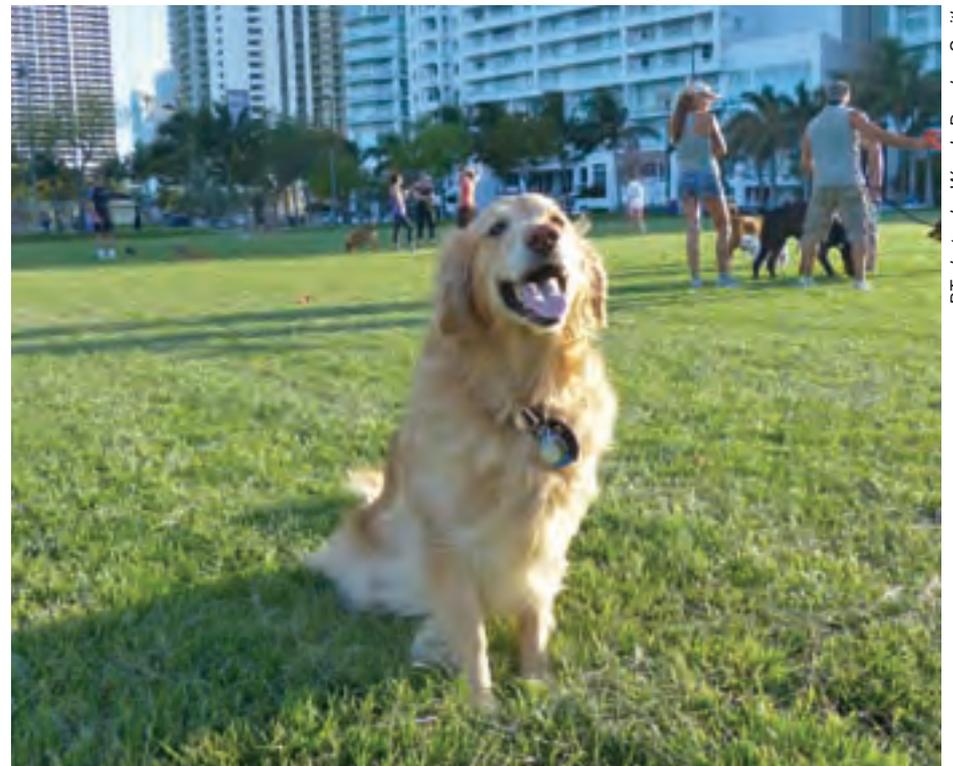
One of the Biscayne Corridor's most heavily used parks is in the middle of a battle, and it's not mud folks are slinging. It's poop. Dog poop, to be exact.

Since it reopened in 2003, after an extreme \$4 million makeover, Margaret Pace Park has had a magnetic pull on residents of the towering condominium buildings that ring its western perimeter. The park's waterfront location at 1745 N. Bayshore Dr. provides sweeping vistas across Biscayne Bay, and though it encompasses just eight acres, a lot of amenities have been packed into it: two tennis courts, kids play areas, volleyball and basketball courts, picnic tables and grills, waterfront walks, open green

spaces, and three elaborate "thrones" evoking Jewish, Spanish, and African-American heritages that have influenced South Florida — a public-art project by New World School of the Arts students.

To say that Pace Park is popular would be an understatement. While no statistics are available, the number of people who visit in any given week is off the charts. From morning till late at night, the place is a beehive of activity. One of the most popular activities seems to be dog owners letting their pets exercise, mingle with other canines, and answer nature's call. That last has become a source of friction.

Some people, it seems, do not always pick up the poop after their dogs relieve themselves. In a small park with an even smaller area where dogs can play, it doesn't take many irresponsible people to cause a lot of problems. Regular park



BT photos by Wendy Doscher-Smith

Margaret Pace Park is extremely popular with dogs and the people they love.

visitors worry about the grounds being contaminated by dog feces.

"The basic problem is they have bags to put the poo in, but people don't use them," says Juan Diaz, a nearby resident and parkgoer. "When they mow the lawn, it spreads and kids play on the lawn. It's very unhealthy."

Dog poop is one of the major issues that plague dog owners in condos, says

Maida Genser, a Tamarac resident and founder of Citizens for Pets in Condos, adding that the problems at Margaret Pace Park are "nothing new." The position of Citizens for Pets in Condos, Genser says, is that responsible pet owners and animal guardians should be allowed to keep their animals. Owners

Continued on page 51

Strapped for Cash? Try a Land Grab

Tiny Biscayne Park has the highest property tax in the county, but even that is not enough

By Erik Bojnansky
BT Senior Writer

An isosceles trapezoid. That's the shape of Biscayne Park on a map, which is essentially a triangle with one of its points flattened. Within this 384-acre trapezoid are trees, green lawns, single-family homes, a few small apartments, and 3055 souls.

Looming above Biscayne Park's northern border of NE 121st Street is the City of North Miami. South of NE 108th Street is Miami Shores. East and west

of this trapezoid are nameless, orphan neighborhoods ruled directly by Miami-Dade County.

The Bell David Planning Group, a North Miami-based consulting firm, is suggesting a major change to this map. They're recommending that Biscayne Park annex chunks of unincorporated Miami-Dade east of the FEC railroad tracks, west of Biscayne Boulevard, south of NE 121st Street, and north of a proposed border that hovers around NE 118th Street.

The 71-acre area, referred to as Biscayne Park East in the firm's report,



BT photo by Erik Bojnansky

These two office buildings could generate some hefty property taxes.

is very different from the Village of Biscayne Park. Besides single-family homes and apartments, the proposed annexation area includes industrial sectors, warehouses, office buildings,

and other commercial uses. Notable landmarks inside this region are a pair of very big office buildings known as

Continued on page 50

Biscayne Plaza, Meet Your New Boss

His name is Mr. Valero and he thinks you have a very bright future

By Erik Bojnansky
BT Senior Writer

For nearly 30 years a business partnership headed by Edward Easton and Allen Greenwald owned the Biscayne Plaza Shopping Center at 79th Street and Biscayne Boulevard, a sprawling retail center with stores like Sabor Tropical Supermarket, dd's Discounts, and Family Dollar that cater to the limited budgets of people residing in Palm Grove, Little Haiti, and other working-class enclaves.

That era came to an end this past March 27, when their company, Green-East Ltd. #2, sold Biscayne Plaza to Global Fund Investments and MMG Equity Partners for \$12 million.

Doron Valero, Global Fund Investments' managing partner, recently gave BT a tour of the 59-year-old shopping center while describing his plans. He's a slender, energetic, 56-year-old Israeli who has been acquiring shopping centers across the United States since 1985. His company, which he co-founded in 2007, owns 32 malls in Florida and Texas.

"This is one of the most exciting projects I've done since 1997, when we bought Skylake Mall," Valero says, referring to the enclosed, 1959 shopping center on Miami Gardens Drive that was a zombie mall by the time his company (at the time Equity One) bought it for \$14 million. Within two years, the 320,000-square-foot shopping center was demolished, replaced by the somewhat smaller, open-air Shops at Skylake, which includes Publix, LA Fitness, TJ Maxx, and several restaurants, retail outlets, offices, banks, salons, and medical practices.

"We revitalized that neighborhood," Valero declares. "Here, it's going to be the same."

The 79th Street corridor is already in the process of changing. The Adler

Group recently broke ground at the site of the aborted Oasis on the Bay condo project next to the 79th Street Causeway, where the company plans to construct a pair of 20-story buildings called Shorecrest Luxury Apartments.

Just across the street from Biscayne Plaza, the Fifteen Group last year bought the gold-clad office building that once served as the Immigration and Naturalization Service's Miami headquarters. (See "Going, Going, Gone!" April 2013.)

The Upper Eastside's neighborhoods straddling Biscayne Boulevard have been steadily gentrifying since the late 1990s. More recently, the MiMo Biscayne Boulevard Historic District (along the Boulevard between 50th and 77th streets) has been attracting investors like developer Avra Jain and restaurateur John Kunkel.

Valero sees the shopping center as a kind of commercial bridge between the area's two worlds — the middle class and the working class. He'd like the new Biscayne Plaza to act as a connector between those worlds by retaining the bargain stores and attracting classy restaurants and cafés of the sort that are popping up throughout the Upper Eastside. "I believe in people surviving together," he says. "I don't think you need to pick one or the other to be doing well."

To accomplish that, Valero will take a page from the Skylake handbook: He wants to make Biscayne Plaza, a 347,000-square-foot complex of five commercial buildings, somewhat smaller. That means knocking something down.

A few weeks ago, the City of Miami received an application to demolish what Valero calls a "monster building." This is the portion of Biscayne Plaza that is located on the northwest corner of Biscayne Boulevard and 79th Street, where its largest store, Payless ShoeSource, operates.

About 100,000 square feet in size, the building continues west for another



BT photo by Wendy Doscher-Smith

Developer Doron Valero sees Biscayne Plaza as a bridge between the middle class and the working class.



BT photo by Silvia Ros

The triangular building Valero will keep next to the pedestrian bridge he won't.

500 feet or so, parallel to 79th Street, with most (but not all) of its ground-floor retail facing the former INS building across the street. A second-floor pedestrian bridge (one of two at the plaza) connects the "monster" to another retail building along NE 81st Street. That bridge is rarely used these days, Valero says, because the offices on the second floor of the "monster" building are empty. Prior to 2008, they were mainly filled by immigration attorneys. When the INS left the area, so did they.

After relocating Payless ShoeSource and most of the building's tenants to other parts of Biscayne Plaza, Valero will level the monster and its bridge. In its place, and at the corner where Payless now operates,

will be a 14,000-square-foot CVS drugstore. Then Valero wants to build a pair of buildings fronting 79th Street — one for a bank and the other for a restaurant.

That is, if the City of Miami approves the demolition and construction plans. "We have a signed lease with CVS, subject to site-plan approval," says Valero, who'd like to see that building completed by 2015. "It's in the application process now. There's no indication that there should be a problem, but until you have it, you don't have it."

The news that Valero wants to demolish part of Biscayne Plaza might displease some MiMo architectural

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Biscayne Park

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Biscayne Centre and 12000 Biscayne, the Ocean Collision car repair shop, the Alta Mira Apartments now under construction, and Von Wedel Montessori School.

The Village of Biscayne Park and Biscayne Park East are demographically different as well. Seventy-two percent of Biscayne Park's population is white (both Hispanic and non-Hispanic), according to the 2010 census, while 75 percent of Biscayne Park East's 1208 residents are black.

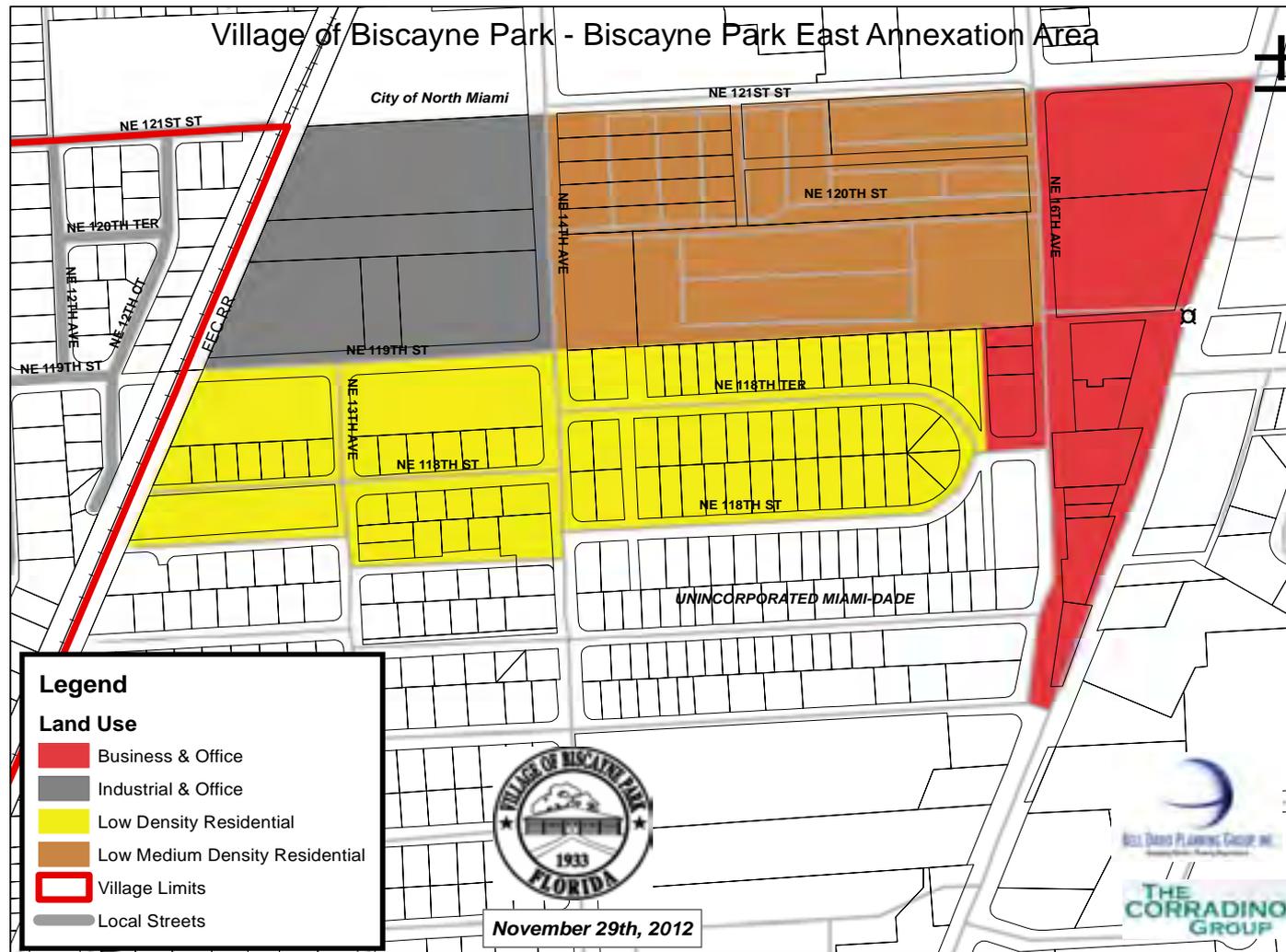
There are no roads connecting the two areas, either, which are physically separated by the FEC tracks and a series of fences. So why is Biscayne Park entertaining the idea of annexing this land beyond the tracks? In a word, *money*.

The Bell David firm believes that the village could collect \$280,717 in additional revenue at Biscayne Park's existing property-tax rate if it annexes the area. If and when it does, property owners within the annexed area will see their taxes go up. At 9.5 mills, or \$9.50 in property taxes for every \$1000 of assessed value, Biscayne Park has the highest tax rate in Miami-Dade County. Unincorporated Miami-Dade areas are only charged \$1.93 per \$1000.

Ana Garcia, Biscayne Park's village manager, says the proposed annexation plan will likely be discussed at the next commission meeting on May 7. She also insists that the annexation is only in its study phase. "The dollars we need as revenue to run the village continues to slip," Garcia explains, adding, "We're just studying this because if we don't study ways to generate revenue, how responsible are we?"

Commissioner Bryan Cooper confirms that he and his commission colleagues unanimously agreed to budget \$6000 for the study last year. At the same time, he's skeptical that annexation will allow the village, which now collects \$3.2 million in taxes and fees, to obtain more revenue. "I believe our consultant is not providing a thorough report tied to our existing finances," Cooper writes in an e-mail to the *BT*. "There is no business plan at all at this point with clear demarcation of a break-even point or deliverables for the western residents."

Actually, the revenue estimates are conservative, counters Garcia. The



The proposed annexation area has been dubbed Biscayne Park East.

report even takes into account the need to hire five more police officers and an additional code enforcement officer to patrol Biscayne Park East. (The village now employs 12 police officers and two civilian code enforcers.)

Despite the projected revenue boost, Audrey Ehrhardt, a real estate agent who has lived in Biscayne Park for more than 50 years, is so against the idea that she's ready to circulate a petition to prevent the village from considering annexation ever again. "Why do we need to change?" she asks. "Why do we need to include businesses? We pay our bills."

Commissioner and former mayor Roxanna Ross counters that even at 9.5 mills, the village is having a hard time generating enough tax revenue to operate services or undertake needed infrastructure improvements, such as modernizing the 80-year-old log cabin that serves as a village hall and police station. "The tax base is totally residential," Ross says. "We were really seriously hit by real estate market. When it took a dive, it reduced our revenue substantially."

In fact the *only* nonresidential uses in the village are the village hall log cabin, a community center, a park, and the (tax-exempt) Church of the Resurrection. And that's the problem, Garcia maintains, elaborating on Ross's point: "When the housing market crashed, by not having businesses, all of our eggs were in one basket, so to speak. Hence, for the past three years we've lost like 30 percent of our ad-valorem taxes."

Last year property values in Biscayne Park began rising again, Garcia says. Unfortunately for the village's fiscal health, more than half of the village's 1324 housing units are owner-occupied, or homestead property. State law forbids tax increases higher than three percent per year for homestead homes.

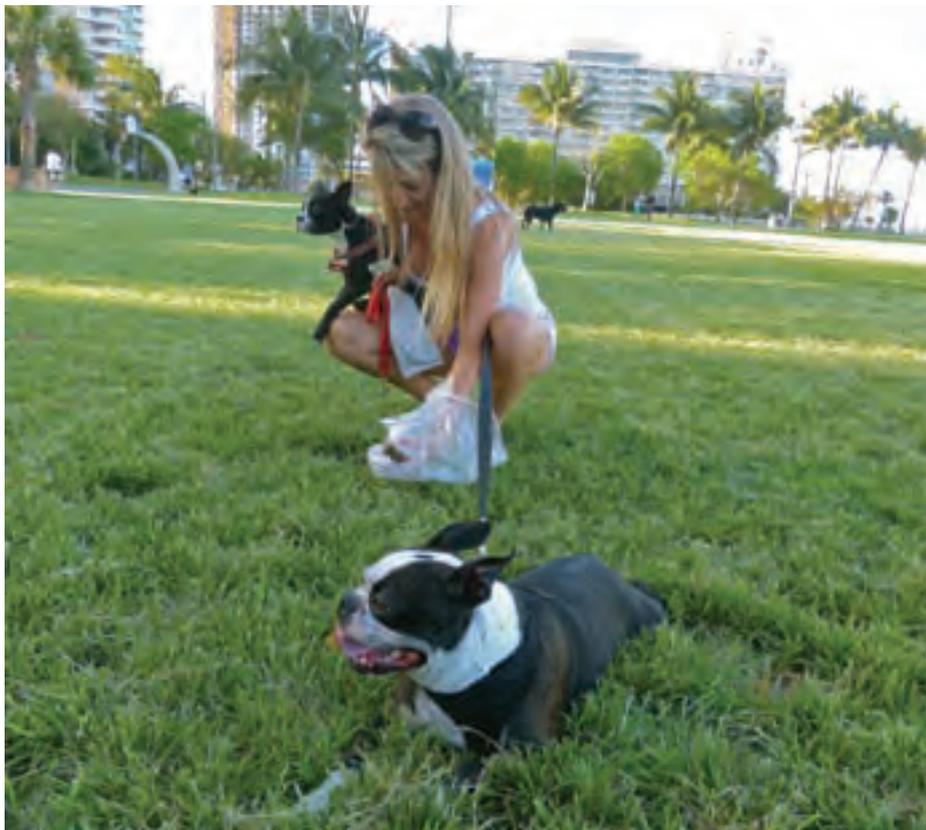
Such restrictions don't apply to nonresidential property or multi-family buildings, which Biscayne Park East has in abundance. Garcia appears particularly intrigued about annexing the 230-unit Alta Mira Apartments now being developed by Atlanta-based Wood Partners.

"They'll have one- to three-bedroom units," says Garcia, who has a printout describing Alta Mira taped to her office wall, just above a large map of Biscayne Park. "The plans look pretty."

Miami-Dade County Commissioner Sally Heyman, whose district includes Biscayne Park and the proposed annexation area, thinks the village could benefit from an eastward expansion. For one thing, villagers can respond to any nuisances occurring in the industrial area. Heyman claims her office receives noise complaints all the time. "The county will cite the owner, but they [Biscayne Park] have no say in it," she says. Annexing Biscayne Park East might also allow the village to build a new government center or public works building in that area, she adds.

Biscayne Park East residents will benefit, too, Garcia offers. "What services are they getting on a consistent basis — in regards to police and code enforcement, contact with their elected

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Veronica Wolan and her posse: She once followed a scofflaw and handed her a full poop bag.

Margaret Pace Park

Continued from page 48

must be considerate of others, though. “So-called animal issues are almost always people issues,” Genser says. “It’s important to properly take care of your animals and make sure they’re not a nuisance to other people. Part of responsible pet ownership is cleaning up their waste products and training them to avoid nuisance behavior.”

Last year Diana Fontani, a resident of the condominium complex known as Cité, across the street from Pace Park, became so annoyed by the “waste products” littering the park she organized a petition drive asking for an enclosed dog run, which the park does not have. She secured more than 150 signatures (most from dog owners) and contacted the office of Miami Commissioner Marc Sarnoff, whose district includes the park. Fontani asked for help establishing a dog run separate from other areas of the park.

A meeting organized by Sarnoff’s office and the OMNI/Midtown Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) was held this past March to discuss the pros and cons of a fenced-in dog area. Says Pieter Bockweg, executive director of the OMNI/Midtown CRA: “We very quickly found out that there were several opinions

about the park and that we needed to discuss the fenced-in play area.”

One result of the meeting: a six-month education campaign, geared to teaching people about the importance of curbing their dogs, as well as the laws against *not* doing that.

Park regulars acknowledge that the dog-poop scofflaws are small in number, but they can be a big headache. Many say they’ve approached perpetrators only to be ignored or cursed.

Cité resident Veronica Wolan takes her two Boston terriers to the park at least twice daily. She asserts there are not enough poop bags, and recently had to leave her dog with someone else while she ran to get a bag to pick up her dog’s feces. (Wolan also once followed a woman who did not clean up after her dog, did the job herself, and then handed the woman her dog’s bagged poop.)

Another park regular, Eduardo Itriago, who lives across the street in the high-rise condo Quantum on the Bay, says he doubts that building an enclosed dog run will deter people from leaving behind their dog’s waste. “I have a rule,” Itriago says. “I check my shoes before I go home.”

Jaime Blanco, who lives in the adjacent 1800 Club condo, has seen traces

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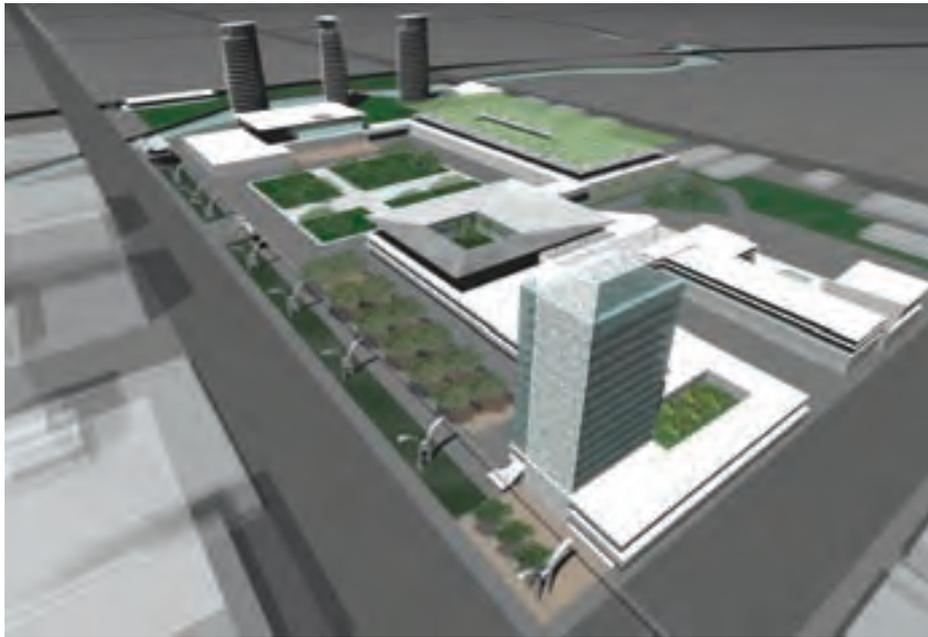
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The plaza's previous owners hired architect Allan Shulman to design something drastically different.

Interior of the triangle building: "I'm envisioning a nice restaurant, something like Soyka's."

Biscayne Plaza

Continued from page 49

enthusiasts, who appreciate the shopping center's "car-centric" design, created by architect Robert Fitch Smith in 1954. However, Valero says he only wants to destroy the "monster" building. Everything else, he asserts, will get a modernizing "face-lift."

He's already started renovating one small retail building, and aims to upgrade the large retail building along 81st Street (where d.d's Discounts and Family Dollar now do business). He'll even keep the four decorative towers that stand on the plaza's outer edge.

Valero is particularly eager to repurpose a glass-walled, triangular structure at the rear of the "monster" building. This triangle building is adjacent to Glasshaus Studios, the former Admiral

Vee Hotel, which is not owned by Global Trust Investments. During the 1960s, the triangle building served as a bank branch. "I'm envisioning it becoming a nice restaurant," Valero says, "something like Soyka's."

Grant Stern, president of Morning-side Mortgage, says Biscayne Plaza can be something more than just a shopping center. Under the city's Miami 21 zoning plan, the 18-acre tract could become the next Midtown Miami — a community with condos, apartments, offices, restaurants, and retail. Prior to the real estate crash, Green-East Ltd. #2 hired Miami architect Allan Shulman design just such a mixed-use development to replace the old shopping center. The \$400 million project never got off the ground.

"Their best bet is to redevelop it as a mixed-use project," Stern says. "That way they can get Class-A rents."

Today's tenants are not paying anything close to Class-A rents. According to Valero, rents now range between \$12 and \$24 per square foot. Once the enhancements are complete, Valero intends to charge up to \$30 per square foot. As for a residential component, Valero says he might build up to 70 affordable apartments on a parcel at 82nd Street near the Little River, but nothing more — at least not yet. "I'm not a dreamer. I'm a realist," he quips. "In real life, that is not the place for it right now. Maybe in the future."

In addition to redeveloping Biscayne Plaza, and possibly building some affordable housing, Valero is interested in the creation of a public park along the banks of the Little River. Last year Green-East Ltd. #2 attempted to sell its vacant land holdings along the river to the city for \$730,000, with the idea of creating a park.

That effort was unsuccessful.

Now that Global Trust Investments owns the land, Valero says he's contacted the Trust for Public Land, a nonprofit, open-space advocacy organization, to find a way to make it a park. "There were like 30-something manatees swimming in the river last time I checked," he says.

Valero is also enthusiastic about the prospect of a train station for a proposed commuter rail line near 79th Street, just west of Biscayne Plaza. "Our vision is to try and have a center that will serve the community," he says. "We own a lot of property here, and I'd love to see that become part of a park, and one day part of a train station. If you think about it, Biscayne Plaza would be a wonderful train station."

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

Biscayne Park

Continued from page 50

officials, contact with the public works department?" she asks. "When one of our residents has a complaint, their answers come quickly."

Commissioner Cooper doubts that Biscayne Park can provide sufficient services for the eastern frontier: "My concerns include promises that will be made to some of the residents in the eastern area; promises that just cannot be met. The real effect likely will be to siphon off their tax base for use within the current village boundaries."

Cooper worries that annexation might inadvertently spark "class warfare" when the west's "more affluent code warriors" send code enforcement officers into the east.

Garcia stresses that any anxieties over annexation can be addressed during public workshops in both the west and east — if the village decides to continue pursuing annexation. "We're just in a preliminary stage right now," she says.

The village might not even annex all of Biscayne Park East. In fact, Garcia tells the *BT* she'll recommend that the village narrow its focus to an area north of NE 119th Street. That would leave out the school and the area's residential areas,

except for Alta Mira Apartments and the next-door Bay Winds Apartments, a gated, 205-unit affordable-housing community.

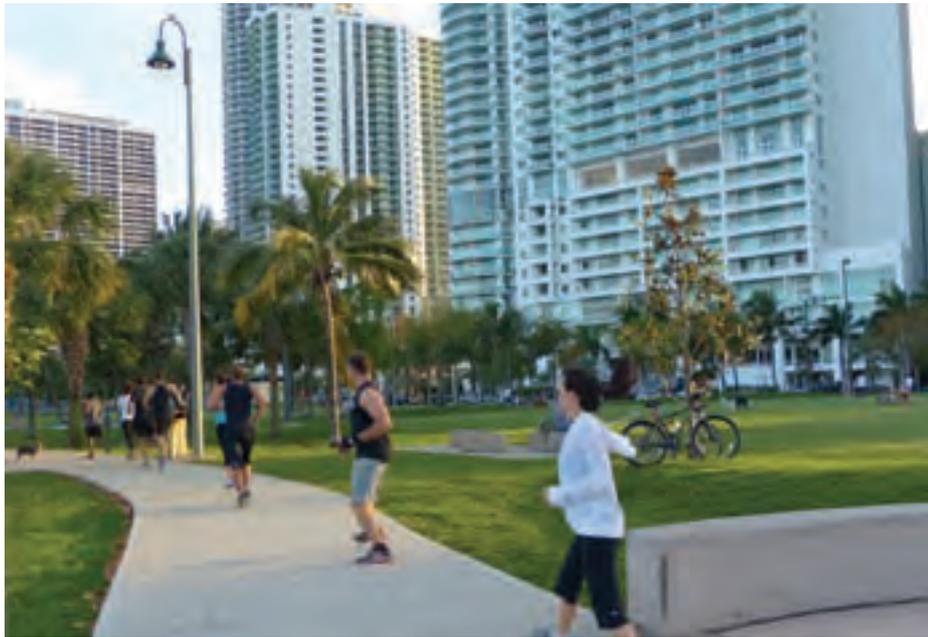
Cooper says he'd be "more amenable" to annexing such a narrow area, but he isn't sure the county commission will agree to the village "cherry-picking" an area with a more lucrative tax base while leaving out the rest. "I thought Manager Garcia knew that such requests in the past have been resisted by Miami-Dade," he says.

If more than 250 registered voters live in the area Biscayne Park wishes to annex, those residents will vote on whether or not they want to be part of the village. Those same rights are not

extended to commercial property owners. Their only recourse will be to speak up at public hearings and lobby county elected officials.

Mara Medof says she'll fight annexation any way she can. The 35-year-old runs North Miami Mini Stor-It, a two-acre storage facility at NE 13th Avenue and 119th Street that has been owned by her family since 1977. Medof is happy with services the county provides and, she adds, "I wouldn't want my property taxes to go up, I'll tell you that much."

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com



Humans are allowed to use the park, though they are often outnumbered by canines.

Margaret Pace Park

Continued from page 51

of feces throughout his building. Blanco thinks a dog run will make the park ugly, but says he understands the necessity.

The first phase of Bockweg's marketing initiative includes the distribution of pamphlets and cards that will be handed out and left at every building in the park's vicinity, in an effort to get the word out about proper curbing and off-leash procedures.

One of Fontani's complaints is that "many individuals that live at the Grand, Opera, and Quantum never received a notice of the March 13 meeting." Fontani has now offered to assist in the outreach for the next meeting, and Bockweg says it's one of his priorities. "I'm going to go to every single building in the Margaret Pace Park area," he vows.

Among the flyer's points: Dog waste is the third-largest contributor to contaminated water; parasites can be transmitted by dog feces and infect other dogs and people; Miami-Dade County will fine people \$50 for not curbing their dogs, and at Margaret Pace Park the fine could be as high as \$200. Parkgoers are also encouraged to limit their dog's activities to the northern portion of the park, to keep dogs leashed at all times, and to maintain vaccinations.

Seven additional poop-bag dispensers with garbage cans are being procured as well, Bockweg says. In addition, the City of Miami's parks and recreation department is now involved, as is the

police department, which has been put on notice to watch for rule-breakers.

This summer another meeting will be held, says Bockweg, in order to determine what's been accomplished and which steps need to be taken next.

Meanwhile, the OMNI/Midtown CRA is also considering plans for an expanded kids' play area. How big an expansion is yet to be determined and will be based on a cost analysis, Bockweg says: "We spent money to make sure we provide shade for kids and put in Astro-Turf, which is better from a maintenance standpoint. The size of the expansion will depend on the overall expansion and of the fenced-in dog area."

For her part, Fontani is optimistic. "I am just glad the issue didn't die at the March meeting," she says.

Historical footnote: The park was created in the late 1960s and named in honor of Margaret Pace, who was not, as widely believed, the founding president of the Miami Women's Club. (The club's grand headquarters abuts the park's southern border and is on the National Register of Historical Places.) According to a 1977 column in the *Miami News* known as "Why Is It Called...," Pace was "deeply devoted to this area's nature and history.... Mrs. Pace, wife of Johnson Pace, was a founder and past president of the Miami Garden Club. She was chairwoman of Royal Palm State Park, which was given by the Florida Federation of Women's Clubs to the government as part of Everglades National Park."

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Big Ballot Brawl

Fifteen candidates battle for three slots in city elections

By **Mark Sell**
BT Contributor

It's a dogfight. Fifteen candidates are ripping into each other for three slots on Election Day (May 14): two seats on the city council and the mayor's job. Already there are reports of stolen signs, dodgy residential claims, and potential conflicts of interest.

Once elected, the lucky winners likely will face mobs questioning their residential water bills, the mammoth development of Biscayne Landing, and tricky budget hearings in the fall, considering that most of last year's \$17.5-million deposit from Biscayne Landing has already been earmarked.

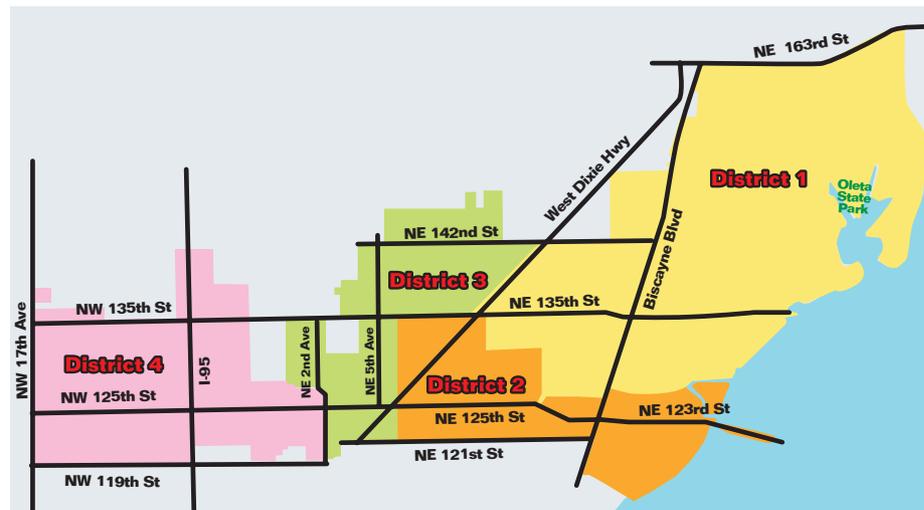
Four candidates are scrambling to represent District 3, where Jean Marcelus is giving up his seat to run for mayor. In the four-way race for District 2, three

are battling to unseat incumbent Michael Blynn, who is fighting to keep his 14-year seat.

Seven candidates are jostling for mayor, to replace term-limited Andre Pierre. They will meet at Johnson and Wales University on May 6 (7:00-9:00 p.m.) for a forum.

Any bets on a runoff? If no candidate in a race gets more than 50 percent of the vote, the top two get to slug it out in a June 4 runoff. (Early voting started April 29, so this election is already on.)

In this city of parallel universes, non-Hispanic whites have shrunk from a majority population to just under 13 percent in the 2010 census. Meanwhile, most of North Miami's Haitian-American plurality is more likely to take cues from Kreyol radio and the street than from the *Miami Herald*, let alone the *Biscayne Times* (see "A City of Two Tales," October 2011).



Map by Marcy Mock

The campaign makes terrific theater. The raucous, packed April 16 joint appearance of 14 of the 15 candidates at the Griffing Community Center included shouting matches, finger-pointing, cheers, and jeers.

If you've missed the action thus far, here's the election lineup:

Mayor: This, the only at-large position, is considered the likeliest runoff. **Kevin Burns**, mayor from 2005 to 2009, is coming back for an encore, with strong support from the business community and the "white" eastern

precincts. He's promoting himself as a reform-minded ex-mayor who doesn't need on-the-job training.

The only "Anglo" in this race, he is challenged by **Lucie Tondreau**, a public relations and immigration consultant (Biscayne Landing developer Oleta Partners is a client) who has formed a solid campaign organization with "I Love Lucie" signs and tacit but unmistakable support from Mayor Pierre. She is a well-known Haitian-American radio personality, former journalist, and longtime activist whose priorities include



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While a Burns-Tondreau June 4 runoff is plausible, this race could go anywhere. **Gwendolyn Boyd**, the former police chief, has nibbled into some of Burns's support on the east side and is running on an anti-crime ticket, with support from law enforcement officers, firefighters, and teachers.

At the April 16 meeting, **Jean Marcellus** was warmly received as he talked economic development, public safety, code enforcement, and civic education. He also portrays himself as "the Man Who Was Right on Biscayne Landing," having last year promoted a separate but failed \$14-million land purchase by a car dealership on the southeast corner of 151st Street and Biscayne Boulevard that would have netted the financially strapped city extra money.

Dr. Smith Joseph, who runs an internal medicine practice, has raised by far the most money and proclaims his wish for an end to domination by "special interest groups." **Anna Pierre** (no relation to the mayor), a registered nurse, entertainer, and motivational speaker, promises an

emphasis on better education, crime prevention, and job opportunities. **Modira Escarment**, head of the Escarment Foundation for the Needy, champions the interests of poorer residents and advocates for lower water bills, an end to those pesky red-light tickets, and economic development.

City Council District 2: Attorney and 35-year resident **Michael Blynn** could face the political fight of his life with challenges from attorney, lifelong resident, and 2011 mayoral candidate **Carol Keys**, IT consultant **Joseph Haber** (son of former Miami Beach Mayor Leonard Haber), and Mary Irvin, CEO of a recruitment and staffing agency.

All four have been involved on city boards and declare themselves in favor of transparent governance and reform. Blynn portrays himself as a financial watchdog who knows how to bring home the bacon from Tallahassee. Keys, in particular, and Haber have attacked Blynn for being "out of touch" with his district and too pliant with Biscayne Landing's developers. Blynn, for his part, emphatically says, "Unless they [Oleta Partners] have a decent plan, I can't vote for it to go forward." He indeed voted

with the rest of the council April 23 to continue Biscayne Landing until May 28.

This race could be the fight of Blynn's political life. Keys, until recently chair of the Board of Adjustment and a regular at council meetings, has a strong base in Keystone Point, Sans Souci Estates, and in much of the business community. She promises more energetic attention to services in the district and sharp fiscal scrutiny. Haber, a veteran of city boards who calls himself "Haber Your Neighbor," is positioning himself as a friendlier alternative to Blynn and Keys, both of whom can be blunt.

City Council District 3: This race for Marcellus's old seat is wide open. **Philippe Bien-Aime**, who owns a car dealership on NW 7th Avenue, has put together a strong campaign organization and says he wants to improve the 7th Avenue business corridor and neighborhoods to the west (although they are actually in Councilwoman Marie Steril's District 4, which is not up for grabs this time; the other district not being contested is Councilman Scott Galvin's District 1).

At the April 16 joint appearance, candidates **Jacques Despinosse**, a 27-year

resident who served on the council from 2001 to 2009, and business professor and political newcomer **Hans Mardy** tore right into Bien-Aime, who claims as his official residence a dumpy-looking house on 133rd Street, but who reportedly lives in a swank condo in Plantation. **Kati-usquie Pierre** (again, no relation to the mayor), is the youngest candidate at 33 and has promoted school-dropout prevention and addressing gang violence.

So what's in it for the winner? It's not just the opportunity to serve; there's also money. Council members get four-year terms and a little better than \$3000 per month, plus allowances (such as a car). The mayor gets about \$4000 per month. (And, some would add, this being North Miami, that's just *legally*.)

We cannot divine anything, but we can come up with a few basic questions voters can ask: Who is best at following the money? Who has been paying the closest attention? Who is the least beholden to anybody?

Oh, one more: Who can best bring peace?

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com



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Downtown After Dark

An experiment to find nightlife in the city's center meets with disappointment

By **Adam Schachner**
BT Contributor

I have a theory that downtown Miami is ripe for a walking nightlife.

By day, of course, downtown is bustling with shoppers, courthouse traffic, students attending Miami-Dade College, and people on county business. For many, this is a part of town where they *have* to go, whether they want to or not.

I wanted to prove that, when the sun sets and the steel rolling shutters come down on row after row of commercial outlets, downtown still could be ignited by more casual strollers intent on exploring local pubs, cafés, and so forth, until beauty sleep beckoned.

To prove this point, I devised an experiment involving a cross-section of

friends, both locals and transplants. The test was simple: We would take a downtown bar hop, and do it on a Thursday night. (That happened to be the night we all had free, and it's generally a good night for happy hours.)

Each of us would find our way to a discrete downtown meeting place, in this case the Filling Station on SE 1st Street. The challenge would be to arrive on foot or by public transit, rather than the standard commute in a hermetically sealed personal vehicle. We'd kick off with beer, appetizers, and standard pub fare. From there, we'd work our way to three other establishments: Sparky's Roadside Barbecue on NE 1st Street for dinner, Elwood's Gastro Pub on NE 3rd Avenue for after-dinner drinks, and Kork Wine and Cheese on S. Miami Avenue for a final nightcap.



BT photo by Adam Schachner

When proposing this endeavor to my companions, I could sense a testing bias owing to the novelty of the plan. Had I suggested doing this on Lincoln Road or in South Miami, I'm certain that no adrenal thrill would have accompanied the plan; we've crawled those places.

So we broke the mold on many levels. Everyone gathered at the Filling Station, all arriving car-free and within ten minutes of 6:30. No one was on

"Miami time." As I downed the night's house special — a Sea Dog Blueberry Ale — and snacked on some tater tots smothered in cheese, I listened happily to the group review work, discuss transit, and make introductions where needed. It was a good start to the evening.

Our first walk took us past electronic and wristwatch boutiques. Daylight dimmed as we meandered the sidewalks. Only a few stragglers remained on the

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streets, waiting for buses and jitneys to whisk them home. Pleasantly full of ale and the promise of dinner, I had hopes we'd meet fellow walkers soon.

Sparky's Roadside Barbecue on NE 1st Street was bumping with classic rock and the food smelled like glory. The proprietor, Hans Seitz, introduced himself with a brilliantly mustachioed smile and a clear passion for having diners who appreciate his good work. We feasted on roast chicken and divine veggie burgers, all drowning in Sparky's hoisin barbecue sauce, a creation that gives me hope for peace among all mankind.

Wrapping up dinner around 9:30, we walked the several blocks to Elwood's. Night had fallen and the pavement was sparsely populated, but I wasn't ready to abandon my vision of a nighttime scene popping up.

The pub was empty but happy to accommodate us. Brightly colored paintings lampooned the pastel Miami seascapes of Guy Harvey and Romero Britto. These contrasted the cool and dimly lit atmosphere Elwood's maintains. A placard on the table advertised live comedy monthly, on the first and third Tuesday. I pointed

this out to my fiancée, who nodded and observed, "It's a destination. People make a point of coming for it."

We lost some of our numbers at 10:30, after Elwood's kitchen closed. So we shuffled out. The five of us who remained sauntered across the grid, working our way to Kork at S. Miami Avenue and Flagler. I could tell we were losing steam, and a little motivation. The landscape between destinations was disheartening. Rows of vertical steel shutters secured storefronts of electronic goods, luggage, and formal wear. This was the after-hours downtown I hoped no longer existed: a silent, lifeless lunar landscape devoid of inspiration.

One of our walkers, my brother-in-law visiting from Boston, looked at me with bemused but wordless inquisitiveness. Where were all the people?

Trying to justify my experiment to him, I realized the allegory in this experience. Downtown Miami is a microcosm of South Florida. There are many destinations, but little cohesion. One would no more stroll on a random whim between venues downtown than take a walk from Wynwood to the

Upper Eastside, or from Coral Gables to the Grove.

Miami is a collection of attractive islands for activity, places to which we deliberately drive. The spontaneity of getting lost on foot and seeing what comes next is missing from our otherwise remarkably active community.

As a Brickell resident frequently passing through downtown, my concept of the area has evolved dramatically. Growing up in Kendall, if I informed my parents I was spending the night downtown, I would likely have been locked in my room for my own protection. The downtown of my youth was a reputed haven for degenerates, where young people disappeared in search of drugs or went for a good mugging.

But that was the Miami of the 1980s and 1990s. This reputation has changed in the past decade, as more social draws have worked their way to our city center.

Our pub crawl ended on S. Miami Avenue, where the only other nighthawks to be found were a couple of police officers chatting between squad cars, and a homeless woman leaning against large potted plants, staring intently at nothing. Glancing up the avenue, it was clear

Kork was closed. Several yards beyond, the brightly lit Metromover station beckoned. We instinctively pursued it like moths to a fluorescent light.

We departed in separate directions. Two friends unlocked their bikes back at the Filling Station and cycled off into the distance. My brother-in-law caught the Metromover to Bayside, as my fiancée and I hopped on a Brickell tram.

The only other occupants were a young man who claimed to be a veteran of the war in Afghanistan, asking for spare change, and a stoic disciple of Yahweh ben Yahweh, brandishing golden adornments and a very large stick. The four of us quietly evacuated downtown on a limited-service public transit pod.

At about 11:00 we reached the financial district, the last stop on the line. Below the platform, the squawking chatter and pulsing bass of socializing was just getting rolling at Segafredo on S. Miami Avenue. Finely dressed professionals strolled about.

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Don't Let the Bedbugs In

A trip to Las Vegas results in unwanted houseguests back in the Shores

By Jen Karetnick
BT Contributor

If you live on South Beach, chances are you don't look forward to spring break, when the neighborhood is invaded by booze-swilling students. If you're a single, working adult elsewhere in Miami, you probably don't even know when spring break is. But if you're a kid, parent, or teacher — which covers a whole bunch of us in the Shores — you count down the days in March or April until it begins.

For families, spring break is one of the few opportunities you have to travel together, whether it's to visit other relatives or just relax in a different locale.

But as we discovered this year after a week in Las Vegas, coming back can have consequences: Cranky kids with jet lag. Low motivation to return to work. And sometimes something will hitch a ride home with you, and you may not notice until it's too late.

We had booked a great deal at the Palms Casino Resort, a lovely, newly remodeled tower located off the Strip, away from all the madness (but only a convenient five-minute shuttle ride away).

We also got a fantastic bargain on bedbugs.

I first noticed the large welts on our limbs during the second day of our visit and, having had no previous experience with the pests, dismissed them as



mosquito bites. Then they began appearing on my hands and feet, as well as the back of my neck. An exterminator we called after we got home looked at the scabby bites on my feet, which were a couple of weeks old by then. "Oh yeah," he nodded. "Those are from bedbugs."

Because the minuscule pests bite you when you're sleeping, they go for the exposed areas. They reside in beds for that strategic reason, and because prolonged exposure to heat and light kills them.

They don't live on oxygen, but on carbon dioxide — what you breathe out when you're sleeping.

Once I got used to the idea that we had been a bedbug buffet, none of this information bothered me particularly (though I can't say the same for my kids). Bedbugs have a nasty reputation, like lice and fleas, and they're hard to kill. But we've survived explosions of both those other pests, and at least bedbugs don't carry diseases. Nor do they imply

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filth; some of the nicest, cleanest places have had bedbugs.

What I was truly concerned about was the fact we had probably brought them back to Miami Shores with us in our luggage, or even on the clothing we were wearing. If you've ever spent any time in a New York taxi cab, you know that bedbugs, especially during the colder months, like to catch a free ride from hotel to hotel on their human transport systems. Occasionally, they fall off into the seats and make their homes there, feeding on unsuspecting passengers.

Fortunately many exterminating companies in the Miami Shores area are well acquainted with bedbugs, in addition to the usual roaches — excuse me, “palmetto bugs” — termites (yeah, its swarming season), mice, and rats. One of them, Elimanex (www.elimanex.net), also specializes in “bird abatement” and “feral pig” control. This is important to remember, in case the chickens that scratch around in the McDonald's parking lot begin to breed too freely, or all those feral pigs in Miami Shores begin to cheat you out of your mangos.

Or perhaps you could bring in the chickens to consume the bedbugs. While

we haven't had an inundation of bedbugs the way a city like New York has, the past three years have brought record reports of them, according to BedBugs.net and other bedbug registry sites. (Yes, there are such things.)

This is how seriously people take their bedbugs, and well they should. Our exterminator was encouraging. He examined the seams of our mattresses and found absolutely no evidence we had

If you go to bed unmarked and wake up with itchy hives, you should probably get your home inspected for bedbugs.

been invaded. Yet. He said it could take a few months to develop; in the meantime, we could squash an incipient infestation. Wrapping mattresses in plastic encasements suffocates the bugs by depriving them of carbon dioxide.

(And for the first time in a while, I got lucky: Groupon had bedbug mattress encasements on sale in the Miami Shores area. What would have cost me \$160 for a king-size wrap only set me back \$29.99.)

In fact, the exterminator told me, the mattresses in his home are all encased, even though he never has had the bugs himself. That's how rampant these things are. He doesn't want to take the chance of inspecting a house that has them and bringing them home. And I've since read horror stories online of folks who have them so bad they can't even take their furniture with them when they move out.

If you suspect you have bedbugs — for instance, if you go to bed unmarked and wake up with itchy hives — you should probably get your home inspected. And if you had a staycation for spring break, don't be too smug, either.

Despite our heat and humidity, which the bugs don't like, Miami hotels are as susceptible as those anywhere else, and already there have been reports from 2013 citing bedbugs in our area lodgings.

Apart from checking your mattress (look along the seams for tiny, black dots and on the sheets for smears of blood) and calling in professional help, if you believe that you picked up the bugs somewhere, get in touch with the hotel

after you're sure of exposure.

I spent the weekend following my Vegas trip in New York, at the ultra-cool Benjamin Hotel. Afraid I had unknowingly brought bedbugs with me, I later gave them a call. With speed and grace, the general manager brought in inspectors and faxed me the all-clear report. (Meanwhile, the Palms Casino Resort has yet to return a message, and I've found other reports online about bugs in that particular place.)

I've learned three things from this experience. None of us is immune, no matter how clean your house is (and mine isn't all that clean, for the record). Prevention is the best policy; always check the mattress seams in a hotel room, especially near the headboard, before bedding down.

And when you come home from a trip, unpack and throw all your belongings immediately into the dryer (even the luggage, if you can), where the heat kills just about anything. With these guidelines, Miami Shores can remain bedbug-free — that is, if we haven't infested it already.

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Gimme a Brake

Why are drivers in Belle Meade in such a hurry?

By Frank Rollason
BT Contributor

So the other day I was out doing a little yard work when a neighbor driving by stopped and started a conversation concerning last month's column on climate change and rising sea levels. Her comment was most profound: "You write that we should 'think globally but act locally.' When are you going to write something *locally* about Belle Meade?"

I told her my column this month would be on the current hot-button issue in our neighborhood: traffic calming.

Lately there has been an increasing awareness of the driving habits of

some of our neighbors, as well as some visitors to our lovely enclave. It seems that certain individuals believe driving the speed limit or stopping at stop signs is beneath them. It's the old "the world revolves around me and the rest of you simpletons can take a hike" syndrome that eventually will result in a serious accident on our usually quiet streets.

So pressure is building to do something. I'm not quite sure what that something will ultimately be, but rest assured the natives are restless and it won't be long before the torches and pitchforks are brought out of the barn. Our homeowners association, not being oblivious to the issue, has reached out to residents to get their input on how



Photo courtesy of Felipe Azenha, TransitMiami.com

they would like to proceed. And here is where the fun begins.

A neighborhood meeting was held on Saturday, April 6, in the neighborhood park, at the request of several residents who find it difficult to attend an evening meeting during the week owing to parenting duties on the home front. We did not receive a huge turnout, but

there were some fresh faces, most notably young parents voicing their concerns over traffic scofflaws and the increasing dangers to pedestrians.

What is most troublesome is that we have this (mostly) self-inflicted problem to begin with. While it is true some of our service providers — lawn-care companies and Fed Ex and UPS delivery

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trucks, for example — contribute to the condition, most of the offenders are residents of the mainland community and Belle Meade Island, which includes about 53 homes, all of them waterfront. As Pogo said many moons ago: “We have met the enemy and he is us!”

(Right now some of you are probably asking, “Who the hell is Pogo?” To which I respond, “What exactly is a Lady Gaga?”)

Anyway, the point is that it is way too sad that we have to have these meetings to come up with a plan to address the jerks who have no consideration for the rest of us. Living on a corner home with adjacent stop signs, I see all too well the number of residents who, during their daily commutes, hardly slow down for the stop signs, much less actually, you know, *stop*.

And then there are those who think NE 76th Street is the Indianapolis Speedway. They rev up heading east with a blast through the NE 7th Avenue stop sign, increase their speed as they approach 8th Avenue, then blast through that stop sign and continue to gain speed until they have to slow down to either

make the left onto the island or continue east around the bend to reach home.

As I wrote in an earlier column, I once did a test run in my car from the guard house to the farthest points on the island and the mainland — one at the speed limit, stopping dead for each stop sign encountered, and one as fast as I could safely travel while cruising through every stop sign. The time differential on the trips to the island and the mainland was 20 seconds. Yep, 20 seconds — hardly worth the accompanying jeopardy, but a jackass is never known for critical thinking skills or considering the potential outcomes of his actions.

So what’s next? Well, several alternatives were discussed at that April 6 meeting.

For one, there is the possibility of having a traffic circle of some design installed at the intersection of NE 8th Avenue and 76th Street. Some favor that idea while others oppose it.

There is also the option of lowering the neighborhood speed limit from 30 mph to 25 mph. One individual vociferously pushed for 20 mph. Recognizing that this alternative would require an

extreme level of police enforcement, which is unlikely, he suggested the streets need to be redesigned in such a way that a car simply couldn’t do more than 20 mph. I don’t think there is community support for such a drastic measure (or the money to finance it).

Yet another option is to privately pay for an off-duty officer to ticket drivers who commit speeding and stop-sign violations. The cost to residents would be \$105 for three hours of the officer’s time. I, for one, like this option and stated I would be willing to “opt for a cop” every once in a while to get the attention of a jackass or two.

Perhaps some other residents would consider doing the same. Sometimes a little enforcement is the only appropriate medicine for those who simply cannot be convinced in a more civil manner.

Another possibility is to have existing crosswalks enhanced with what is called stamped asphalt. This is a process whereby a hot die is applied to the existing asphalt surface between the two white stripes of the crosswalk. Then a surface treatment is applied, with the end result resembling a brick crosswalk.

Just this little improvement has a positive effect on a driver’s ability to more easily recognize a crosswalk.

The City of Miami’s Office of Capital Improvements previously approved this process and, I was told, Commissioner Marc Sarnoff approved funding. The homeowners association is currently following up on the status of this installation, which was supposed to take place once our storm-water project was completed. That was about two and a half years ago.

It was the consensus of the group that gathered in the park to pursue the traffic circle on NE 8th Avenue and 76th Street, along with the crosswalk enhancements. Further outreach to our elected officials and administrative personnel is under way, and the results will be presented at our next homeowners association meeting, to be held Tuesday, May 14, at 7:00 p.m. at the Legion Park community center.

In the meantime, obey the speed limits and stop signs in the neighborhood — or keep a wary eye out for the man.

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Every Lobby a Temple

In Aventura, condo buildings have long doubled as houses of worship

By **Jay Beskin**
BT Contributor

Like a retired actor, my former tenure on the Aventura City Commission continues to earn me royalties. Mine are not paid in cash (if only, he thought to himself), but in the lifelong friendship of residents who feel a kinship born of our shared stake in the building of our city.

Many of these residents take the time to send me updates on the progress of their neighborhood, their block, or their building. I enjoy their keeping me in the loop, but some days I feel like one of those guys in the federal government who sits all day monitoring the airwaves for “static.”

Lately my informants have been opening my eyes to an interesting phenomenon that portends a shift in the demographics of the Jewish population of Aventura.

In the early days of the city, several of the larger buildings, particularly in the city’s southern end, housed enough supplicants of the Jewish persuasion to create an ersatz synagogue inside the common areas of the building. Everyone would get together in the rec room and lift some spiritual weights, as it were. No doubt a sociologist would have scolded these folks for not venturing out far enough to create communal circles, but it certainly made for a convenient, if not lazy, option.



In truth, some of these temples were intended as more of a fallback than an ideal devotional setting. Most weeks, residents would prefer to head over to the luxurious, fully appointed place of worship a few blocks away. Some weeks, they might have gone north to hear the rabbi they liked, and other weeks they might have gone south to hear the one they could “take or leave.”

But when there was pouring rain, or even a drizzle, or, for that matter, a *threat* of rain, it was a nice option to be able to fall out of bed and into a service in your own building. If you could not make the house of worship, you could at least make the worship of house.

For other, less mobile types, proscribed by increases in age and decreases in health, the in-house chapel served



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very nicely as a home not really away from home. Perhaps aided by a walker, or escorted by an aide, residents could easily commute the distance between their physical apartment and the spiritual department. Some folks who sneered at this option 20 years ago, when they felt energetic at all times, lately have come to appreciate the chance to conserve their waning energy.

Setting up these outlets was no simple task. Most congregants prefer some rabbinic leadership, but it is rare that a building has a big enough money pool to hire somebody. A retired rabbi or sexton living on premises must generally be conscripted as a volunteer. (A rabbi on a nice pension from his generous acolytes up north is often happy to rerun his sermons before a captive audience, one that will not complain too loudly, considering the price.)

Then a Torah scroll must be procured. A new one costs upward of \$35,000 and takes six months to a year to complete. A used one might run \$10,000 or \$15,000.

The rest of the synagogue furniture can cost a few thousand dollars, if you

want to do it right, or it can be cannibalized at no cost from the card room. Sometimes the patchwork result of grabbing chairs and tables from hither and thither has a sort of quaint charm; other times it may look quite absurd. One way or the other, these little shuls were cobbled together in quite a few venues around Aventura, overcoming the logistical barriers in creative ways.

The crisis emerges when it is time to pick a denomination. (No, not money-wise; there we always prefer hundreds.) These are religious denominations: Orthodox, Conservative, Reconstructionist, Egalitarian, Reform. It is easy to say "to each his own" when dealing with individuals, but congregations require some multiple of "each" and "own" to function as a collective. Suddenly Jews are called upon to unite and wear the same stripe of tallit, and the claws are immediately unsheathed.

When it comes to the temple inside a building, a brutal democracy is the only viable approach. This is not a group of like-minded souls buying a lot together and constructing a sanctuary. In that case, if you don't fit in, you just go elsewhere. In your own development,

however, there is no elsewhere to go, at least not on rainy days. The losers in the denominational vote can either try out the other flavor and see if they acquire a taste for it, or opt out and sulk.

Judging by some of the murmuring I have heard over the years, the sulkers are well represented.

The news provided by my cadre of insiders shows a fascinating trend from the other groupings toward the Orthodox. During the dawning days of our demos, most of these democratically determined denominations produced the compromise synagogue, that is, the one in the middle: Conservative. The Orthodox tended to be outnumbered. Ironically, the people most committed to walking instead of driving on the Sabbath were enjoined to take up their staffs and traverse the desert to reach the Holy Land.

Times have been a-changing. The other denominations are finding it difficult to populate and maintain these outposts. No one is moving out by choice that I can see, but the ravages of time are whittling down the ranks of our earliest pioneers. Several buildings have made

the tough decision to switch to Orthodox so the synagogue may survive.

For observers of religious trends, this propensity must be fascinating. A century ago synagogues around the country were voting to shift from Orthodox to Conservative. In law school, we studied cases from that era in which the dwindling founders of shuls sued the young upstarts for bypassing the original charter. Now it seems there is some movement in the other direction, possibly reflecting the nationwide move away from the melting pot model to the multiethnic diversity model.

At any rate, as a city, we hope this all works out in our favor. There is a class of supposedly tolerant heterodox people whose open minds are locked to any thought in any realm classified as Orthodox. Hopefully the word "Orthodox" will not become a red flag in Aventura. We have always been moderate people here, regardless of affiliation.

As long as we all respect each other, we should continue to thrive as a home for people committed to excellence.

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Art on the Move

Now that the Design District has gone high-end, some of Miami's more innovative galleries are migrating south

By Anne Tschida
BT Arts Editor

The world of art is never static. Art is made in one place, then shipped and sold — a photograph, for instance, that was shot in the Everglades, but hangs in a Shanghai home — while art galleries and studios have traditionally been the most nomadic of spaces, particularly when it comes to urban neighborhoods in gentrification mode.

And so it is with Miami. For years, developers looking to revitalize areas have invited galleries and studios to move in on the cheap, or even for free, in order to bring some life, traffic, and hipster cred to a neighborhood. In the 1990s, South Beach was a center of the local art scene, until it rose from the ashes, rents soared, and art was no longer needed to sell the hood. Time to move on.

While some decry this relationship between “greedy” developers and “needy” artists, it is a somewhat



T. Elliot Mansa's *Yemaya and Olokun* at BFI, which held a fundraiser for him before he enters the MFA painting program at Yale.

co-dependent process: Artists and galleries get discounted rents, while developers, and the city, get good publicity. And



The new Bas Fisher Invitational exhibition space, featuring an installation by Tyson Reeder.

then the cycle starts all over again somewhere else. Like the Design District.

Real estate developer Craig Robins, the CEO of Dacra, started his career as an instrumental player in the revitalization of South Beach, then moved on to the Design District to try and jumpstart that area. Back in 2000, it was a lonely place. Half the buildings were empty and very few people could be found walking its streets.

To populate the neighborhood, Robins offered some nice deals to artists. It was a ride that lasted longer than most probably imagined, as the recession kept redevelopment from taking off in earnest.

Within several blocks around 38th and 40th streets, Dimensions Variable (DV), Spinello Gallery, Swampspace, Locust Projects, and Bas Fisher Invitational (BFI) found homes, as did a

number of artist studios. But as the recession has receded — and Robins's investment in the area has started to pay off — Louis Vuitton, Cartier, Prada, and other high-end retailers have moved in, crowding out the art spaces.

Which is why several of them have now transplanted to a huge downtown space, owned by developer conglomerate Miami Worldcenter Associates, which aims to rebuild a huge swath of the urban core along NE 1st Avenue. But since that is still a work in progress, in come the artists.

The DV and BFI spaces, the Turn-Based Press, a unique printmaking center led by artists and printers Kathleen Hudspeth and Thom Wheeler Castillo, and the performance and video artistic duo TM Sisters have all settled in the 20,000-square-foot former site of Capt. Harry's Fishing Supply

warehouse on 11th Street and NE 1st Avenue.

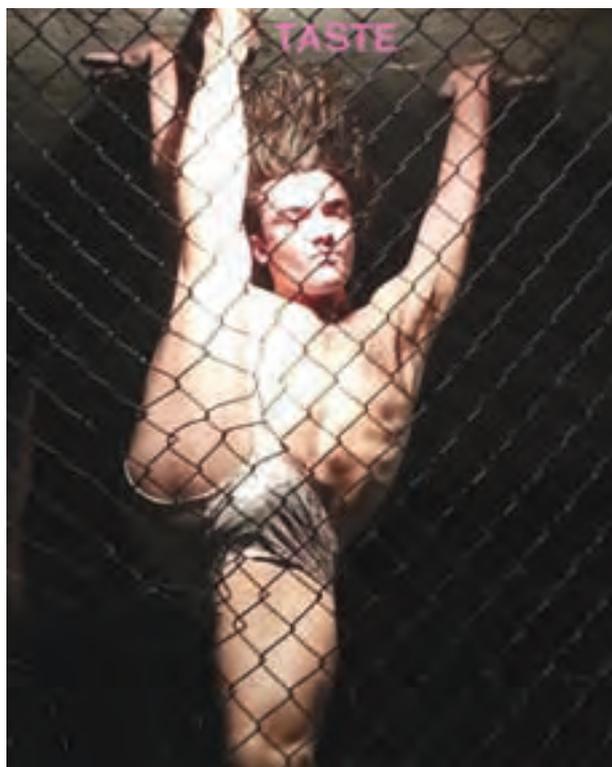
DV takes over the front, main space, accessible from glass doors facing the parking lot. The ceiling soars 22 feet, and there is an undeniably funky feel to it.

On this April afternoon, the exhibition is a dual show from Brooklyn-based Antoine Lefebvre and Miami's P. Scott Cunningham, a poet and founder of the O, Miami Poetry Festival that took place last month. It's a conceptually complex exhibit, as is most everything DV has offered up since it opened in a storefront in the Design District in 2009.

DV is run by the artist trio of Frances Trombly, Leyden Rodriguez-Casanova, and Adler Guerrier, all of whom also have huge studios in the complex.

The space is still taking shape. They have added 12-foot walls within the exhibition area and proper lighting, but there remains an unfinished rawness to it, which is a good thing. Now DV has even more space for its artistic constructions, which usually feature combinations of artists from elsewhere and here. For instance, Trombly says that the upcoming group June exhibit will be co-curated by an artist from Iowa and local Odalis Valdivieso.

The collaborative, interactive aspect of this art house goes beyond the main gallery. In another area, the duo that runs BFI — artists Naomi Fisher and Jim Drain — has also been setting up



O, Miami dance performance *Taste*, April 2013, at BFI.

shop: studios and performance spaces that can be accessed through a roll-up, metal garage door. BFI participated in O, Miami with a poetry-dance event, which spilled out onto the courtyard and street.

"The space is big, airy, and raw," says Fisher. "There are chain-link fences from floor to ceiling, left over from the fishing supply warehouse days, that give it a really special feel." She has high hopes for the new digs, especially when it comes to increased visibility: "Even though we were in the heart of the Design District [in the Buena Vista Building on 39th Street], people really had to know we were there, since we were hidden upstairs." Being in a space with other artists and endeavors, she hopes, will help BFI



Odalis Valdivieso's *Paper Folding* at the new home of Dimensions Variable.

become "a community hub for contemporary art."

BFI differs from DV in that it mixes up one-off visual art shows with performances and off-location events. For instance, in May, the latest installment of its Weir Miami Bus Tour, started several years ago, will roll out. This time the tour guide will be Cesar Trasobares, artist and activist, who will take visitors on a trip through the Cuban exile heritage of Miami. (The first Weir tour was led by DV's Guerrier, who took riders through Little Haiti and Liberty City.)

Also in May, BFI will feature art from a local African-American artist on the rise, T. Elliot Mansa, who has just been accepted to the MFA painting program at Yale University.

In yet another huge space, the Turn-Based Press is still under construction, utilizing the huge steel beams that once helped shelve fishing equipment and that must remain permanent fixtures; Rodriguez-Casanova says they are just too heavy and integral to the infrastructure to remove. That's fine. Like the chain-link walls, they look cool.

While benefiting from low rents, it should be noted that all three of these groups have also received Knight Foundation arts grants, which allow them to pursue these more eclectic projects without commercial pressure.

As of now, the inn is full. But don't expect it to remain static. "We are currently working on figuring out the space we need," says Rodriguez-Casanova, "to then be able to see what we can use to invite others."

"P2V: Antoine Lefebvre and P. Scott Cunningham" runs through May 25 at Dimensions Variable. "T. Elliot Mansa" runs through May 8 at Bas Fisher Invitational. The Weir Miami Bus Tour, with guide Cesar Trasobares, drives around town from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (lunch break at 1:30 p.m.) on May 4; cost is \$25. All events take place or leave from 100 NE 11th St. For more information, go to www.basfisherinvitational.com or dimensionsvariable.net.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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GALLERIES

101/EXHIBIT

101 NE 40th St., Miami
 305-573-2101
www.101exhibit.com
 Through June 15:
 "Paintings" by Jorge Santos

ABBA FINE ART

233 NW 36th St., Miami
 305-576-4278
www.abbafineart.com
 May 11 through July 31:
 "Group Show" with various artists

ACND GALLERY OF ART

4949 NE 2nd Ave., Miami
 305-751-8367
www.acnd.net
 May 4 through 31: "E-KleK-TiK: An IPC Visual Lab Photography Exhibit" with Carl Juste, CW Griffin, Charlie Trainor, Andrew Kaufman, Jenny Babot, Romney, Rubyann Smith Hernandez, Nanci Thomas, Zeus Shama, Jennifer Kay, and Ethan Britton
Reception May 4, 6 to 10 p.m.

ALBERTO LINERO GALLERY

2294 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
 786-286-7355
www.albertolinerogallery.com
 May 11 through June 8:
 "Dick-tators" by Dario
Reception May 11, 4 to 10 p.m.

ALEJANDRA VON HARTZ FINE ARTS

2630 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
 305-438-0220
www.alejandravonhartz.net
 Through May 31:
 "Pouring Light" by Alejandro Corujeira

ALMA FINE ART

2242 NW 1st Pl., Miami
 305-576-1150
www.almafineart.com
 Through June 9:
 "Dissolving the Form" by Ariel Toledano?
 "Private Matters" by Julian Pardo and Jesus Petroccini?

ART FUSION GALLERIES

3550 N. Miami Ave., Miami
 305-573-5730
www.artfusiongallery.com
 Through June 17:
 "Subjects of Splendor" with various artists

ART NOUVEAU GALLERY

348 NW 29th St., Miami
 305-573-4661
www.artnouveauMiami.com
 Through June 21:
 "Mostly Red" by John Henry

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
 305-237-3597
<http://artseenspace.wordpress.com>
 May 31 through June 21:
 "New World School of the Arts High School Senior Showcase" with various artists
Reception May 31, 6 to 9 p.m.

ASCASO GALLERY

2441 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
 305-571-9410
www.ascasogallery.com/site
 Call gallery for exhibition information

BAKEHOUSE ART COMPLEX

561 NW 32nd St., Miami
 305-576-2828
www.bacfl.org
 May 10 through May 25:
 "Papering" with various artists
 May 10 through June 7:
 "The Nature of Silence" by Tina Salvesen and Gerbi Tsesarkaia
Reception May 10, 7 to 10 p.m.

BAS FISHER INVITATIONAL

122 NE 11th St., Miami
 DWNTWN ArtHouse
www.basfisherinvitational.com
 Through May 8:
 T. Elliot Mansa

BLACK SQUARE GALLERY

2248 NW 1st Pl., Miami
 786-999-9735
www.blacksquaregallery.com
 Through June 1:
 "Gold Chains and Champagne" by Ryan McCann

BORINQUEN ART GALLERY

100 NE 38th St., Suite 3, Miami
 305-491-1526
www.borinquenhealth.org
 Call gallery for exhibition information

BRIDGE RED STUDIOS / PROJECT SPACE

12425 NE 13th Ave. #5, North Miami
 305-978-4856
www.bridgeredstudios.com
 Through June 16:
 "INKarnation" by Karen Rifas and Kerry Phillips

BRISKY GALLERY

130 NW 24th St., Miami
 786-409-3585
www.briskygallery.com
 May 9 through August 9:



Karen (KK) Clardy, *Walking Down the Aisle*, acrylic paint on canvas, 2012, at Art Fusion Galleries.

"Eternal Reflection" with Reinier Gamboa, Abstrkt, LEBO, Eric Cloutier, Lucinda Linderman, CP1, Diana Contreras, Alex Yanes, José Mertz, and Karen Vermeer
Reception May 9, 7:30 to 11 p.m.

BUTTER GALLERY

2930 NW 7th Ave., Miami
 305-303-6254
www.buttergallery.com
 May 11 through July 31:
 "Recent Work" by Douglas Hoekzema (HOX)

BUZZART

2750 NW 3rd Ave., Suite 6, Miami
 305-571-8100
www.buzz-art.net
 Through May 31: "Skyfall" by Javier Velasco

C-ART GALLERY

2600 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
<http://www.c-artgallery.com>
 May 2 through June 1: David Rodriguez Caballero

CALDWELL / LINFIELD GALLERY & STUDIO

8351 NE 8th Ct., Miami
 305-754-2093
www.susannacaldwell.com
 Through June 1:
 "Mahogany Sculptures and Sculptural Offering Bowls carved from Florida Hardwoods" by Susanna Caldwell

CARIDI GALLERY

785 NE 125th St., North Miami
 786-202-5554, www.caridigallery.com
 Call gallery for exhibition information

CAROL JAZZART CONTEMPORARY ART

158 NW 91st St., Miami Shores
 305-490-6906
www.cjazzart.com
 By appointment: carol@cjazzart.com

Through May 5:
 "Reigning Men" by David Rohn
 May 17 through June 30:
 "Ulama, Ule, Olé" by Ronny Quevedo
Reception May 17, 7 to 10 p.m.

DANIEL AZOULAY GALLERY

Shops at Midtown Miami
 Store # 120 Buena Vista Blvd., Miami
 305-576-1977
www.danielazoulaygallery.com
 May 3 through July 5:
 "Tunnel to No Where" by Daniel Azoulay

DAVID CASTILLO GALLERY

2234 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
 305-573-8110
www.davidcastillogallery.com
 Through May 4:
 "Far From Apple Hill" by Francie Bishop Good
 May 17 through July 6:
 "Kaleidoscopic" by Shinique Smith
Reception May 17, 6 to 10 p.m.

DIANA LOWENSTEIN FINE ARTS

2043 N. Miami Ave., Miami
 305-576-1804
www.dfinearts.com
 Through May 31:
 "The Empire of Light" by Fabiano Parisi
 "Tend To" by Sterz

DIASPORA VIBE GALLERY

3938 N. Miami Ave., Miami
 786-536-7801
www.diasporavibe.net
 Call gallery for exhibition information

DIMENSIONS VARIABLE

100 NE 11th St., Miami
 DWNTWN ArtHouse
 305-607-5527
www.dimensionsvariable.net
 Through May 20:
 "PV2" by Antoine Lefebvre and P. Scott Cunningham

DINA MITRANI GALLERY

2620 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
 786-486-7248
www.dinamitrani-gallery.com
 Through June 7: "Illuminations" by Kanako Sasaki

DOT FIFTYONE ART SPACE

187 NW 27th St., Miami
 305-573-9994
www.dotfiftyone.com
 May 9 through June 6:
 "Inventory Revised" with Mauro Giaconi, Raquel Schwartz, Liliane Eberle, and Hernan Cedola
Reception May 9, 7 to 10 p.m.

ELITE GALLERY

46 NW 36th St., Miami
 754-422-5942
www.elitefineartgalleries.com
 May 1 through 31:
 "May Show" with Patricia Ortega, Beatriz@Beatrice, and Alba Vasconcelos
Reception May 11, 7 to 10 p.m.

Culture: GALLERIES + MUSEUMS

EMERSON DORSCH

151 NW 24th St., Miami
305-576-1278
www.emersondorsch.com
Through May 11:

"In a Perfect World" by Brookhart Jonquil

"Relay (Flow)" by Rene Barge
May 17 through June 8:

"Object implied" with Kris Chatterson, Dave Hardy, Ryan Roa, April Street, Robert Thiele, and Odalis Valdivieso
Reception May 17, 6 to 9 p.m.

ETRA FINE ART

50 NE 40th St., Miami
305-438-4383
www.etrafineart.com
May 11 through 25:

"Polymorphism" by Juan Mejia

FREDRIC SNITZER GALLERY

2247 NW 1st Pl., Miami
305-448-8976
www.snitzer.com
Through May 27:

"Boys in Peril?" by Hernan Bas

GALERIE HELENE LAMARQUE

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

GALLERY 212 MIAMI CONTEMPORARY ART GALLERY

2407 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
516-532-3040
www.gallery212miami.com
Call gallery for exhibition information

GALLERY DIET

174 NW 23rd St., Miami
305-571-2288
www.gallerydiet.com
Through June 1:

"In Proximity" by Daniel Peet and JJ PEET

GARY NADER FINE ART

62 NE 27th St., Miami
305-576-0256
www.garynader.com
Through July 30:

"Master's New Acquisitions" with various artists

GENERAL AUDIENCE PRESENTS

769 NE 125th St., North Miami
786-467-0941
www.generalaudiencepresents.com
Through May 11:

"Fun with your new head" by Robert Pruitt

GREGG SHIENBAUM FINE ART

2239 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-456-5478
www.gsfineart.com
Call gallery for exhibition information

HARDCORE ARTS CONTEMPORARY SPACE

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

www.hardcoreartmiami.com

Through June 1:

"No Hard Feelings" by Chanoir

"Personal Is Political" with Fernando Arias, Milton Becerra, Henry Bermudez, Efen Candelaria, Manuela Covini, Leslie Gabaldon, Mariana Monteagudo, Magnus Sigurdarson, Ruben Torres Llorca
May 11 through July 6:

"Preserving the Void" by Jonathan Rockford
Reception May 11, 7 to 10 p.m.

HAROLD GOLEN GALLERY

2294 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-989-3359
www.haroldgolengallery.com
Through May 4:

"That '70s Show, Again!" by David van Alphen

IDEOBOX ARTSPACE

2417 N. Miami Ave., Miami
305-576-9878
www.ideobox.com
May 2 through July 5:

"Square Totem" by Jesus Matheus
Reception May 2, 7 to 10 p.m.

JUAN RUIZ GALLERY

301 NW 28th St., Miami
786-310-7490
www.juanruizgallery.com
Call gallery for exhibition information

KABE CONTEMPORARY

123 NW 23rd St., Miami
305-573-8142
www.kabecontemporary.com
Through June 15:

"Disassembling Paradise" by Sergio Vega

KAVACHNINA CONTEMPORARY

46 NW 36th St., Miami
305-448-2060
www.kavachnina.com
Through May 25:

"Over & Out" by John La Huis
May 11 through June 30:
"CONTINUUM" by Laura Rodriguez
Reception May 11, 7 to 10 p.m.

KELLEY ROY GALLERY

50 NE 29th St., Miami
305-447-3888
www.kelleyroygallery.com
May 4 through 25:

"To Go Into Silence" by Riitta Klint

KIWI GALLERY

48 NW 29th St., Miami
305-200-3047



Rene Barge, *Relay (Flow)*, detail, amplifiers, sonic drivers, plywood, Dynaband, 2013, at Emerson Dorsch.

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
May 11 through June 1:

"In god we trust" by Serguei Litvin Manoliu
Reception May 11, 6 to 10 p.m.

LOCUST PROJECTS

3852 N. Miami Ave., Miami
305-576-8570
www.locustprojects.org
May 11 through June 19:

Jillian Mayer
"Out of Place" by Tracey Goodman and Valerie Snobeck

MARKOWICZ FINE ART

114 NE 40th St., Miami
786-362-5546
www.markowiczfineart.com
Through May 30:

"The Lost Series" by Arno Elias

MIAMI-DADE COLLEGE, CENTRE GALLERY

300 NE 2nd Ave., Miami
Bldg. 1, Room 1365
305-237-3696
www.mdc.edu
Through May 2:

"Emerging Artists 2013" with various artists

MIAMI-DADE COLLEGE MUSEUM OF ART AND DESIGN

Freedom Tower
600 Biscayne Blvd., Miami
305-237-7700
www.mdc.edu
Through May 4:

"A Life's Work" by Arnold Mesches
Through May 31:

"Transcending Narratives of Humanity Selected works from the CINTAS Foundation Fellows Collection" with various artists, curated by Natalie Perez

MIAMI-DADE COLLEGE, NORTH GALLERY

11380 NW 27th Ave., Miami
305-237-1532
www.mdc.edu
Through May 3:

"Emerging Artists 2013" with various artists
May 16 through July 18:

"Aperture 2013" with various artists
Reception May 16, noon to 5 p.m.

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
305-2 37-3597
Call gallery for exhibition information

NINA TORRES FINE ART

1800 N. Bayshore Dr., Miami
305-395-3599
www.ninatorresfineart.com
May 10 through 31:

"May Contemporary" with Eumelia Castro, Gloriela Araujo, Ivonne Torres, Leomaris Bojos, Mery Godigna Collet, and Sal Sidner

"One's Condition" by Manny Perez
Reception May 10, 7 to 10 p.m.

NOW CONTEMPORARY ART

175 NW 25th St., Miami
305-571-8181
www.nowcontemporaryart.com
May 11 through June 30:
Mark Jenkins

O. ASCANIO GALLERY

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

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

OXENBERG FINE ART

50 NE 29th St., Miami
305-854-7104
www.oxenbergart.com
Call gallery for exhibition information

PAN AMERICAN ART PROJECTS

2450 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-573-2400
www.panamericanart.com
Through May 25:



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Culture: GALLERIES + MUSEUMS

"Upside Down (turmoil, disasters & shootings)" by Luis Cruz Azaceta
 "Miami Cool" by Luis Enrique Camejo

PRIMARY PROJECTS

4141 NE 2nd Ave., Suite 104, Miami
 www.primaryprojectspace.com
 info@primaryflight.com
 www.primaryprojectspace.com
 Through May 11:

"PUCHO: An Act of Vandalism" by PUCHO

PROJECTS GALLERY

250 NW 23rd St., Ste 208, Miami
 267-303-9652
 www.projects-gallery.com
 Call gallery for exhibition information

ROBERT FONTAINE GALLERY

2349 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
 305-397-8530
 www.robertfontainegallery.com
 Through May 4: Nick Gentry
 May 11 through 25:

"Never Odd, Odd or Even" by Anthony Lister
Reception May 11, 6 to 9 p.m.

SAMMER GALLERY

82 NE 29th St., Miami
 305-441-2005
 www.artnet.com/sammerglassery.html
 May 3 through June 2:

"Periode Blanche" by Carmelo Arden Quin

SPINELLO PROJECTS

2930 NW 7th Ave., Miami
 786-271-4223
 www.spinelloprojects.com
 Call gallery for exhibition information

SWAMPSPACE GALLERY

150 NE 42nd St., Miami
 http://swampspace.blogspot.com/
 swampstyle@gmail.com
 May 11 through 31: "Presque Vu" by Maitejosune Urrechaga

THE LUNCH BOX GALLERY

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

THE SCREENING ROOM

2626 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
 May 16 through July 11:
 "We Are Where We Are Not" by Carola Bravo

UNDER THE BRIDGE

12425 NE 13th Ave., North Miami
 305-978-4437
 Call gallery for exhibition information

UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI GALLERY

2750 NW 3rd Ave., Ste 4, Miami
 305-284-3161
 www.as.miami.edu/art
 May 6 through 24: "The Means to an End" by Daniel Listwan
Reception May 11, 2 to 9 p.m.
UNIX FINE ART GALLERY

2219 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
 305-496-0621
 www.unifineart.com
 Ongoing:
 Alexis Torres

WALTMAN ORTEGA FINE ART

2233 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
 305-576-5335
 www.waltmanortega.com
 Through May 31: "Absolute Zero"
 by Jonathan Huxley

WYNWOOD WALLS

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

YEELAN ART GALLERY

294 NW 54th St., Miami
 954-235-4758
 www.yeelenart.com
 Call gallery for exhibition information

ZADOK GALLERY

2534 N. Miami Ave., Miami
 305-438-3737, www.zadokgallery.com
 May 11 through July 4: "Reclaimed Miami" with various artists
 "20 Shades of Grey" with various artists
Reception May 11, 2 to 10 p.m.

MUSEUM & COLLECTION EXHIBITS

ARTCENTER/SOUTH FLORIDA

800 Lincoln Rd., Miami Beach
 305-674-8278, www.artcentersf.org
 Through May 26:
 "Multiplicity" with Eugenia Calvo, Babette Herschberger,
 Regina Jestrow, Laz Ojalde, Kerry Phillips, Frances
 Trombly, Gerbi Tsesarskaia, and Michelle Weinberg

BASS MUSEUM OF ART

2100 Collins Ave., Miami Beach
 305-673-7530
 www.bassmuseum.org
 Through July 21: "From Picasso to Koons: The Artist as
 Jeweler" with various artists
 Through August 11:
 "Rufus Corporation" by Eve Sussman

CANNONBALL

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

CIFO (Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation)

1018 N. Miami Ave., Miami
 305-455-3380, www.cifo.org
 Through May 12: "City Metaphors" by Miquel Navarro
 May 24 through June 9:
 "Properly Named: New World School of the Arts BFA



**Kanako Sasaki, *Knot*, archival pigment print, 2012,
 at Dina Mitrani Gallery.**

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 www.margulieswarehouse.com
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 http://rfc.museum
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What's Not To Love?

It's time for the tenth annual **Love-In Party in the Park** at Greynolds Park (17530 W. Dixie Hwy.) on **Sunday, May 5**, from 11:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Don't be too cool for school here — it's *supposed* to be multigenerational, cheesy fun. The 1970s group Grand Funk Railroad (of "We're an American Band" fame) is the featured act, there will be a videotaping of a Harlem Shake, and "costumes" from the last four decades are encouraged. Plus tons of activities. Tickets cost \$15 in advance, \$20 at the door. Kids 12 and under are free. Go to www.miamipartyinthepark.com.

Inanna in Town

Inanna is considered the most powerful goddess in ancient Mesopotamia (today's Iraq), her legend going back 6000 years. She was associated with Venus, fertility, and sexual rituals. Conflating the ancient with the contemporary, Stephanie Ansin and Fernando Calzadilla of Miami Theater Center (9806 NE 2nd Ave.) have come up with *Inanna and the Huluppu Tree*, a fabulously costumed and choreographed play about the goddess trying to save a city constantly under attack from nature and losing the leadership of its old deities. How very Miami. Starting **Wednesday, May 1**, and running through the month. Tickets cost \$20. For show times, go to www.mtciami.org.

A Grand Slam of a Ballet

To close out the season, Miami City Ballet will stage *Slaughter on Tenth Avenue*, adapted from a Rodgers and Hart Broadway play about gangsters, strippers, a murder plot, and the unexpected joie de vivre of the criminal underworld. It also includes tap dancing and spoken-word parts, which is why the Balanchine-choreographed work is so out of the ordinary. Oh, and also because former baseball star Mike Piazza takes on a cameo role (but only on opening night). Miami City Ballet's Program IV, which also includes a Jerome

Robbins piano ballet, runs from **Friday May 3, through Sunday, May 5**, with shows at 8:00 p.m. (and 2:00 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday) at the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts. Tickets are \$20-\$175. Visit www.arshtcenter.org.

The Private Dancer

Rudi Goblen, dancer and actor, has been involved with many of Miami's homegrown dance and hip-hop-based performances over the past decade, working with the likes of Teo Castellanos and Rosie Herrera, as well as creating his own pieces. Now he's back with the conclusion of his theatrical trilogy for Miami Light Project (404 NW 26th St.). Titled *PET*, it's a celebration of, and mourning for, love. Goblen's interactive physical theater, drawn from real-life experiences in support groups, takes the stage **Friday, May 10, and Saturday, May 11**, at 8:00 p.m. Tickets cost \$25. Go to www.miamilightproject.com.

Beautiful Puppets

We all know *Sleeping Beauty*: A beautiful young princess has been cursed to stay in a deep sleep until a handsome prince kisses her. But Mexican puppetry troupe Marionetas de la Esquina, one of the best in the world, has modernized the story a bit. In *Sleeping Beauty Dreams*, our heroine breaks out of her confines on her own, in search of love and her inner self. The storytelling is humorous and the marionettes

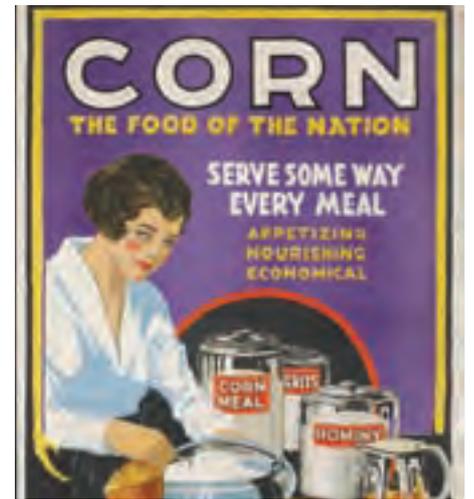
always clever in this work for adults and young ones. Two shows are in English, two in Spanish. On **Saturday, May 11**, at 11:00 a.m. (English), 2:00 p.m. (Spanish), and 5:00 p.m. (English), and on **Sunday, May 12**, at 2:00 p.m. (Spanish). At the Arsht Center for the Performing Arts. Tickets are \$26. Go to www.arshtcenter.org.

Take Mom to the River

Brunch is so over for Mother's Day. Cruising up and down the Miami River on the morning before that day, **Saturday, May 11**, from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., seems much more relaxed. That's what HistoryMiami is offering up with **Mom's Miami River Boat**, a float through our waterway heritage, under old bridges, past riverside neighborhoods (many hidden from the average commuter) and little parks, and alongside unique river traffic, which includes tugboats and creaky old freighters. And maybe a manatee. The tour costs \$44 for members, \$54 for nonmembers. Go to www.historymiami.org.

Match Point

Tennis has always produced stars, icons, and prima donnas, both male and female. Rarely, though, has it produced as much collective love, and resentment, as that directed at the Williams sisters, Venus and Serena. Black female superstars in a white sport, tough, dominant, and winning, their story seems



We Are What We Eat

A delicious-sounding exhibit, "**Modern Meals: Remaking American Foods From Farm to Kitchen**", opens at the Wolfsonian-FIU (1001 Washington Ave., Miami Beach) on **Friday, May 17**, and runs through August 18. For those who've never been to the Wolfsonian-FIU (shame on you), this unique museum highlights trends, objects, and designs that transformed the U.S. in the 20th Century. This exhibit will follow the evolution of mass-produced food, which changed both the U.S. and the world, impacting not just what we eat, but where and how. Admission is \$7; free on Friday evenings. More at www.wolfsonian.org.

just made for the big screen, and now it has been. *Venus and Serena* plays on O Cinema's new screen in Miami Shores (9806 NE 2nd Ave.) from **Thursday, May 16, through Sunday, May 19**, at various times. Admission is \$10.50 for nonmembers; \$7.50 for members. Details at www.o-cinema.org.

Networking Opportunity

The Performing Arts Network (PAN), founded back in 1994 as an organization of multicultural, multidisciplinary performance groups, has always been hard to categorize. And that was before its North Miami building burned down a couple of years back. But we're happy to announce the nonprofit has returned, with an official reopening on **Sunday, May 19**, at PAN, 13146 W. Dixie Hwy., from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. The open house will include performances and refreshments. Admission is free, but call 305-899-7730 for reservations. Go to www.panmiami.org.

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



The Zoo You Never Knew

Back in 1948, the story goes, a traveling circus unexpectedly closed down in Miami, leaving behind some large animals, including lions. The big cats and monkeys needed a home, and so the Crandon Park Zoo (6747 Crandon Blvd., Key Biscayne) was born. But as the zoo grew, it needed more room, eventually morphing into what is now ZooMiami. Not everything made the move, however. Today there are still remnants of the original zoo, cages and bits of buildings, as well as peacocks, ducks, geese, ibises, and more than a few big lizards. Check it all out in HistoryMiami's **Old Crandon Park Zoo Eco-Walk** on **Saturday, May 18**, from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. \$20 for members; \$30 for nonmembers. Tickets at www.historymiami.org.

Biscayne Crime Beat

Compiled by Derek McCann

Say "Cheese" for Your Mug Shot

4870 Biscayne Blvd.

Sometimes people want to pay for certain things, while acting as if they are entitled to others. This woman was shopping at Publix and went to the makeup aisle. She opened up a package of makeup and placed the contents in her purse, then threw the empty package behind the cheese. (Classy.) Continuing to shop, she eventually went through the checkout line, paying for everything in her cart — except the makeup. She was stopped by police in the parking lot and promptly arrested. While the economy has hit us hard, and we need to make a good impression in those job interviews,

do we really need to risk a mug shot to get the look we want?

Love, Miami Style

400 Block of NE 30th Street

According to this police report, a woman was "helping someone out" by allowing that person to temporarily live with her. She was also dating him. To return the favor, her beau took her key ring one day without her permission. Perhaps he was going to prepare a beautiful feast replete with romantic candles and New Age music? Nope. Instead the victim discovered her jewelry, bag, and sunglasses missing, and the love of her life gone from the picture. Police were searching for the man at press time.

Lock It or Lose It

1100 Block of NE 80th Street

Again, people, we are not living in Canada. This is Miami. For reasons unbeknownst to us, people continue to leave their doors unlocked. This person left the door unlocked for a maintenance man who was going to repair the water heater. When the victim arrived home, he found his home ransacked and several items stolen, including his Playstation 3. Please be aware that naiveté is a code word for "open score" in the criminal mind.



Fit Thief Eats Turkey Hot Dog, Goes for Run

400 Block of NE 36th Street

A thug grabbed some beer and a turkey hot dog at a gas station store and decided to leave without paying. (Turkey hot dog from a gas station? You would have to

pay us to eat that.) The clerk electronically locked the door, which led the man to break it. He ran north to Biscayne Boulevard, then headed toward State Road 112. Police chased him. One even used his Taser, but to no avail; the thug kept running. The man crawled under a bridge and came out the other side, and

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even broke through a residential fence in an effort to escape. However, a team of police had materialized by this time and was able to forcefully subdue him.

Isn't Weed Supposed to Chill You Out?

60 NE 11th St.

Defendant was being arrested after being pulled over by police. Appears they found some marijuana in the car. As they continued searching the vehicle, they also found a Luger pistol inside the glove compartment. When asked about the gun, the man said, "I bought that at a pawn shop!" He then called the officer a name that rhymes with gas hole. Oh, what cops have to put up with. It turns out the gun was reported stolen in Arkansas. So being arrested for weed and a stolen gun? Who's the gas hole, now?

Family Night in North Miami

975 NE 125 St.

Woman was dining at a local restaurant with her black handbag hanging from the back of the chair. Tsk, tsk. This is kind of like the unlocked door from

another entry in this Crime Beat, except this method is much closer to dangling a mouse in front of a cat. Predictably, she left the establishment and forgot the purse. When she returned — wait for it — the purse was gone. The woman noticed, however, that a lively party of six nearby was laughing the night away. Suspecting they had filched her purse, she waited for them to leave and actually attempted to block them in using her car, but they sped away. We guess the family that steals together, stays together.

Fast-Food Heist

965 NE 125th St.

While Subway is known for its motto of "Eat fresh," one has to understand that good food karma only infuriates the criminal brethren. After this Subway closed for the night, a vagrant dressed in black threw a brick through the window (setting off the alarm), entered the establishment, and stole a cash register. His total haul was \$100, which is good for about 20 sandwiches at Subway, or perhaps a portion of his bail money, whichever comes first. We are hoping for the latter, of course.

Local Restaurant Serves Pig, Pays For It

4590 NE 2nd Ave.

Even at the Buena Vista Deli, which draws a sophisticated crowd with its great desserts and fantastic brunch, problems can arise. The owner, known for being affable, approached a table only to be screamed at by this customer. Naturally, the owner asked him to leave. The man responded by pushing the owner in the chest, and kept eating. He then left without paying. If this stuff persists, they are going to have to put bars on that outside dining area. We hope polite Miami-ians will continue to outnumber the sociopaths. Order the Spanish omelet. It's delicious.

Crazy Diner Avoids Sharing Charge

5300 Block of N. Miami Avenue

Sometimes people just flip out and, when they do, it's best to just drive away — if you can. This poor victim was sitting in traffic when he was approached by a man carrying a doggie bag from a local restaurant. There must have been something in that food. He screamed at the driver and, when his attention-seeking behavior was ignored (normally the best strategy when

dealing with Miami vermin), the man reached into the victim's car and took the key from the ignition. He then took the food from his doggie bag and rubbed it into the interior of the car. This included cake. Police have not tracked him down, and lab tests have not determined whether the cake was angel food or coconut.

Handi-Capable and Then Some

1700 Block of N. Bayshore Drive

A patron, checking out of the Double Tree Hotel, had his luggage brought down to him in the lobby. A man in an electric wheelchair drove up to one of the bags and waited a couple of minutes. The patron thought nothing of it and turned his head. Big mistake. The man in the wheelchair grabbed the bag and began speeding away. Seriously. He exited the lobby and headed north on Bayshore Drive. Police canvassed the area, but could not track him down. Even though he was in a wheelchair, carrying a piece of luggage. This just proves that people with disabilities can do anything anyone else can do — and, in Miami, that is saying a lot.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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A Great Bay

Miami's signature waterway is more of a jewel than even we realize

By **Jim W. Harper**
BT Contributor

In all the world, there is only one Biscayne Bay. It is Miami's front yard of blue glass, a river of seagrass.

It is hard to overstate its value, beauty, and diversity. Matt Damon's house on the bay just went on the market for a cool \$20 million, and that's just a drop in the bay's bucket of thousands of high-value properties. Add in the world's

busiest cruise ship center, the skyscrapers of downtown, and Vizcaya, and you start to see the green in this blue oasis.

Downtown Miami is visible from the bay's northern and southern extremes. It floats on the bay like a formation of crystals.

The 35-mile-long bay is remarkably clean, much more so than Chesapeake or other American bays. A great mystery of Biscayne Bay is how a metropolis was built on top of it without killing it. The bay is teeming with life in a literal octopus garden.

What other city in the world has skyscrapers that reflect turquoise waters dotted by dolphins, manatees, and spotted eagle rays?

The bay has been altered over the years, sometimes for the better, sometimes for the worse. Older Miami-ans may recall the days, decades ago, when authorities often prohibited swimming owing to raw sewage spills. Dredging tore up the estuary's floor and created the many spoil islands that dot the bay today.

The northern bay's main barrier to the ocean, a former peninsula, became an island with the creation of Haulover Cut. Perhaps the greatest change came from farther inland, as efforts to drain the Everglades altered the flow of fresh water into the bay. The mangroves along the bay's shoreline were chopped down for development.

How did the bay survive it all? Perhaps because of its massive size, the forgiveness of ocean currents, and the leadership that secured its protection.

While not a traditional park, all of Biscayne Bay is protected. Two governing bodies split the bay into essentially two regions. The region south of Key Biscayne falls mostly within Biscayne National Park, while the



BT photos by Jim W. Harper

Our glistening bay survives despite having skyscrapers as neighbors.

Biscayne Bay Aquatic Preserve covers the more developed northern section. The entire bay is an Outstanding Florida Water, meaning it has been deemed to have exceptional natural value.

Established in 1974, the Biscayne Bay Aquatic Preserve is where most people meet the bay. It covers 67,000 acres of submerged land (dry a few thousand years ago) running between the mainland and the islands from Key Biscayne northward, mostly. A secondary portion lies in Card Sound by Key Largo.

The state-level Aquatic Preserve (it is part of the Department of Environmental Protection) has an annual budget of \$18,000 plus salary for two employees, according to Pamela Sweeney, the preserve's manager. That number is not a typo: To help preserve and protect Biscayne Bay, the state spends less than 0.1 percent of the value of Matt Damon's house.

What? This economic insanity makes me "smad," sad and mad at the same time. Donald Trump alone has invested billions in Miami-Dade County. Meanwhile, what is arguably its most valuable asset, Biscayne Bay, gets pennies.

Putting aside the tears in my eyes, let's focus on the place that launched a thousand kayaks, the bay's northern portion.

The Oleta River, inhabited in ancient times by the Tequesta Indians, rolls into the apex of the bay, and the bay's shoreline, thick with towering red mangroves, reminds us of what the area used to look



Sandspur Island in the northern bay is a treat for visitors.

like. Gradually widening as it spreads south, the bay flirts with the ocean over a spit of sandy land. While thin, this beachy land absorbs the Atlantic's waves and leaves the bay perpetually calmer.

Surrounding the bay is the greenest space in northeastern Miami-Dade. The bay's bordering parks and green spaces previously reviewed in this column have received the highest rankings of any area in the Biscayne Corridor. Ratings out of a perfect 5 have included:

Oleta River State Park: 5
Haulover Beach Park: 4.5

Florida International University's Biscayne Bay Campus: 4
Sandspur Island: 4

These ratings are no fluke. Remember, a view of the bay is worth \$20 million.

While this area has regular boat traffic, it is generally quiet. Fishing boats line the marina in Haulover Beach Park, and some yachts park in the cove in between FIU and Oleta River State Park, which has a manmade, protected beach,

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Oleta River State Park: Surrounded by the bay, it is a jewel.



FIU's Biscayne Bay campus fronts Biscayne Bay passively.



Haulover Beach Park is undergoing a major bayfront redesign.

excellent for swimming; the bay's natural shoreline is more swamp than beach.

The bay welcomes small boats, but repels large ones. Its depth averages only a few feet, so kayaks and canoes are an ideal means of transportation. Wayward motorboats have left many, many scars in the seagrass beds. Covering most of the bay, these beds are exceptionally valuable ecosystems.

Aquatic Preserve manager Sweeney favors a kayak around the mangroves in Oleta and a snorkel by Sandspur or

Pelican Island. My favorite bayside spot is within FIU's borders, where I scattered my dog's ashes. Surely the bay is home to many loved ones' ashes.

This year the Aquatic Preserve teamed with local nonprofits to publish a new map for Paddle Out Biscayne Bay, a program of 20 kayak launches across the bay. (Link to the map from "Park Patrol" on our website.)

As for animals, Biscayne Bay has a permanent resident population of about 100 dolphins, and research shows

distinct north-versus-south-bay sub-groups. Seahorses and juvenile fish hide in seagrass beds near the shoreline. Bird life abounds; visit any bridge at sunset to watch pelicans diving for dinner.

Views of the bay are everywhere. One of the best views of Brickell's skyline is from the Rusty Pelican restaurant. Without the bay, it would just be a row of buildings, but reflected in the bay, it becomes art.

Treat yourself: Play tourist one day and take one of the sunset cruises that originate at Bayside Marketplace.

Instead of gawking only at the homes of the rich and famous, which derive most of their value from bayside views, look into the water and appreciate how truly outstanding it is. It lets Miami breathe.

Thousands of people drive over Biscayne Bay every hour without giving it a second thought. Don't be one of those people. Give it many thoughts, because it has given you more than you will ever know.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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Causeway Jim

A beachcombing expedition leads to an unexpected encounter with a homeless man

By Wendy Doscher-Smith
BT Contributor

I frequently beachcomb next to a causeway, in between Miami and Miami Beach. It is out of the way and somewhat isolated.

When I go, I put on my rain boots, make sure I have water, my phone and camera, and bags for shells, sea glass, and any other items I might come across or trip over — a list that so far includes old cell phones, bones, a piece of a Judas Priest cassette tape, and pottery shards. Perhaps most important, I also bring a bat, so I can club the hell out of anyone who tries to do me harm.

(I have learned that just lugging around a bat does the trick. That,

combined with wearing my penguin-shaped hat. Works every time. I emerge from the brush and people run from me.)

A week ago I found something — *someone* — who was more important than ocean-tumbled glass (even if it is the rare red kind), and even more important than the animals I routinely encounter on the beach, like sea slugs, mummified fish, and horseshoe crabs. I found Jimmy.

But perhaps it is more accurate to say Jimmy found me.

I had just spent a few hours collecting debris that travels from who-knows-where to the ocean and then into Biscayne Bay. I had taken the low tide by the mucky teats and milked it dry. My legs and butt were sore. My pockets and



BT photo by Wendy Doscher-Smith

bags brimmed with tidal treasure. My hair was salty.

I had loaded my stuff into my car, along with my bat, when I decided to take one last glance along the seawall. Poised in The Crouch — one of my beachcombing positions — I was just about to inspect a light green piece of glass when I heard a voice behind me.

“Excuse me, ma’am.”

Now, I’m not a screamer. I’m a freezer. I’m half-convinced that, if I ever find myself in a dire situation, I will

stand there mortified and gawking. The screamers... well, I needn’t explain them.

This voice startled me into a scelp — half scream, half yelp. I think this is because when I’m on the comb (similar to being on the hunt) and immersed in fine details, I tune out the world. This is part of what makes the comb so fun and therapeutic.

It also makes it dangerous, as you should always be aware of your surroundings. I am usually very good at maintaining perked ears and detecting

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the slightest noise — usually wind moving through the trees, which does, in fact, sound like voices. (Just in case you thought that was a load of crap.)

Well, I had let my guard down. I cursed myself for letting the beach lull me into a false sense of security, and for leaving my trusty bat behind. Without my bat, I was just some freak in a penguin hat, which, while frightening enough, was not likely to deter a bad man looking to do me in.

Whipping around, I hoped, in my vulnerable and bat-less state, for a hint of the crazy in my eyes, to make up for that sissy scelp, and saw an older man straddling a bicycle.

“Oh, I’m very sorry,” he said. “I didn’t mean to scare you.”

He was tall and very skinny, wearing a short-sleeve work shirt and slacks. Sober. Not strung out.

Let the panhandling begin, I thought.

But Jimmy didn’t want my money.

“Ma’am, please, if you have any food at all, and you can spare it, I would greatly appreciate it,” he said. “I’m hungry.”

I said I would check.

“Please. Anything. You know how you always hear that people go hungry

in America? Well, I’m it.” Pause. “*This is the face of hunger.*”

That line resonated. I realized Jimmy wasn’t just naturally skinny. He was, indeed, hungry. Perhaps even starving.

I found some mixed nuts and offered Jimmy the can, but he just shook his head and pointed at his mouth: “I can’t

Jimmy was missing his bottom teeth, but was able to get some of my peanut butter crackers down.

chew them.” Oh. Jimmy was missing his bottom teeth, but was able to get some of my peanut butter crackers down.

As he gummed the crackers, Jimmy told me about how he was on his way to Mount Sinai Hospital for his diabetes medicine. He had been under the bridge for two days, because he was too weak to leave, but he was out of time.

Jimmy told me that his full name was James Jackson. He’s originally from Alabama, but had lived in the Northeast. He had a degree in engineering from Antioch

University. His wife, Margaret, died a few years ago. He had no children or relatives. And his benefits had run out. For the past 90 days he had been on the streets.

Jimmy said he didn’t understand why the homeless (although he preferred “residentially challenged”) took money for drugs or alcohol. He found the city to be pretty rough. He tried shelters, but preferred living in the shadow of the causeway, even though it was less convenient food-wise, because at least he wasn’t far from the hospital. He learned to forage for food out of Dumpsters at night,

since people were less likely to chase him away then.

“There used to be a raccoon, and he tried to forage off me until he realized that did no good,” Jimmy said.

At some point in his story he started wheezing, but said he was “just dehydrated.”

I fetched my water bottle and gave it to him. I remembered the two bags of candy I recently bought, but figured it would be useless. Sure enough, he just shook his head and said sadly, “I can’t believe it. Two bags of groceries

and I can’t accept them.”

I decided to get Jimmy real food. “Will you come back?” he asked me, adding, “Do you have anything to read? I miss reading books.”

I bought \$50 in groceries and returned. Jimmy’s face lit up.

“You came back!” he said, tearing up. “This will feed me for a week! You got two loaves of bread — and the big-size potato salad!”

We sat and discussed politics, philosophy, religion, and current events. He worried about an oncoming storm. I reached in my car and gave Jimmy my rain boots, clothing, bags, an umbrella, and curtains he could use for bedding.

“Are you a bag lady?” he wanted to know.

Before I left, he asked me to throw his trash in a garbage can for him; he didn’t want to litter. Jimmy assured me he’d be okay.

Of all the treasures I’ve found on that beach, Jimmy is by far my best discovery.

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Pioneer Justice

A view of our past from the archives of HistoryMiami

By Paul S. George
Special to the BT

Miami was just four years of age in 1900, when the county seat returned to the city after ten years at Juno, in today's north Palm Beach County.

Prior to the relocation, workers removed the cells from the Juno jail and placed them — along with one prisoner and the county records — on a barge for transport to the Miami River, 90 miles to the south. Soon the human cargo and freight were delivered to a two-story,

wood-frame building that sat near the edge of the river, on property owned by Julia Tuttle, Miami's "mother."

The new courthouse building, seen here, stood just east of today's S. Miami Avenue on the north bank of the Miami River. It hosted county offices on the ground floor, along with a courtroom and jury rooms on the top floor. A jail sat at the back of the structure. This unimposing building was characterized in one account as "dingy" and cramped.

Almost from the beginning, this river-based courthouse was insufficient for the growing business of the court. In



Photo courtesy of HistoryMiami, #X-00-53-1

1901 a Dade County grand jury called for a new courthouse, branding the existing building inadequate for the burgeoning county.

The grand jury was especially critical of the jail, calling it a "menace to the health and safety of not only the prisoners incarcerated therein, but to the county officers whose offices are contiguous, and to the public who have occasion to visit the courthouse and premises."

The county commission was listening, for in the same year, they

awarded a design contract for a new courthouse to a South Carolina architectural firm whose design was soon executed. The story of the new courthouse will appear in next month's "Picture Story."

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

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Fruit of Temptation

Once you've tasted black sapote, it's hard to say no to more

By Jeff Shimonski
BT Contributor

I always enjoy evaluating trees in older Miami neighborhoods because I never know when I'll come across one that's not very common to our area, or maybe one that is just unfamiliar to me. Last month I visited a property that had the most interesting collection of fruit trees, with many of them in bloom or in fruit. What a find!

One of the larger trees on this property was a relative of the persimmon. I immediately recognized it as a black sapote or *Diospyros digyna*. What was most rewarding was the fact the tree was full of mature fruit, which do, in fact, resemble the persimmon, so I helped myself to a small quantity (strictly for "scientific purposes," of course).

I spent several hours on this property measuring and inspecting trees, and also taking lots of photos. I saw some of the neighbors outside their houses so I went over to them and asked if they had ever eaten the fruit of the black sapote. Since this tree is native to Mexico and parts of Central America, I naturally assumed the neighbors, who were Hispanic, were familiar with it. I was wrong.

The people I spoke with not only had never tried the fruit, they did not even know it. When I told them it was called

black sapote, they said they knew the other sapote fruits, which come from completely unrelated families of trees. Perhaps they never tried the black sapote because, when it ripens, the green color of the fruit only changes slightly — to a lighter shade of green — so many people don't realize it's ready to eat.

Regarding the other sapotes, there is the white sapote, *Casimiroa edulis*, that is in the citrus family, and mamey sapote, *Pouteria sapota*, from a totally different plant family (and a favorite of Cubans, who make milkshakes with it). All of the different sapotes are native to Mexico. In Spanish, black sapote can be called (at least by those familiar with the fruit) *sapote negro*, *sapote prieto*, *sapote de mico*, or *ebano*. In English, I've heard it called black persimmon.

Aside from the difficulty in learning to tell when the fruit is ripe on the tree, I suppose another problem with black sapote is what the inside looks like when you're ready to eat or prepare it in some manner (the outer shell becomes very soft and easily gives way to a serrated knife): a mass of dark brown pulp. Some folks say it resembles stewed prunes. At first I seriously considered not trying it. The fruit I collected was from a seedless variety, so at least there wasn't the issue of picking out the seeds before eating.



BT photo by Jeff Shimonski

A plate of ripening black sapote almost ready to eat or bake.

When I brought the black sapote home, I asked my favorite chef, Monica, to come up with some preparation methods to see how good this tropical fruit can taste. Monica cut open a couple of the ripe fruits and set aside cinnamon, shredded bitter chocolate, and maple syrup.

We used spoons to scoop out some of the fruit and tasted it by itself. I would say it tasted a bit like pudding, with a hint of chocolate. Adding the condiments certainly made the flavor more interesting. My favorite was the maple syrup.

Monica has a book with recipes using tropical fruit, so I challenged her to bake a black sapote cake. She baked a butter cake using only a single fruit. For a topping, she mixed shredded coconut in cream and then toasted the cake. Wow, was it delicious!

We both agree that next time she will use two black sapote. We have a few more ripening so a black sapote mousse is on standby, although I would almost prefer to have another cake. I've also heard of a tempting beverage made by blending the pulp of black sapote with pineapple juice.

This tropical fruit tree is quite easily grown in our local soils. It can be sensitive to cold and frost while becoming established, but once it reaches the size of a smaller tree, it will tolerate some cold weather.

The tree from which I collected the fruit had not been cared for — in the sense of fertilizer or irrigation — probably for years. Nevertheless, the tree was quite healthy — you could tell by the dark-green foliage — and, because of its size, had hundreds of fruit in the canopy. It's the perfect sustainable tree to grow if you have space in your yard. No fertilizer or spraying necessary.

There were quite a few species of unusual trees on this property that bore edible fruit and/or had some interesting property, like being flammable. I will save that combustible topic for another column.

I love my job!

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

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By the Book

Monitoring what your child reads is tricky, but it is every parent's responsibility

By Crystal Brewé
BT Contributor

I have a secret. I read all of the *Fifty Shades of Grey* books. That's right, I am a walking cliché. What's worse is, I bought them in bulk, with a bomber bottle of Chardonnay, while wearing sweatpants... at Costco.

Was it great literature? Absolutely not.

But guess what? I can guarantee what happened in those books was much more titillating (in my head) than any "Inspired by the Best-Selling Series" movie that may later get made.

Remember the thrill, as a fourth grader, of reading the "dirty" parts of *Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret?* Remember graduating to the Sweet Valley High series and hiding those books from your parents because the teenage twin heroines had a weak spot for make-out sessions with handsome boys?

I was a voracious reader as a child. I read so much, in fact, that my mother made me discuss it with our family therapist, like it was an addiction. I was not dissuaded by her lack of enthusiasm. If she didn't take me to the library, I raided her bookshelf, reading most of the Jackie Collins novels, *Helter Skelter*, *Zodiac*, and several self-help books by age 13.

Seeing your kid's nose in a book is obviously a good thing. But reading the

book your kid's nose is in first is probably a good idea.

On a recent visit to our amazing pediatrician's office, she handed me a book. "Open this book and read any paragraph on any page," she urged.

I did, and then I blushed. I can't even indulge you with a strategically censored passage from said book, fair reader, because it's impossible to come up with one. To me, every page I turned to was too dirty!

She had confiscated the book from a 14-year-old patient who checked it out of the public library. The girl's parents did not speak English; hence, they didn't know the content was inappropriate for a young adult.

After the good doctor paid the girl's "lost book fee" — in an effort to take the book out of circulation — and made several calls to City of Miami commissioners Michelle Spence-Jones and Marc Sarnoff, she took it upon herself to visit the library and ask why they would let a young girl check out such a book. Why do they even have a book that includes such material?

While a book like the one in question may never end up on the library bookshelf next to classics like *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* or *The Catcher in the Rye*, many argue that the messages and culture contained in books like this are still important.



It turns out this book is from an author many consider the "Queen of Street Literature," Wahida Clark. Her titles, which include *Thug Lovin'*, *What's Really Hood*, and *The Golden Holsta*, are flying off the shelves in Chicago, New York, and Atlanta, and Ms. Clark has speaking invitations from libraries across the country.

Nevertheless, this book shouldn't have ended up in a child's hands. Whose job is it to police what your kids are getting from the library? The friendly librarian will point your child to the young adult section, but she is likely not carding. The American Library Association does not have a book rating system, as they consider that a form of censorship. (No, not the "C" word!)

Most libraries do not "ban" books. Most libraries depend on their head librarians to select materials based upon a materials management policy. The Miami-Dade Public Library System *does* carry *Fifty Shades of Grey*, Jackie Collins, Danielle Steele, and plenty of other romance and erotica titles that contain graphic sexual scenarios, including Wahida Clark's series.

We can judge a movie by its rating; we can judge a TV show by its air

time and network; we can put parental controls on the Internet. Books are on a throne. Rating the oldest form of media, whether it be the government or a private entity, somehow conjures up thoughts of book burnings and the Bill of Rights.

Some organizations offer online age-coded guides to recent book releases, but do these raters share *your* views as a parent? Do they consider a proverbial teenage toe dipped in the provocative Gossip Girl series a safe way to explore complicated topics? How do they feel about bodily functions? (*Diary of a Wimpy Kid* is riddled with them.)

Reading is an intimate business. You can be supportive of your child's appetite for reading, but too lenient with their choice of material. You can be skeptical of your child's appetite, but the lack of support may backfire. What works for some might not work for others, it's true, but we should stop outsourcing parenting.

Children and teens *will* read books with bad words and adult situations. It's not someone else's job to protect them by rating books. It's our job to raise them as we want them to be raised.

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*Actual WJB Kids, 2012; photo by Rosemary Wolfson, Principal, Magras Mirel

Here Today, Gone Tomorrow

Thanks to our irresponsible ways, many of our animal species are facing extinction

By **Jim W. Harper**
BT Contributor

Extinction is forever. Here in South Florida, we have our hands full with potential extinctions caused by the relentless progress of humanity. Some species are on the verge, and some have already succumbed. Think polar bears have it bad? They still exist — and their public-relations team got their image on the side of the Coke can.

In South Florida, our most camera-ready species is already gone. Imagine the cutest little animal in the ocean, a seal pup, bobbing along in the current off South Beach. Its head pops out of the water and its big black eyes focus on something coming toward it. Is it a bird? Is it a plane? No, it's a spear flying into its little gut.

The Caribbean monk seal was hunted to death. It disappeared from Florida's waters centuries ago, but persisted in the region until about 1952, which is when it was last seen in the wild.

Children need to be taught about this calamity, just as they should be taught about the dramatic decline of sea turtles and whales as a result of hunting. We need to remember this recent history in order to avoid repeating it (over and over). Two surviving species related to the Caribbean monk seal, the Hawaiian and Mediterranean monk seals, are among the most threatened species in the world.

What other species in Florida have gone extinct recently? The South Florida

rainbow snake and the Florida fairy shrimp were declared extinct in 2011, outlasting the dusky seaside sparrow (1990) by only a couple of decades. Several other extinctions have been recorded, but the real number remains unknown.

While Florida may have experienced more extinctions than other states, this pales in comparison to the global situation. Today we are in the midst of what scientists are calling the sixth mass-extinction event in history. The last one was 65 million years ago, so they don't happen too often. The difference this time is that humans are the primary drivers.

Historically, hunting has been the main cause, but now habitat loss leads the way. Add the escalating effects of climate change, on top of other human-induced threats, and this volatile situation, unknown in the fossil record, is our new reality.

Evidence clearly points to the burning of fossil fuels as the elevator taking us to the penthouse of extinction. It's the gasoline, stupid — plus all the other senseless, irresponsible things people do without thinking.

The most threatened animals today are amphibians and those adorable rainforest frogs, but coming up fast are corals and the underwater rainforests they create. Scientists predict the end of all coral reefs within a human lifetime. All gone. Kaput. If an entire ecosystem and its thousands of species can disappear in a matter of decades, what will become of Homo sapiens? We're a



Caribbean monk seal: Once common, now extinct.

species, too, you know.

Perhaps focusing on local extinctions can set the stage for the prevention of this global catastrophe.

The U.S. Endangered Species Act lists 62 animals and 54 plants in Florida. The animals in South Florida most threatened with extinction today include two butterflies, the Miami blue and the Schaus swallowtail. Other familiar animal species, the panther and manatee, have made small gains in recent years, but they remain highly vulnerable. Hundreds of manatees have died in Southwest Florida this year owing to toxic algae blooms.

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission tracks 60 species on Florida's endangered and threatened species list, and this year the agency is drafting reviews that will lead to integrated, multi-species protection plans. Local species under review include the Everglades mink, the white-crowned pigeon, and the roseate spoonbill.

Endangered species are not exotic or far away. Pick your favorite outdoor spot in South Florida — the beach, the bay, the Keys, the Everglades — and you'll find endangered species. They live where we live.

So what can we do? Educate ourselves and our children, because we can't solve the problem of extinction if we don't acknowledge it. But education is only the starting point.

At the deepest level, we need to explore the link between the extinction of nonhuman species and the survival of the human species. We are only one among millions, and there is no guarantee that our species will stay on top.

At the species level, we have proven that we can prevent extinction. Whaling was banned in increments over the past century and finally worldwide in 1988, and no whale species has gone extinct. In Florida, the ban on hunting certain birds and alligators has led to their recovery.

Preventing the sixth mass extinction would likely require going backward in time and building the industrial revolution on renewable sources instead of finite and dirty fuels.

The Caribbean monk seal died by the sword (and the club and the spear), but the next seal will likely die by the greenhouse gas.

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

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In Defense of Merlot

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

By Bill Citara
BT Contributor

“I am *not* drinking any f—ing Merlot!”

In the annals of bad luck, that line from Paul Giamatti’s character, Miles Raymond, in the movie *Sideways* ranks right up there with finding a poisonous four-leaf clover, booking a last-minute cabin on the Titanic, and living in Detroit. The 2004 flick was as good for Pinot Noir as it was bad for Merlot, the former extolled as the Beverage of the Gods, the latter dismissed as a pathetic excuse for grape juice. Pinot Noir sales reportedly soared, while sales of Merlot sank like a concrete soufflé.

That the grape Miles so roundly dissed has a long and distinguished history, and that a wine considered to be among the finest in the world, Chateau Petrus, is almost exclusively Merlot, didn’t seem to matter. What did matter is that the comment reflected the disgust of many cork dorks with the sweet, fruity, insipid swill vintners at the time were churning out, like so many bazillion gallons of Welch’s.

Now, you’re not going to be drinking any Petrus at our price point, since a single bottle of the most recent vintage of this magical elixir can cost upward of \$2000. But it is nice to say that, even on the budget end of the wine spectrum where VINO lives, you can get Merlots of decent structure and varietal character

that won’t make you look like an idiot or philistine if you pour them for friends.

For example, the **2011 Oustric** from Bernard Magrez. It’s a very deep purple color — almost inky — but its French pedigree becomes obvious in the nose, where its juicy black cherry-berry fruit is given nuance by whiffs of oak, olives, and cloves. Taste it, though, and that seemingly inky fruit is lighter and less ominous than it appears, balanced by taut acidity and noticeable tannins.

Balance and nuance also mark another French product, the **2010 Chateau Bois Redon**. A blend of 75-percent Merlot and 25-percent Cabernet Sauvignon, it displays some of the softness of the former and some of the backbone of the latter, all in a pleasing red and black cherry package with a lingering, tart berry finish.

Miles Raymond may not be drinking any Merlots like the **2011 Coastline** from the Paso Robles region of California, or Washington’s **2011 Radius**, but fans of big, fruity, full-bodied Merlots will like them just fine. The Radius is all plums and cherries and blueberries, with scents of vanilla, toast, and allspice. It’s on the sweet side of ripe, and its tannins are softer than a 1000-thread-count sheet, but if your idea of a good Merlot is biting into a piece of summer-ripe fruit, just tell Miles to piss off.

The Coastline’s aromas hint at that same uber-ripe character, but on the palate the wine backs off a bit, delivering more strawberry-raspberry flavors than

blackberry and blueberry, with a pronounced stony-chalky character from Paso Robles’ calcareous soil. Both wines would be happy guests at your next backyard barbecue, where they could stand up to anything from burgers to ribs.

No surprise that a couple of domestic Merlots would go over to the dark (and fruity) side. What came as a surprise, though, were two thoroughly unimpressive South American Merlots. The **2011 La Playa** from Chile got off on the wrong nostril with a blast of musty, vegetal, and raisin aromas. It tasted better than it smelled, with simple blueberry and blackberry flavors and a dollop of spice, but for \$10, you can do a lot better.

An Argentine Merlot, the **2011 Portillo** from Bodega Salentein, was disjointed and rough around the edges, as evidenced by a hotness on the nose and palate despite a (relatively) moderate 14 percent alcohol. It did deliver some appealing spice notes, but woody flavors and a sharp, puckery finish said, “Stick with Malbec.”

Finally, we come to my favorite wine of the tasting, the **2011 Perimeter**. This Washington State product is not only a great deal at \$10, but is the antithesis of the fruit-bomb Merlots that get Miles all riled up. Its fruit is clean and refreshing



The Oustric and Perimeter Merlots are at the North Miami ABC Fine Wine & Spirits (16355 Biscayne Blvd., 305-944-6525) for \$9.89 and \$9.99, respectively. At the North Miami Total Wine & More (14750 Biscayne Blvd., 305-354-3270), you’ll find the Coastline and Radius, both for \$10.99, while Publix (14641 Biscayne Blvd., 305-354-2171 and 1776 Biscayne Blvd., 305-358-3433) has the Portillo, also for \$10.99. And you can get the La Playa Merlot at Lorenzo’s Italian Center in North Miami Beach (16385 W. Dixie Hwy., 305-945-6381) for \$9.99.

— think fresh strawberries, raspberries, and red cherries — with just a hint of oak. Nothing too complex here, but its well-integrated flavors, excellent structure, and lighter body mean it plays well with food. It’s one f—king Merlot I’d be more than happy to drink. Sorry, Miles.

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Openings and Closings: An Ominous Balance

Food news we know you can use

By Pamela Robin Brandt
BT Contributor

As old-time miners used canaries to test dwindling oxygen, economists use restaurants as first indicators of upcoming recessions. When eateries die, the rest of the economy often follows.

Since Dish started a year ago, the national restaurant scene has grown bleaker, but Miami eateries, at least in BT territory, have seemed almost immune. Not last month, when closings equaled openings. And some closings were shockers.

OPENINGS

The Cypress Room (3220 NE 2nd Ave., 305-520-5197) is a new/old Florida fine dining venue from Michael Schwartz, though the guy actually cooking is chef de cuisine Roel Alcudia. See our Dining Guide's "New This Month" section for info.

My Ceviche (1250 S. Miami Ave., 305-960-7825) is a new Brickell branch of the Beach original. Again, see the Dining Guide for details. One timely additional tip: Chef Sam Gorenstein's business partner Roger Duarte, of George Stone Crab, supplies My Ceviche's claws — which are fresh, never frozen. And season ends May 15, so hurry over or wait till October.

Stanzione 87 (87 SW 8th St., 305-555-1212) produces Neapolitan pizzas — not uncommon nowadays, but 23-year-old proprietor Franco Stanzione's are

Miami's only pies certified authentic by Naples's Associazione Verace Pizza Napolitana, and following its rules (including wood-burning oven, cooking time not exceeding 90 seconds, properly light dough using tipo 00 flour, and more).

Time for Wine (2200 NE 2nd Ave., 786-409-4898), a mom-and-pop wine bar/market, brings a boost to a still decidedly ungentrified Wynwood street with cool décor, limited but tasty tapas, \$4 glasses of house wine, an extensive selection of affordable bottles (most under \$15), and free parking.

Copperbox Culinary Atelier (3328 N. Miami Ave., 305-392-0983) isn't exactly a restaurant, serving meals. It's a "gastronomic studio," where chef Gabriela Machado "curates exclusive, interactive epicurean dining installations," on Thursdays and Saturdays. It's not exactly open to the public in the walk-in sense, either. Reservations are "by association," meaning you e-mail info@copperbox.com to introduce yourself, and they e-mail back if you've scored an elite seat at two communal tables. Neither is the food exactly the norm. Menus change, but expect to pay \$125-\$150 for seven wine-paired courses like foie gras crème brûlée, duck breast with celeriac/tangerine mousseline, and cotija cake with beet ice cream.

CLOSINGS

TIKL, opened last August by the team behind South Beach's long-lived Altamare, has closed despite critical acclaim when it opened this past August. Chef Simon Stojanovic (a Michael's Genuine



alum who brilliantly reinvented Altamare's menu in 2010) cited "lack of momentum." Perhaps even the Brickell Boom couldn't support yet another raw bar/grill. Stojanovic is considering future plans while cooking at Copperbox.

South Street, a "neo-soul-food" restaurant from Amir Ben-Zion and Amaris Jones that opened with much ballyhoo in Sra. Martinez's former space last October, has folded without explanation. My guess: A South Beach nightclub ambiance may draw Kardashians, but neighborhood residents, most restaurants' mainstay, prefer their soul food old-school, and without the South Beach prices.

Acme Bakery & Coffee in Midtown has also closed after only nine months. A press release from Pious Pig, the endlessly inventive group also behind The Federal Food, Drink & Provisions (5132 Biscayne Blvd., 305-758-9559), mentioned the café's main weaknesses and strengths (poor service, great bread), plus its overhead. You must sell a lot of loaves to cover a \$10,000 monthly lease.

Clive's Café in Wynwood, for 38 years a magnet for lovers of homey Jamaican specialties, has folded. Reason: landlord gentrification plans. Fortunately owner Pearline Murray has regrouped at **Clive's II** (5890 NE 2nd Ave., 305-757-6512), merging the original's breakfast/

lunch menu with junior's mainly lunch/dinner menu.

Enriqueta's Sandwich Shop (2830 NE 2nd Ave., 305-573-4681) is closed only temporarily. An April 10 electrical fire damaged the beloved Cuban café, but not seriously. Owner José Luis Pla hopes to reopen later this month.

SIDE DISH

Tired of pubcrawls? Try a **Dishcrawl**. Already established in nearly 200 North American cities, crawls feature feasts at four restaurants per night. Last month's inaugural Miami Dishcrawl hit Edge Steak + Bar, Vapiano, The Hoxton, and OTC. The next, on May 21, also focuses on Brickell. Restaurants are kept secret, but tickets are only \$45. Reserve at www.dishcrawlmiami.com.

Soon to join **Feverish Pops** in moving from food truck to stationary eatery: **Ms. Cheezious**, whose grilled-cheese sandwiches won the 2013 South Beach Wine & Food Festival's trucks event in Wynwood. Ms. Cheezious plans a December opening at 7418 Biscayne Blvd. — and to keep on truckin', too.

Hungry for more food news? See "BizBuzz," page 24. Send me your tips and alerts: restaurants@biscaynetimes.com.

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Dining Guide

Restaurant Listings

The Biscayne Corridor's most comprehensive restaurant guide. Total this month: 326.

Restaurant listings for the BT Dining Guide 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

Aijo
1331 Brickell Bay Dr., 786-452-1637

Hidden within Jade condo, this sleek Japanese fusion restaurant (whose name means "love") is also a jewel. Food-loving Venezuelan owner Rene Buroz encourages innovation, and his chefs (including four from Zuma) respond with beautifully plated items as fun as they are flavorful. Don't miss the layered croquette (a sort of Asian croqueta: mouthwatering crispy rice, subtly smoked salmon, and creamy crab), Aijo kani (king crab legs with citrus foam clouds and rich emulsified butter dip), or creative cocktails from a mixologist who also juggles and plays with fire.

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., 305-503-6500

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

Bento Sushi & Chinese
801 Brickell Bay Dr., 305-603-8904

Hidden in the Four Ambassadors Towers, this tiny spot (which specializes in sushi plus Japanese small plates, but also serves limited Chinese and Thai-inspired dishes of the mix-and-match, pick-your-protein-then-preparation sort) has been mostly an insider's secret delivery joint for Brickell residents. But it's actually a pleasant place to relax outside, enjoying a bay view and budget bento box specials that include miso soup, ginger-dressed salad, California roll, and fresh orange sections. plus two mini-entrées (the nigiri assortment sushi and lacy-battered tempura especially recommended). Bubble tea, too! \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Bonding
638 S. Miami Ave., 786-409-4794

From trend-spotting restaurateur Bond Trisansi (originator of Mr. Yum and 2B Asian Bistro), this small spot draws a hip crowd with its affordable menu of redesigned traditional Thai dishes, wildly imaginative sushi makis, and unique signature Asian fusion small plates. Highlights include taste-bud-tickling snapper carpaccio; an elegant nest of mee krob (sweet, crisp rice noodles); blessedly non-citrus-drenched tuna tatakai, drizzled with spicy-sweet mayo and wasabi cream sauce; greed-inducing "bags of gold," deep-fried wonton beggar's purses with a shrimp/pork/mushroom/waterchestnut filling and tamarind sauce. \$\$

Bon Fromage
500 Brickell Ave. #106, 786-329-5632

Though independently owned instead of a chain cog, this cheese and wine café/shop is like a pint-size version of Midtown Miami's Cheese Course, right down to being officially self-service. But it is staffed by accommodating employees who, unofficially, do their best to double as servers for eat-in diners. The cheese (plus charcuterie) menu of garnished platters, salads, and crusty baguette sandwiches features numerous high-quality, imported favorites, but don't miss more unusual domestic treasures like Wisconsin bread, a cooked cheese that, like halloumi, doesn't melt but tantalizingly softens when heated. \$\$

Brother Jimmy's BBQ
900 S. Miami Ave. #135, 786-360-3650

The South is supposed to be the source of barbecue. But Bro J evidently didn't hear about that. His signature North Carolina pork "cue comes from NYC, where the first Brother Jimmy's opened more than 20 years ago. Miami's location is actually the first south of the Mason-Dixon line. But the slow-smoked pulled pork butt tastes righteous – no interfering glop, just hot sauce-spiked vinegar to balance the fab fattiness. There's other "cue, too, including big (not baby back) ribs, and respectable brisket. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

NEW THIS MONTH

MIAMI

BRICKELL/DOWNTOWN

Blue Martini
900 S. Miami Ave. #250, 305-981-2583

With a 41-martini menu (plus exotic lighting, late hours, dance floor, and live music most nights), this wildly popular place is more lounge than restaurant. Nonetheless food offerings are surprisingly ambitious, including substantial items like sliced steak with horseradish sauce, as well as shareable light bites – parmesan-topped spinach/artichoke dip, served hot with toasted pita; shrimp and blue crab dip (yes: crab, not faux "krab"); a seductive puff pastry-wrapped and honey-drizzled baked brie. Come at happy hour (4:00-8:00 p.m. daily) for bargain drink/snack specials, and lots of locals. \$\$

MPP Brickell
141 SW 7th St., 305-400-4610

Tasty Peruvian eateries aren't rare in Miami. Peruvian fine-dining restaurants are. In the tastefully toned-down but still glam space formerly housing Andú, this second location of Lima's popular Mi Propiedad Privada specializes in familiar flavors presented with seriously upscaled preparations, plating, and prices. But many ceviches, tiraditos, and starters (like especially artful layered/molded mashed potato/seafood causas, or clever panko-breaded fusion "causa makis") come in trios for taste-testing. And ceviche lovers score on Tuesdays, when all-you-can-eat costs the same as a trio. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

My Ceviche
1250 S. Miami Ave., 305-960-7825

When three-time James Beard "Rising Star Chef" nominee Sam Gorenstein opened the original My Ceviche in SoBe, in 2012, it garnered national media attention despite being a tiny take-away joint. Arguably, our newer indoor/outdoor Brickell location is better. Same menu, featuring local fish prepared onsite, and superb sauces including a kicky roasted jalapeño/lime mayo), but this time with seats! What to eat? Ceviches, nachos. But grilled or raw fish/seafood tacos and burritos, in fresh tortillas, might be even more tempting. Pristine stone-crab claws from co-owner Roger Duarte's George Stone Crab add to the choices. \$\$

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 nut-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 Gunder 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 food restaurant," many consider it a more spectacular dining setting than the upscale Azul, upstairs, owing to the option of dining outdoors on a covered terrace directly on the waterfront. The food is Asian-inspired, with a few Latin and Mediterranean accents. For the health-conscious, the menu includes low-cal choices. For hedonists there's a big selection of artisan sakes. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

MIDTOWN / WYNWOOD / DESIGN DISTRICT

The Cypress Room
3620 NE 2nd Ave., 305-520-5197

Deer and boar heads on wood-paneled walls juxtapose with crystal chandeliers at this tiny fourth restaurant in Michael Schwartz's burgeoning empire, evoking feelings of dining in a century-old millionaire's hunting lodge – in miniature. Many dishes are similarly fun fantasies of 1920s Florida fine dining, pairing yesteryear's rustic proteins (including wild game) and veggies with preparations that are ultimately refined interpretations of the past: antelope/wild mushroom gnocchi; "French onion soup" with a sort of gruyere tuile float instead of the usual gooey melt, served on a lacy doily. Don't miss the royal red shrimp, or Hedy Goldsmith's desserts. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Lagniappe
3425 NE 2nd Ave., 305-576-0108

In New Orleans, "lagniappe" means "a little extra," like the 13th doughnut in a baker's dozen. And that's what you get at this combination wine and cheese bar/backyard BBQ/entertainment venue. Choose artisan cheeses and charcuterie from the fridges, hand them over when you pay (very little), and they'll be plated with extras: olives, bread, changing luscious condiments. Or grab fish, chicken, veggies, or steak (with salad or cornbread) from the hidden yard's grill. Relax in the comfie mismatched furniture, over extensive wine/beer choices and laidback live music. No cover, no attitude. \$\$

NORTH MIAMI

Piccolo Pizza
2104 NE 123rd St., 305-893-9550

Pizzas at this spin-off from family-owned Il Piccolo impress even NYC visitors, thanks to recipes proprietor Hubert Benmoussa learned from an authentic Neapolitan pizzeria. Other favorites here include subs on homemade baguettes and, surprising for a pizzeria, delightfully custardy quiche (Benmoussa is part French). But it would be unthinkable to miss the pies, especially our favorite Italia: subtly sweet tomato sauce, fresh tomatoes, mozzarella, onions, plus mixed greens and uncooked prosciutto on top – both pizza and salad. There are also nicely priced catering trays of finger subs, quiche squares, pizza bites, more. \$\$\$

Cavas Wine Tasting Room
900 S. Miami Ave. #180, 305-372-8027

Like South Miami's predecessor (now closed), this Cavas is mainly an upscale, high-tech tasting lounge for the wine-curious. Patrons buy prepaid cards to sample ounce, half-glass, or full-glass portions from more than 50 self-service dispensing machines. But there's an extensive selection of tapas/pintxos small plates, flatbread "pizzas," sandwiches, plus fully garnished charcuterie and cheese platters specially selected to pair well with vino. Additionally, more substantial dishes have been added, including a daily three-course lunch special and some tasty, bargain-priced soups (carrot cream with Gouda particularly recommended). \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Ceviche Piano
140 SE 1st Ave., 305-577-4414

Owners Martin and Charo Villacorta, a married chef/pastry chef team, think of this eatery as a relocation (in the same downtown plaza) and reinvention of their former "best kept secret" spot Martini 28. Most dramatic changes: upscaled size, and with its glamorous white piano, upgraded elegance. The menu has also been altered to be less of a global wildcard. Focus is now strongly on Peruvian cuisine, including a shrimp/calamari-smothered fish fillet with aji amarillo cream sauce. But no worries, old fans. Some of the old favorite dishes remain. \$\$

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

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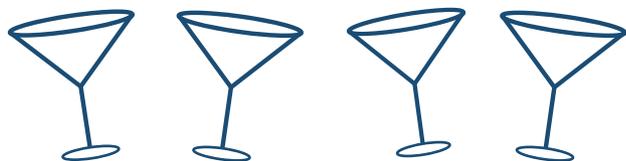
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Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

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 fill a T-Rex. Not for the frail. \$\$\$

The Corner 1035 N. Miami Ave., 305-961-7887

With a Zuma alum in the kitchen, a Gigi alum crafting classic or creative cocktails, a warm pub feel, and hours extending from lunch to nearly breakfast the next morning, The Corner is transforming a desolate downtown corner into a neighborhood hangout. The nicely priced menu of sandwiches, salads, snacks, and sweets (the latter from Om Nom Nom’s cookie queen Anthea Ponsetti) ranges from 100-percent homemade ice cream sandwiches to the Crazy Madame, France’s elaborate Croque Madame (a béchamel sauce-topped grilled cheese/ham/fried egg sandwich) plus bacon and caramelized onion. \$-\$\$

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

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

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: super-sized 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. \$-\$\$

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. \$\$\$

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

At typical restorolounges, the “resto” part often gets the short end of the stick. But not at this chic but friendly spot, where Gerardo Barrera, an alum 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. \$\$\$

Edge, Steak & Bar 1435 Brickell Ave., 305-358-3535

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

Elwoods Gastro Pub 188 NE 3rd Ave., 305-358-5222

Cordial English owners, classic rock music (sometimes live), and updated classic pub fare make this hangout a home. Made from scratch with artisan ingredients, traditional Brit bites like fish and chips can’t be beat – thick pieces of 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 deliriously rich (but worth it) sticky date pudding with toffee sauce. Tie down your dental implants. They’re in for a wild ride. \$\$

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

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. \$

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 historically international trade port’s “cafés” – meaning fast-food restaurants. Typical menus present hundreds of items that are local interpretations of dishes from all China, and most other nations. So believe us: At this café, whose head chef is from HK, the Indian-style curries, sambal-spiked Indonesian chow fun, even the borscht (a tomato/beef, not beet-based version of the Russian soup) are as authentic as the kung pao whatever, and as tasty. \$\$

Fratelli Milano 213 SE 1st St., 305-373-2300

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

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

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

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

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

Grimpa Steakhouse 901 Brickell Plaza, 305-455-4757

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

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

As with South Beach’s original Half Moon, you can get wraps or salads. But it’s this snackery’s unique take on Argentine-style empanadas that makes it seem a natural for national franchising. The soft-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. \$\$

Hibachi Grill 45 NE 3rd Ave., 305-374-2223

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

The Hoxton 1111 SW 1st Ave., 786-691-2730

Though inland (and reportedly inspired by old England), this urban beach bar/grill has the relaxing, refined-rustic ambience of a classic New England hangout, and upscaled “down shore” food to match: Maine lobster rolls, on brioche rather than hot dog rolls; a luxe take on Québécoise poutine (from-scratch fries with Vermont cheddar and duck confit gravy); an especially lavish clam bake. Also appealingly different from the Miami norm: frequent live bands of many musical genres in the comfortable lounge area, plus almost spookily competent service. \$\$\$

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. \$\$\$

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. \$

Jamon Iberico Pata Negra Restaurant 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 picquillo peppers, or two of Miami’s best rice dishes: seafood paella and arroz negro (with squid and its ink). \$\$\$

Kork Wine & Cheese Bar 2 S. Miami Ave., 305-377-8899

From the owner of Transit Lounge, a hip hangout long before the downtown/Brickell revival, this more upscale-cool venue is worth checking out for its almost medieval dimly lit décor alone, including a subterranean wine cellar/party room, formerly a WW II-era bomb shelter. Comestibles are limited to wine and cheese plus accompaniments. Both are available to go. Kork is as much market as lounge. But with a stock of roughly 5000 bottles, and a selection of roughly two dozen perfectly ripe artisanal cheeses – curated by a cheese sommelier who’ll create perfect pairings – who needs more? \$\$\$



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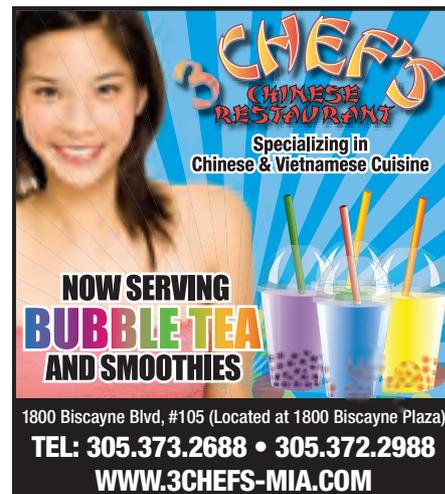
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Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

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 Miami's encounter such bread – crackling crust outside; moist, aromatic, aerated interior – it's likely not from a restaurant's own kitchen, but from La Provence. Buttery croissants and party-perfect pastries are legend too. Not so familiar is the bakery's café component, whose sandwich/salad menu reflects local eclectic tastes. But French items like pan bagnats (essentially salade Nicoise on artisan bread) will truly transport diners to co-owner David Thau's Provençal homeland. \$\$\$

La Sandwicherie

34 SW 8th St., 305-374-9852

This second location of the open-air diner that is South Beach's favorite après-club eatery (since 1988) closes earlier (midnight Sunday-Thursday, 5:00 a.m. Friday and Saturday), but the smoothies, salads, and superb Parisian sandwiches are the same: ultra-crusty baguette stuffed with evocative charcuterie and cheeses (saucisson sec, country pâté, camembert, etc.) and choice of salad veggies plus salty/tart cornichons

and Sandwicherie's incomparable Dijon mustard vinaigrette. Additionally the larger branch has an interior, with a kitchen enabling hot foods (quiches and croques), plus A/C. \$\$\$

Le Boudoir Brickell

188 SE 12th Terr., 305-372-233

At this French bakery/café, mornings start seriously, with choices ranging from quality cheese, charcuterie/pâté, or smoked salmon platters to chic Continental and complete American breakfasts. At lunch, generously salad-garnished, open-faced tartines are irresistible. But sophisticated salads and homemade soups make the choice tough. And do not skip dessert. Superb sweets include rich almond/fresh raspberry or properly tangy lemon tarts, traditional Madeleines, airy layered mousses, and addictive mini-macaron sandwich cookies with daily-changing fillings. \$\$\$

Lime Fresh Mexican Grill

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

Like its Midtown and North Miami Beach siblings, this Lime Fresh serves up 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. \$

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 portions, is especially noteworthy. The prices? A steal. \$\$\$

Machiya

3252 NE 1st Ave. #116, 786-507-5025

Originally called Machiya Ramen Noodle House, this eatery changed its name – and really, the place is not so much a ramen joint as a contemporary izakaya (lounge featuring Japanese hot and cold small plates plus sushi), with a few added ramen bowls. Most of the menu is a mix of today's popular favorites, like "Kobe" sliders, and unique inventions. Wildest: wasabi-spiced tuna pizza. Our faves: fatty salmon makis (lightly seared salmon belly with shrimp tempura, asparagus, and yuzu sauce); rich miso-braised short ribs; steam buns with rock shrimp and spicy aioli.

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 tart cornichons

those with time to sit, we'd recommend the savory crêpes, garnished with perfectly dressed salad, or sweet crêpe like the Bonne Maman (whose sugar/salted butter stuffing brings Brittany to downtown). And quiches are nicely custardy. But there are surprises here, too, including just a few full entrées, with correctly made traditional sauces one wouldn't expect at a luncheonette – except, perhaps, in Paris. \$\$\$

Miami's Finest Caribbean Restaurant

236 NE 1st Ave., 305-381-9254

Originally from Jamaica, proprietor Miss Pat has been serving her traditional homemade island specialties to downtown office workers and college students since the early 1990s. Most popular item here might be the weekday lunch special of jerk chicken with festival (sweet-fried cornmeal bread patties), but even vegetarians are well served with dishes like a tofu, carrot, and chayote curry. All entrées come with rice and peas, fried plantains, and salad, so no one leaves hungry. \$

Mint Leaf

1063 SE 1st Ave., 305-358-5050

Part of London's famous Woodlands Group, this stylish spot, like its Coral Gables parent, serves the sort of upscale Indian food rarely found outside Great Britain or India. More interestingly, the menu includes not just the familiar northern Indian "Mughlai" fare served in most of America's Indian restaurants, but refined versions of south India's scrumptious street food. We've happily assembled whole meals of the vegetarian chaat (snacks) alone. And dosai (lacy rice/lentil crepes rolled around fillings ranging from traditional onion/potato to lamb masala or spicy chicken) are so addictive they oughta be illegal. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Miss Yip Chinese Café

900 Biscayne Blvd., 305-358-0088

Fans of the South Beach original will find the décor different. Most notably, there's an outdoor lounge, and more generally a nightclub atmosphere. But the menu of Hong Kong-style Chinese food, prepared by imported Chinese cooks, is familiar. Simple yet sophisticated Cantonese seafood dishes rock (try the lightly battered salt-and-pepper shrimp), as does orange peel chicken, spicy/tangy rather than overly sweet. And a single two-course Peking duck (skin in crepes, stir-fried meat and veggies with lettuce cups) makes mouthwatering finger food, shared among friends. \$\$\$

Momi Ramen

5 SW 11th St., 786-391-2392

Banish all thoughts of packaged instant "ramen." Perfectionist chef/owner Jeffrey Chen (who cooked for more than a decade in Japan), changes his mostly ramen-only menu often, but constants are irresistibly chewy handmade noodles; soups based on creamy, intensely porky tonkotsu broth (made from marrow bones simmered all day); meats like pork belly and oxtail; and authentic toppings including marinated soft-cooked eggs, pickled greens, more. Other

pluses: It's open 24/7, and the ramen ranks with the USA's best. Minuses: It's cash only, and the ramen might be the USA's most expensive. \$\$\$

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

Novocento

1414 Brickell Ave., 305-403-0900

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

Oceanaire Seafood Room

900 S. Miami Ave., 305-372-8862

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

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Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

OTC

1250 S. Miami Ave. 305-374-4612

Over-the-counter service usually connotes the classic fast food "slider" experience: both greasburgers and patrons are in and out quickly. At this casually cool gastropub, the counter ordering system encourages the opposite feel, of comfie congeniality; it invites hanging out, just without the fuss of formal dining out – or the expense. Most plates are \$10 or under. Ingredient-driven dishes cover today's favorite food groups (various mac-and-cheeses, variously topped/scrumptious fries, and more) with some unusual twists, like a scumiously lardon-laden frisée/goat cheese salad brightened by fresh peaches. Even the condiments are housemade. \$\$

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. \$\$

Peoples Bar-B-Que

360 NW 8th St., 305-373-8080

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

Perricone's

15 SE 10th St., 305-374-9449

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

Pieducks

1451 S. Miami Ave., 305-808-7888

If you can overlook a name as unenlightening as most in-jokes (it evidently refers to a favorite character of owner Claudio Nunes's kids – we assume the Pokemon Psyduck), you'll experience pretty perfect pizza. Sadly, not all brick ovens turn out perfectly char-blistered crusts, crisp outside and airy/chewy inside, but that's what you'll consistently find here and a newer take-out/delivery-only Midtown branch. And unlike many artisan pizzerias, Pieducks doesn't get cheesy with cheese quantity (though we like that extra cheese is an option). Elaborate salads complete the menu. \$\$

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. \$\$

The Pizzeria-Café

1951 NW 7th Ave., 305-777-3777

Just over the border from artsy Wynwood, this ultra-cool café (whose interior features a 30-foot Italian glass floral mosaic) isn't what you'd expect to find inside one of the medical/lab buildings in Miami's sterile "Health District." But the owner is Thea Goldman, former founding partner of Wynwood's pioneering restourge Joe's, which explains both the stylishness and the menu, highlighted by imaginative wood-oven designer pizzas, plus artisan charcuterie/cheese platters, creative salads, and housemade salted caramel gelato. Not your typical hospital food. Call ahead regarding dinner. At this writing, it's being served Fridays only. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Pizzarium

69 E. Flagler St., 305-381-6025

Roman-style rectangular pizzas, served in square slices, have been available in the Miami area since the mid-1990s. But the familiar squares and Pizzarium's are similar only in shape. Main difference: dough, here allowed to rise for four days. The resulting crusts are astonishingly airy, as authentic Roman slices, intended as light street snacks, should be. Toppings, a rotating selection of nearly 30 combinations, are highlighted by quality imported ingredients – not to mention a healthy imagination, as the zucca gialla attests: pumpkin cream, pancetta, smoked scamorza cheese. \$

Pollos & Jarras

115 NE 3rd Ave., 786-567-4940

From Juan Chipoco, Peruvian chef/co-owner of seafood-centric Cvi.Che 105, this stylish but affordable two-level restaurant is centered around pollo a la brasa, as a huge rotisserie oven attests. Grilled steaks, unique sandwiches, anticuchos, and varied starters and sides are also served, but the must-not-miss is rotisserie chicken, marinated in roughly a dozen-and-a-half seasonings before a self-basting spin on the spit cooks it to incomparable juiciness. It's served with crisp fries and a substantial salad. Meals also come with a complimentary cup of aguadito – assertively cilantro-spiked chicken rice soup. \$\$

Porketta

43 NE 3rd Ave., 305-372-0034

Warm, juicy, served with succulent pieces of crisp crackling, herb-stuffed Italian porchetta (pronounced "porketta") roast, at its best, is hard to find even in much of Italy except during festivals. But every day is a festival here, where the real thing (not the dry deli-style pork roll slices that often pass for porchetta) is featured on a plate with broccoli rabe and cannellinis; in the hefty Bombardino sandwich; or in three mini-sandwiches, convenient for sampling the place's three sauces. Several salads and carpaccios placate porkophobes. \$\$-\$\$

Prelude

Adrienne Arshet Center 1300 Biscayne Blvd., 305-949-6722

Though the opening of Barton G.'s elegant performing arts center eatery did feature a live giraffe, the food's actually more grown-up than at his original SoBe spot. The concept is prix fixe: Any three courses on the menu (meaning three entrées if you want) for \$39. Highlights include silky, tarragon-inflected corn/bacon chowder, beautifully plated beef carpaccio with horseradish/mustard and shallot olive oil dipping sauces; and over-the-top playhouse desserts, one with a luscious crème fraiche ice cream pop. \$\$\$

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. \$\$

Reggae Tacos

93 SE 2nd St., 786-425-9558

For diners on the go, who want food fast but not typical fast food, this place's Mexican-Jamaican fusion specialties are ideal. Taco or burrito shells encase inventive jerk pork (with mango, pickled onions, and cabbage), scotch-bonnet beef with avocado/cheddar salsa, vinegar/spice-marinated escovitch veggies, curried goat, and other island dishes that are normally plated entrées, transforming them into playful portable packages. And do save some stomach space for deep-fried "festival," sinfully scrumptious cornmeal mini-doughnuts sweetened with both vanilla-spiked honey and powdered sugar. \$

Rincon Escondido

2697 Biscayne Blvd., 305-438-9300

On a quick drive-by, this eatery surrounded by still-ungentrified storefronts rather resembles a hole-in-the-wall Latin cafeteria. Inside, though, the look is rustic-chic, and the menu features some of Miami's most refined traditional or creative Spanish tapas. We love the open-faced sandwiches, particularly montaditos de boquerones (with fresh anchovies and brunoised veggies). Traditionalists will find patatas bravas satisfyingly spicy; braver experimenters should try bombas de queso (fried cheese balls with sweet orange blossom sauce), actually alarming in name only. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

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! \$\$\$

Soya & Pomodoro

120 NE 1st St., 305-381-9511

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

Sparky's Roadside Restaurant & Bar

204 NE 1st St., 305-377-2877

This cowboy-cute eatery's chefs/owners (one CIA-trained, both BBQ fanatics nicknamed Sparky) eschew regional purism, instead utilizing a hickory/apple-wood-stoked rotisserie

smoker to turn out their personalized style of slow-cooked, complexly dry-rub fusion: ribs, chopped pork, brisket, and chicken. Diners can customize their orders with mix-and-match housemade sauces: sweet/tangy tomato-based, Carolinas-inspired vinegar/mustard, pan-Asian hoisin with lemongrass and ginger, tropical guava/habanero. Authenticity aside, the quality of the food is as good as much higher-priced barbecue outfits. \$\$\$

Sushi Maki

1000 S. Miami Ave., 305-415-9779

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

SuViche

49 SW 11th St., 305-960-7097

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

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. \$\$

Top Burger

109 NE 1st St., 305-379-3100

Inside this "better burger" spot, décor is so charmingly 1950s retro you almost expect to find the Fonzy leaning on a jukebox. What you actually find: hand-formed, hormone-free, 100% Angus patties (or alternatives like veggie burgers), a lightly-breaded chicken Milanese, and all-beef hot dogs on toasted buns, with fresh-cut French or sweet potato fries. Welcome surprises include an assertively spicy/tangy BBQ-like secret sauce; prices that, while not 1950s level, rival those at junk-food joints; and old-school service – the kind that comes with a smile. \$

Toro Toro

100 Chopin Plaza, 305-372-4710

Back before Miami's business district had any "there" there, the InterContinental's original restaurant was an executive lunch/dinner destination mainly by default. This replacement, from restaurant empire-builder Richard Sandoval, brings downtown power dining into this decade. As the name suggests, you can go bullish with steakhouse fare, including an abbreviated (in variety, not quantity) "rodizio experience." But the place's strongest suit is its pan-Latin small plates – upscaled refinements of classic favorites: crisp corn arepas with short rib, guacamole, and crema fresca; fluffier cachapas pancakes with tomato jam; more. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

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 and service, similarly, are swlegant, not stuffy, and the room's intimacy makes it a romantic spot for special occasions. \$\$\$

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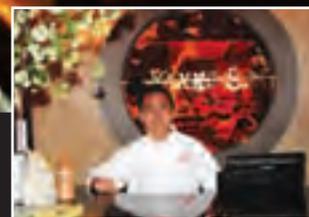
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Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

Tre Italian Bistro

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

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

Truluck's Seafood, Steak, and Crabhouse

777 Brickell Ave., 305-579-0035

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

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 housemade brown bread; puff-pastry-wrapped Irish sausage rolls; lunchtime's imported Irish bacon or banger "butty" sandwiches on crusty baguettes, served with hand-cut fries, the latter particularly terrific dipped in Waxy's curry sauce. \$\$

Wok Town

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

Judging from the takeout window, the minimalist décor (with communal seating), and predominance of American veggies on the menu, this Asian fast-food eatery, owned by Shai Ben-Ami (a Miss Yip and Domo Japanese 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. \$

B Sweet

20 NE 41st St., 305-918-4453

At this homey neighborhood jewel, located in a former apartment building, husband/wife team Tom Worhach and Karina Gimenez serve up warm welcomes and playfully inventive breakfast, lunch, and snack fare: bacon-wrapped egg and cheese cups; pressed Philly steak panini; an elegant yuzu-dressed smoked salmon, grapefruit, avocado, and arugula salad. But the must-eats are sweets, housemade by Worhach, formerly executive pastry chef at the Mansion at Turtle Creek and similar gourmet palaces. One bite of his decadent yet impossibly light white-and-dark chocolate mousse cake will hook you for life. \$-\$\$

Basani's

3221 NE 2nd Ave., 786-925-0911

Despite this tiny place's modern décor, the family-run ambiance and Italian-American comfort food evoke the neighborhood red-sauce joints that were our favored hangouts growing up in NJ's Sopranos territory. And low prices make it possible to hang out here frequently. Pizzas with hand-tossed crusts, not wood-oven but resembling honest bread, for less than fast food pizzeria prices? It's an offer you don't refuse. Don't refuse garlic rolls, either, or sinful zeppole (fried dough) for dessert. There's more complex fare, like chicken à la Francese, too. And they deliver. \$\$

Bengal

2010 Biscayne Blvd., 305-403-1976

At this Indian eatery the décor is cool and contemporary: muted gray and earth-tone walls, tasteful burgundy banquettes. And the menu touts "Modern Indian Cuisine" to match the look. Classicists, however, needn't worry. America's favorite familiar north Indian flavors are here, though dishes are generally more mildly spiced and presented with modern flair. All meats are certified halal, Islam's version of kosher – which doesn't mean that observant orthodox Jews can eat here, but Muslims can. \$\$\$

Best Friends

4770 Biscayne Blvd., 786-439-3999

On a restaurant-starved stretch of Biscayne Boulevard, this spot serves the same sort of simple but satisfying Italian fare (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 figciutto: arugula, gorgonzola dolce, caramelized onions, pine nuts, fresh figs, and prosciutto. Free parking behind the building. \$\$

Bloom

2751 N. Miami Ave., 305-576-5443

Miami's most innovative art district is the perfect setting for this hip hangout, whose mad-genius menu proves that food

is indeed one of the creative arts. Reinvented Latin/Asian street foods from chef Ricky Sauri (ex-Nobu) include spicy Spam-topped rice cakes; tuna tartare in seaweed "tacos"; a reina pepiada arepa, whose traditional mild chicken filling is replaced by shredded duck, avocado, tangy-sweet tamarind sauce, and Japanese mayo; an especially elegant Korean bibimbap; a vegan shitake-pumpkin tamale with nutty, cheesy natto sauce. For liquid art aficionados: cocktails like the eye-popping Tequila Beets (featuring roasted beet juice). \$\$\$

Buena Vista Bistro

4582 NE 2nd Ave., 305-456-5909

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

Buena Vista Deli

4590 NE 2nd Ave.,

305-576-3945

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

Cafeina

297 NW 23rd St., 305-438-0792

This elegantly comfortable multi-room indoor/outdoor venue is described as an "art gallery/lounge," and some do come just for cocktails like the hefty café con leche martinis. But don't overlook chef Guily Booth's 12-item menu of very tasty tapas. The signature item is a truly jumbo-lump crab cake with no discernable binder. At one South Beach Wine & Food Festival, Martha Stewart proclaimed it the best she'd ever had. Our own prime pick: melt-in-your-mouth ginger sea bass antichuchos, so buttery-rich we nearly passed out with pleasure. \$\$

Catch Grill & Bar

1633 N. Bayshore Dr.,

305-536-6414

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

Cerviceria 100 Montaditos

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

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

City Hall the Restaurant

2004 Biscayne Blvd. 305-764-3130

After 30+ years spent guiding other owners' restaurants to success, Miami Spice program creator Steve Haas has opened his own expansive, two-floor place, on a stretch of Biscayne Boulevard that's suddenly looking fashionable. The vibe is a mix of power-dining destination and comfie neighborhood hangout, and chef Tom Azar (ex-Emeril's) has designed a varied menu to match. Highlights: an astonishingly thin/

crunchy-crust pizza topped with duck confit, wild mushroom, 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. \$\$

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 this 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. \$

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 tamales but with a tuber rather than corn masa dough, or empanadas with savory shrimp stuffing. \$

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 foul, 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. \$\$

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Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

The Embassy

4600 NE 2nd Ave., 305-571-8446

Don't come to this embassy for passports. The name is short for "Embassy of Well-being and Debauchery." You will, however, feel transported to Spain's gourmet capital, San Sebastian, after sampling ambassador Alan Hughes's cunning pintxos (complexly layered Basque-style tapas). From a self-serve bar, choose from a changing selection of skewered stacks; brie, homemade fig jam, and tizzles of silky jamon Serrano; roast tomato, goat cheese, and anchovies on buttery garlic toast; many more. Small plates, to-die-for desserts like floating island with lychees, and weekend brunch items demonstrate similar mad-chef skills. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

18th Street Café

210 NE 18th St., 305-381-8066

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. \$\$\$

Feverish Gourmet Pop Shop

Shops at Midtown Miami

3552 NE 1st Ave., 305-482-1832

When kids are sick, you take them to a doctor. If your inner child feels feverish, though, the cure is Felecia Hatcher's handcrafted, vegan-friendly, natural and organic frozen treats – popsicles reinvented for grown-ups. At this literal mom-and-pop shop, Hatcher and husband Derek Pearson offer more than 25 changing flavors, some spiked (like locally sourced mango with bourbon), others just sophisticated (pineapple basil, strawberry balsamic, chocolate banana). No artificial flavors, no refined sugars. Particularly playful inner kids can customize with coatings ranging from nuts to truly nuts: pop rocks, potato chips, and more. \$

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. \$

George's Kitchen & The Loft

3404 N. Miami Ave., 305-438-9199

Veteran Miami restaurateur George-Eric Farge raises the sophistication bar at his new two-story restaurant/lounge. But the real star is Michelin-starred chef Steven Rojas, who combines French technique and personal creativity for dishes like Idiazabal cheese churros with romesco sauce, a green pea pot de crème "jar" with bacon marmalade (accompanied by butter-fried baguette slices for spreading), soy-glazed hamachi crudo with ginger gelee, and caper-sprinkled short rib tartare, the meat's richness cheekily upped by poached bone marrow and caviar. Brunch and lunch items are equally ingenious. \$\$\$

Gigi

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

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

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 tripleta containing roast pork, bacon, Black Forest ham, provolone, and caramelized onions. \$\$

Joey's Italian Café

2506 NW 2nd Ave., 305-438-0488

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

La Latina

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

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

La Provence

2200 Biscayne Blvd., 305-576-8002

(See Brickell / Downtown listing.)

Latin Café 2000

2501 Biscayne Blvd., 305-576-3838

The menu is similar to that at many of our town's Latin cafés, largely classic Cuban entrées and sandwiches, with a smattering of touches from elsewhere in Latin America, such as a Peruvian jalea mixta (marinated mixed seafood), or paella Valenciana from Spain, which many Miami eateries consider a Latin country. What justifies the new millennium moniker is the more modern, yuppified/yucafied ambiance, encouraged by an expansive, rustic wooden deck. \$

Lemoni Café

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

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

Lime Fresh Mexican Grill

Shops at Midtown Miami

Buena Vista Avenue, 305-576-5463

Like its South Beach predecessor, this Lime was an instant hit, as much for being a hip new Midtown hangout as for its carefully crafted Tex-Mex food. The concept is "fast casual" rather than fast food – meaning nice enough for a night out. It also means ingredients are always fresh. Seafood tacos are about as exotic as the menu gets, but the mahi mahi for fish tacos comes from a local supplier, and salsas are housemade daily. Niceties include low-carb tortillas and many Mexican beers. \$

Limón y Sabor

3045 Biscayne Blvd., 786-431-5739

In this dramatically renovated space, the room is now light and open, and the food is authentic Peruvian, with seafood a specialty. Portions are huge, prices low, quality high. Especially good are their versions of pescado a lo macho (fish fillet topped with mixed seafood in a creamy, zesty sauce); jalea (breaded and deep-fried fish, mixed seafood, and yuca, topped with onion/pepper/lime salsa), and yuca in hot yet fruity rocoto chili cream sauce. \$\$

Lost & Found Saloon

185 NW 36th St., 305-576-1008

There's an artsy/alternative feel to this casual and friendly Wynwood eatery, which, since opening as a weekday-only breakfast and lunch joint in 2005, has grown with its neighborhood. It's now open for dinner six nights a week, serving Southwestern-style fare at rock-bottom prices. Dishes like piñon and pepita-crusted salmon, chipotle-drizzled endive stuffed with lump crab, or customizable tacos average \$5-\$8. Also available: big breakfasts and salads, hearty soups, housemade pastries like lemon-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 mezze: a Greek sampler of creamy tzatziki yogurt dip, smoky eggplant purée, and airy tarama caviar spread; and a Turkish sampler of hummus, fava purée, and rich tomato-walnut dip. The mezze of mussels in lemony wine broth is, with Mandolin's fresh-baked flatbread, almost a full meal in itself. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

MC Kitchen

4141 NE 2nd Ave., 305-456-9948

Chef/co-owner Dena Marino calls MC's food "modern Italian" – neither an evocative description nor explanation for why this place is one of our town's hottest tickets. But tasting tells the tale. Marino's food incorporates her entire culinary background, from her Nonna's traditional Italian-American kitchen to a long stint in Michael Chiarello's famed contemporary Californian eatery Tra Vigne, with pronounced personal twists that make eating here uniquely exciting. Particularly definitive: lunchtime's "piadenas," saladlike seasonal/regional ingredient combinations atop heavenly homemade flatbreads. Cocktails feature ingredients from za'atar to salmon roe. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

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 salad, 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 frites that rival Belgium's best; mouthwatering maple-basted bacon; miraculously terrific tofu (crisply panko-crusted and apricot/soy-glazed); even a "voluptuous grilled cheese sandwich" – definitely a "don't ask, don't tell your cardiologist" item. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

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

Oak Tavern

35 NE 40th St., 786-391-1818

With a festively lantern-lit oak tree on the outdoor dining patio and stylishly playful lamps mimicking oaks inside, chef/restaurateur David Bracha of River Oyster Bar has transformed a previously cold space to warm. Food is equally inviting. The mostly small-plates seasonal menu roams the globe from supreme Vietnamese Bahn Mi (with pork belly and foie gras) to down-home buttermilk biscuits with bacon butter, and homemade charcuterie. If available, don't miss Hawaiian-inspired steelhead poke; substituting the salmonlike but more delicate trout for the usual tuna transports this crudo to heavenly heights. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

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

Monday.....\$9.50
1/2 Deli Sandwich and cup of Soup served with Cole Slaw or Potato Salad

Tuesday.....\$8.95
Tuna Fish Appetizer or Sandwich served with Cole Slaw or Potato Salad. Choice of Bagel or Toast

Wednesday.....\$9.95
Open-faced Turkey Platter served with Mashed Potatoes and House Vegetables

Thursday.....\$9.95
Choice of Corned Beef or Pastrami Sandwich served with choice of Cole Slaw or Potato Salad

Friday.....\$11.95
Nova Appetizer served with Lettuce, Tomato, Onion, Cream Cheese and garnish. Choice of Bagel or Bialy

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Specials are served Monday thru Friday 11:00am to 3:00pm (Excluding Holidays)
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Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

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)

Pasta Folie's
Shops at Midtown Miami
3252 NE 1st Ave. #118, 786-382-0205
In France the word "folie" can mean "extravagant." More often it means "madness." It's the latter translation that first comes to mind when perusing the menu of this French Riviera pasta/pizza fast-casual chain, whose concept is pastas, plus pizzas, from around the world – even Italy. Don't expect authenticity from the more exotic toppings; they basically contain one typical ingredient (along with a generic onions/peppers/veg assortment): bean sprouts in Thailand's spaghetti, pineapple in Bali's, curry sauce on India's. Do expect super-fresh sauces, made daily. Friendly staffers and fun. \$\$

Pieducks
3500 N. Miami Ave., 305-576-5550
(See Brickell / Downtown listing)

Pride & Joy
2800 N. Miami Ave., 305-456-9548
Behind this Wynwood warehouse façade you'll find pure Southern roadhouse, and the backyard patio is an even more relaxing place to kick back with beer, blues music, and barbecue from pit master Myron Mixon. Oddly, considering Mixon's many BBQ championships, the 'cue can be inconsistent. Our favorite choices: St. Louis ribs, tender without being falling-off-the-bone overcooked, and enjoyably fattier than baby backs; vinegar-doused pulled pork sandwiches, which, unlike meat plates, come with sides – fries, plus slaw to pile on for added juice and crunch. \$\$\$

Primo's
1717 N. Bayshore Dr., 305-371-9055
The imposing, cavernous lobby of the Grand doesn't have that "do drop in" locals' hangout vibe. But this lively Italian spot is actually a great addition to the neighborhood. The pizzas alone – brick-oven specimens with toppings ranging from classic pepperoni to prosciutto/arugula – would be draw enough. But pastas also please: diners' choice of starch, with mix-and-match sauces and extras. And the price is right, with few entrées topping \$20. The capper: It's open past midnight every day but Sunday. \$\$

Primo Pizza Miami
3451 NE 1st Ave., 305-535-2555
Just a few years ago, chain pizza joints were dominant most everywhere. Today many places now offer authentic Italian or delicate designer pizzas. But a satisfying Brooklyn-style street

slice? Fuhgedit. Thankfully that's the speciality of this indoor/outdoor pizzeria: big slices with chewy crusts (made from imported NY tap water) that aren't ultra-thin and crisp, but flexible enough to fold lengthwise, and medium-thick – sturdy enough to support toppings applied with generous all-American abandon. Take-out warning: Picking up a whole pie? Better bring the SUV, not the Morris Mini.

Sakaya Kitchen
Shops at Midtown Miami, Buena Vista Avenue
305-576-8096

This chef-driven, fast-casual Asian eatery is more an izakaya (in Japan, a pub with food) than a sakaya (sake shop). But why quibble about words with so many more intriguing things to wrap your mouth around? The concept takes on street-food favorites from all over Asia, housemade daily from quality fresh ingredients. French Culinary Institute-trained Richard Hales does change his menu, so we'd advise immediately grabbing some crispy Korean chicken wings and Chinese-inspired, open-faced roast pork buns with sweet chili sauce and homemade pickles. \$\$

Sake Room
275 NE 18th St., 305-755-0122
Sake takes a back seat to sushi – and sophisticated décor – at this small but sleek restorlounge. 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. \$\$-\$\$\$

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 *feгато alla Veneziana*, which will turn liver-haters into lovers. \$\$-\$\$\$

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. \$\$-\$\$

Shokudo World Resource Café
4740 NE 2nd Ave., 305-758-7782
At its former Lincoln Road location, World Resource's café was better known for people-watching than for its standard sushi/Thai menu. But as the new name signals, this relocation is a reinvention. The indoor/outdoor space is charming, but creative takes on popular pan-Asian street foods are the real draw. Travel from Japan and Thailand through Korea, Vietnam, China, the Philippines, and beyond via light housemade momo, curried potato-stuffed Tibetan/Nepalese steamed dumplings; savory pulled pork buns with kimchi and crisped onions. Noodle dishes, hot or chilled, are especially appealing. \$\$-\$\$\$

Sugarcane Raw Bar Grill
3250 NE 1st Ave., 786-369-0353
This chic indoor/outdoor space is an offspring of Lincoln Road's SushiSamba Dromo and a sibling of Sugarcane lounges in NYC and Las Vegas, but more informal than the former and more food-oriented than the latter, as three kitchens – normal, raw bar, and robata charcoal grill – make clear. Chef Timon Balloo's LatAsian small plates range from subtle orange/fennel-marinated salmon crudo to intensely smoky-rich short ribs. At the daily happy hour, select dishes (like steamed pork buns with apple kimchi) are discounted. \$\$-\$\$\$

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 scalion, 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. \$\$-\$\$\$

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 potstickers and, at breakfast, fluffy pecan/maple-garnished pancakes) and prepared as reliably well. \$\$-\$\$\$

Blue Collar
6730 Biscayne Blvd., 305-756-0366
Like its predecessor in this space (Michael Bloise's American Noodle Bar), this working-class-themed eatery is helmed by a former fine-dining chef, Daniel Serfer, a Chef Allen's vet who now crafts casual, creative fare at prices all can afford. Dishes are eclectic. The roughly dozen veggie dishes alone range from curried cauliflower purée to maduros to bleu cheese roasted asparagus. Shrimp and grits compete with any in Charleston; pork and beans, topped with a perfectly runny fried egg, beats Boston's best. \$\$-\$\$

Boteco
916 NE 79th St., 305-757-7735
This strip of 79th Street is rapidly becoming a cool alt-culture enclave thanks to inviting hangouts like this rustic indoor/outdoor Brazilian restaurant and bar. Especially bustling on nights featuring live music, it's even more fun on Sundays, when the fenced backyard hosts an informal fair and the menu includes Brazil's national dish, feijoada, a savory stew of beans plus fresh and cured meats. But the everyday menu, ranging from unique, tapas-like pastéis to hefty Brazilian entrées, is also appealing – and budget-priced. \$\$

Buddha Sushi Bar
1071 NE 79th St., 305-677-3633
While the setting is still more low-rent/high-speed causeway than restaurant row, this stylish, much-more-than-sushi spot definitely brings the street giant steps toward destination-dining status. The invention and skill shown in makis like the Fruity (shrimp, salmon, tuna, whitefish, rose, asparagus, and peaches, dressed with creamy mustard sauce), or small plates like shrimp crullers with a red wine reduction, isn't surprising considering the crafter is Michael Asalie, original chef at downtown's Little Lotus. Order from the menu or grab something from the circulating "sushi river," whatever floats your boat. \$\$\$

Chef Creole
200 NW 54th St., 305-754-2223
Sparkling fresh Creole-style food is the star at chef/owner Wilkinson Sejour's two tiny but popular establishments. While some meatier Haitian classics like griot (fried pork chunks) and oxtail stew are also available – and a \$3.99 roast chicken special – seafood is the specialty here: crevette en sauce (steamed shrimp with Creole butter sauce), lambi fri (perfectly tenderized fried conch), poisson gros sel (local snapper in a spicy butter sauce), garlic or Creole crabs. The Miami branch has outdoor tiki-hut dining. \$\$-\$\$

DeVita's
7251 Biscayne Blvd., 305-754-8282
This Italian/Argentine pizzeria, housed in a charming bungalow and featuring a breezy patio, covers multicultural bases. If the Old World Rucola pizza (a classic Margherita topped with arugula, prosciutto, and shredded parmesan) doesn't do the trick, the New World Especial (a Latin pie with hearts of palm and boiled eggs) just might. Also available are pastas, salads, sandwiches, dinner entrées (eggplant parmigiana with spaghetti, lomito steak with Argentinean potato salad), and desserts (tiramisu or flan). \$

Dogma Grill
7030 Biscayne Blvd. 305-759-3433
Since Frankie and Priscilla Crupi took over this hot dog stand, the menu has changed significantly, with some items eliminated (any vegetarian hot dogs, salads, chichi toppings like avocado). But choices have expanded to include new dog choices (brats, Italian sausage, more) plus burgers and other classic eastern U.S. regional urban street foods: New England lobster rolls, New Orleans po'boys, Jersey shore cheese Taylors (pork roll), Baltimore crab cake sandwiches, and naturally, Philly's of all sorts – cheese steak and beyond. \$\$-\$\$

East Side Pizza
731 NE 79th St., 305-758-5351
Minestrone, sure. But a pizzeria menu with carrot ginger soup? Similarly many Italian-American pizzerias offer entrées like spaghetti and meatballs, but East Side also has pumpkin ravioli in brown butter/sage sauce, wild mushroom ravioli, and other surprisingly upscale choices, including imported Peroni beer. As for the pizza, they are classic pies, available whole or by the slice, made with fresh plum tomato sauce and Grande mozzarella (considered the top American pizza cheese). Best seating for eating is at the sheltered outdoor picnic tables. \$

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,



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Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

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

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. \$

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. \$

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. \$\$

Iron Side Café 7600 NE 4th Ct., 305-759-0551

Located in the Little River “business” (meaning warehouse) district, inside an art complex that looks like just another factory, this eatery is easy to miss. But it shouldn’t be missed. Both the cozy interior and more expansive terrace provide picturesque settings for artfully plated, seriously organic and locally sourced fare from Nuno Grullon, original exec chef at Metro Organic Bistro. Particularly recommended: tuna tartare with a unique spicy lemon dressing, ossa buco featuring flavorful grass-fed beef from Gaucho Ranch right down the road. Saturday BBQ/gallery nights are especially hip. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

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 résumé, not to mention regular Food Network appearances, opened a homey restaurant in an emerging but far from fully gentrified neighborhood. Just be glad she did, as you dine on white almond gazpacho or impossibly creamy ham and blue cheese croquetas. Though most full entrées also come in half-size portions (at almost halved prices), the tab can add up fast. The star herself is usually in the kitchen. Parking in the rear off 69th Street. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Mi Vida Café 7244 Biscayne Blvd., 305-759-6020

At this indoor/outdoor vegetarian and raw-food vegan café, culinary-school-trained chef/owner Daniela Lagamma produces purist produce-oriented dishes that are easy to understand, like sparkling-fresh salads and smoothies, plus more technique-intensive mock meat 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 Moshie Moshie 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 arabiaki 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. \$

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

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

Siam Rice 7941 Biscayne Blvd., 305-758-0516

You’ll find all the familiar favorite Thai and Japanese items here, and prices for curries and noodle dishes (all customizable regarding choice of protein, preparation, and heat level) are especially good at lunch. But don’t overlook somewhat pricier specialties like a deep-fried yet near-greaseless

boneless half duck with veggies in red curry sauce. There’s also an unusually extensive list of salads, some with inventive fusion touches, like a grilled shrimp/soba salad featuring traditional Thai flavors (sriracha chiles, fish sauce, lime) and Japanese green tea noodles. \$\$\$

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 restorlounge, 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 flocchi pockets with gorgonzola sauce, oysters Rockefeller) to heftier 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. \$\$\$

Sweet Saloon 7100 Biscayne Blvd., 305-759-3999

At this dessert/snack/cocktail bar, from the owner of Moonchine, you’ll find live and DJ entertainment, too, from 9:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m. – assuming you can find the place, that is. It’s above the pan-Asian eatery, up a hidden back staircase. Asian savory snacks include dumplings, edamame, krab ranguons, satays. Desserts range from homey American (NY cheesecake, mini cupcakes) to continental (strawberries melba, housemade Belgian waffles, a shareable chocolate fondue/fruit platter). Actually, some cocktails double as desserts (a Godiva dark chocolate martini) or Asian savories (infusion jars of Stolli and lemongrass). \$

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 Dela Bernardo (who co-owns the place with attorney Abbie Cuellar) that are home-made 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

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 e raw fish is always impeccable here, some unusual vegetarian sushi creations also tempt, as do daily entrées. \$

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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Sabor Latin Restaurant & Cafe

1890 79th St. Cswy., 305-741-2020

This family-run restaurant serves big portions of homey traditional food from several Latin American countries, including Cuba (pan con bistec, ropa vieja), Mexico (nachos, tacos, quesadillas), and Peru (lomo saltado). But the specialty is Colombian classics, from snacks like empanadas to a bandeja paisa combo (grilled steak, chorizo, a gargantuan crispy chicharron strip, fried egg, arepa, plantains, beans, rice). Particularly recommended: daily specials including two meal-in-a-bowl chicken soups, ajiaco, and sancocho. If you've wondered about the much-debated difference, here's where to test the taste. \$\$\$

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. \$\$\$



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Sushi Siam

1524 NE 79th St. Causeway, 305-864-7638
(See Miami / Upper Eastside listing)

Trio on the Bay

1601 79th St. Causeway, 305-866-1234

Several ventures have failed in this expansive indoor/outdoor waterfront space, but that's hard to imagine once you've experienced this stunning incarnation as an exciting yet affordable restaurant/nightclub where food definitely doesn't play second fiddle to entertainment. Former Crystal Café chef Klime Kovaceski created the original menu, and among his dishes still available is the filet mignon atop surprisingly pistachio-studded béarnaise sauce. Now there is a range of Mediterranean offerings as well, from grilled calamari steaks to mahi piccata. \$\$\$

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 focchi 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 house-made 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. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Rouge CineCafe

908 71st St., 305-865-5955

This friendly café's décor is indeed playfully red, and the "cine" refers to vintage films projected unobtrusively on a wall. But the main attraction is the French and Moroccan food, both genres as authentically homey as you'll find in the homes of those cuisines. For hearty eaters, exotically spiced tagine stews, like lamb with prunes, are the way to go. Grazers will find Rouge's bocaditos (evocatively French saucisson sec, or Moroccan merguez sausage with grilled onions and hot harissa sauce, both on crusty Boulart bread) irresistible – as are housemade desserts. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

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 ambiance. There isn't any. But when friends from the Pacific Northwest, where foodies know their fish, tout the seafood's freshness, we listen. There are some surprisingly imaginative makis, like the Maharaja, featuring fried shrimp and drizzles of curry Mayo. And where else will you find a stacked sushi (five assorted makis) birthday cake? \$\$\$

Miami Shores Country Club

10000 Biscayne Blvd., 305-795-2363

Formerly members-only, the restaurant/lounge facilities of this classy 1939 club are now open to the public – always, lunch and dinner. Not surprisingly, ambiance is retro and relaxed, with golf course views from both bar and indoor/outdoor dining room. The surprise is the food – some classic (steaks, club sandwiches) but other dishes quite contemporary: an Asian ahi tuna tower; a lavish candied-walnut, poached-pear, grilled chicken salad; and fresh pasta specials. Prices are phenomenal, with dinner entrées \$9 to \$17; drinks average \$3 to \$4. \$\$

PizzaFiore

9540 NE 2nd Ave., 305-754-1924

Owned by Arcoub Abderrahim, who opened South Beach's original PizzaFiore way back in 1996, this café serves the kind of nostalgic, medium-thin crust, oozing-with-goey-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. \$\$\$

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 à 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 art 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. \$\$

Caminito Way

1960 NE 123rd St., 305-893-8322

Open since 1999, this bakery-café is particularly known for its European-influenced homemade Argentine pastries. So come early to pick from the widest variety of savory empanadas (plumply stuffed and admirably delicate – no leaden crusts here) or sweet facturas (Argentina's most popular breakfast items). They sell out fast. What some might not know is that despite its small size, Caminito's also crafts tasty big food: elaborate salads; hefty baguette sandwiches, like choripan sausage with chimichurri; pastas; major meat or poultry entrées. For lighter lunches, try tartas (quiches), also perfect party food. \$\$\$

Casa Mia Trattoria

1950 NE 123rd St., 305-899-2770

Tucked away, off to the side on the approach to the Broad Causeway and the beaches, this charming indoor/outdoor trattoria seems to attract mostly neighborhood regulars. But even newcomers feel like regulars after a few minutes, thanks to the staff's Italian ebullience. Menu offerings are mostly classic comfort foods with some contemporary items as well. Housemade pastas are good enough that low-carb dieters should take a break, especially for the tender gnocchi with pesto or better yet, delicate fagottini – "beggar's purses" stuffed with pears and cheese. \$\$

Chéen-huyae

15400 Biscayne Blvd., 305-956-2808

Diners can get some Tex-Mex dishes here, if they must. But the specialty is Mayan-rooted Yucatan cuisine. So why blow bucks on burritos when one can sample Caribbean Mexico's most typical dish: cochinita pibil? Chéen's authentically succulent version of the pickle-onion-topped marinated pork dish is earthily aromatic from achiote, tangy from bitter oranges, and meltingly tender from slow cooking in a banana leaf wrap. To accompany, try a lime/soy/chili-spiced michelada, also authentically Mexican, and possibly the best thing that ever happened to dark beer. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Chef Creole

13105 W. Dixie Hwy., 305-893-4246

(See Miami listing)

City Slickers

807 NE 123rd St., 305-891-6565

If you hear "hoagie" and instantly think "\$5 footlong," this health-minded gourmet sub shop will be a revelation. Instead of processed proteins and sad pre-prepared toppings inside factory-produced rolls, you get fresh-baked white, grain, or sundried tomato breads generously stuffed with quality meats (including rotisserie turkeys/chickens and rare roast beef made in-house), sparkling-fresh veggies, and more than a dozen imaginative dressings. Choose a signature sub or build your own. There are also signature or DIY salads and homemade soups, plus craft beers or wines to accompany.

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Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

Evio's Pizza & Grill 12600 Biscayne Blvd., 305-899-7699

Family-owned and operated, this indoor/outdoor pizzeria is also family-friendly, right down to the size of its NY-style pies (sold whole or by the slice), which range from large to roughly the diameter of a ferris wheel. And toppings, ranging from meat-lovers to veggie-loaded, are applied with awe-inspiring abundance. Since tastes do vary, the menu also includes a cornucopia of other crowd-pleasers: burgers (including turkey with a unique mustard-spiked cranberry sauce), entrée-size salads, burritos or quesadillas, wings, hot or cold subs and succulent self-basted lamb/beef gyros with tzatziki. \$

Fish Fish 13488 Biscayne Blvd., 786-732-3124

Here's what makes this elegantly warm restolounge and seafood market not just an irresistible neighborhood draw but a worth-the-drive dining destination: Both local and cold-water fish and shellfish, including stone crab and lobster from owners Melvyn Franks and Rebecca Nachlas's own Florida Keys plant, that are always fresh, never frozen (except some shrimp). For home cooks, the market offers all delivered-daily catches on the menu. But don't miss chef Oscar Quezada's simple and perfect preparations, including lightly battered, crispy tempura shrimp; sophisticated fish and chips (featuring Atlantic cod, not cheapo fish); bracing ceviches; and, for carnivores, shepherd's pie topped with ethereal whipped potatoes. \$\$-\$\$\$\$

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. \$\$-\$\$

Giraffes 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. Giraffes. Given that the steaks, especially the tender, flavorful picanha, rival those at the most upscale rodizio joints – and beat the sword-wielding grandstanders for custom cooking (because staff asks your preference) – we'd bet on giraffe domination. Overstuffed grilled sandwiches, salads, even tasty veggie options are all here, too. The cheese bread is a must. \$\$

Happy Sushi & Thai 2224 NE 123rd St., 305-895-0165

Grab a booth at this cozy eatery, which serves all the expected Thai and sushi bar standards, including weekday lunch specials. But there are also delightful surprises, like grilled kawahagi (triggerfish) with seasoned Japanese mayonnaise. This intensely savory/sweet "Japanese home cooking" treat satisfies the same yen as beef jerky, except without pulling out your teeth. Accompanied by a bowl of rice, it's a superb lunch. For raw-fish fans, spicy, creamy salmon tartare (accompanied by hiyashi wakame seaweed) is a winner. \$\$-\$\$\$

Here Comes the Sun 2188 NE 123rd St., 305-893-5711

At this friendly natural foods establishment, one of Miami's first, there's a full stock of vitamins and nutritional supplements. But the place's hearty soups, large variety of entrées (including fresh fish and chicken as well as vegetarian selections), lighter bites like miso burgers with secret "sun sauce" (which would probably make old sneakers taste good), and daily specials are a tastier way to get healthy. An under-ten-buck early-bird dinner is popular with the former long-hair, now blue-hair, crowd. Frozen yogurt, fresh juices, and smoothies complete the menu. \$-\$\$

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. \$\$

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. \$\$\$

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 ajajaco. 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. \$\$

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-keizer 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. \$

Tiny Thai House 12953 Biscayne Blvd., 305-895-1646

The space is tiny. The menu, which features Thai specialties but includes sushi plus Japanese appetizers and entrées, is not. Despite the huge selection of sushi/Thai restaurant standards, though, don't overlook items harder to find in America, like "floating noodle" soup, a popular street food from Thailand's boat-based market stalls; similar in flavor to Vietnamese pho, the dish contains beef, bean sprouts, and noodles heaped in umami-rich beef broth. Among the nicely priced sushi selections, the Mylo roll (tuna, salmon, crab, avocado, and cuke, topped with tempura fish and eel sauce) is a tasty pick. Don't miss sticky rice with mango for dessert. \$

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 nostalgic

hangout. New owners have made some changes, including a décor/ambiance upgrade (there's now a patio lounge, with music) and an expanded menu featuring contemporary comfort foods like fire-grilled pizzas with fresh toppings (homemade mozzarella, etc.), several salads, and veggie burgers. But time-tested road food favorites remain: big beef burgers, hot dogs, and of course, Woody's famous cheesesteak, done traditional Philly-style with shaved ribeye. You can even get Cheese Whiz. To drink, there are nine draft beers plus old-school shakes. \$\$

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 week-end 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 fillas 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 Gouvella, 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,



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globally inspired dishes designed to please crowds: stuffed potato skins, crab Rangoon, coconut-crust fish fingers with orange-ginger sauce, jumbo wings of many flavors. Imagine a sports-oriented Cheesecake Factory. What makes this particular Duffy's different and better? Location, location, location – fronting the Intracoastal Waterway. There's even a swimming pool with its own bar. \$\$-\$\$\$

Empire Szechuan Gourmet of NY 3427 NE 163rd St., 305-949-3318

In the 1980s, Empire became the Chinese chain that swallowed Manhattan – and transformed public perceptions of Chinese food in the NY metropolitan area. Before: bland faux-Cantonese dishes. After: lighter, more fiery fare from Szechuan and other provinces. This Miami outpost does serve chop suey and other Americanized items, but don't worry. Stick with Szechuan crispy prawns, Empire's Special Duck, cold sesame noodles, or similar pleasantly spicy specialties, and you'll be a happy camper, especially if you're an ex-New Yorker. \$\$

El Gran Inka 3155 NE 163rd St., 305-940-4910

Though diners at this upscale Peruvian eatery will find ceviches, a hefty fried-seafood jalea, and Peru's other expected traditional specialties, all presented far more elegantly than most in town, the contemporary Peruvian fusion creations are unique. Especially recommended are two dishes adapted from recipes by Peru's influential nikkei (Japanese/Creole) chef Rosita Yimura: an exquisite, delicately sauced tiradito de corvina, and for those with no fear of cholesterol, pulpo de oliva (octopus topped with rich olive sauce). \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Ginza Japanese Buffet 16153 Biscayne Blvd., 305-944-2192

Highlighting the lunch and dinners spreads at this all-you-can-eat Japanese buffet are a hibachi station (where chefs custom-cook diners' choice of seafood or meat), plus many types of maki rolls and individual nigiri sushi, both featuring a larger variety of seafood than at many sushi bars – not just salmon and tuna but snapper, escolar, surf clam, snow crab, and more. But there are also steam-tabled hot Japanese and Chinese dishes; an array of cold shellfish and salads with mix-and-match sauces; and desserts. Selections vary, but value-for-money is a given. \$\$\$

Hanna's Gourmet Diner 13951 Biscayne Blvd., 305-947-2255

When Sia and Nicole Hemmati bought the Gourmet Diner from retiring original owner Jean-Pierre Lejeune in the late 1990s, they added "Hanna's" to the name, but changed little else about this retro-looking French/American diner, a north Miami-Dade institution since 1983. Customers can get a cheeseburger or garlicky escargots, meatloaf in tomato sauce or boeuf bourguignon in red wine sauce, iceberg lettuce and tomatoes, or a mushroom and squid salad with garlic dressing.

For oysters Rockefeller/tuna-melt couples from Venus and Mars, it remains the ideal dinner date destination. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Hiro Japanese Restaurant 3007 NE 163rd St., 305-948-3687

One of Miami's first sushi restaurants, Hiro retains an amusing retro-glam feel, an extensive menu of both sushi and cooked Japanese food, and late hours that make it a perennially popular after-hours snack stop. The sushi menu has few surprises, but quality is reliable. Most exceptional are the nicely priced yakitori, skewers of succulently soy-glazed and grilled meat, fish, and vegetables; the unusually large variety available of the last makes this place a good choice for vegetarians. \$\$

Hiro's Sushi Express 17048 W. Dixie Hwy., 305-949-0776

Tiny, true, but there's more than just sushi at this mostly take-out spin-off of the pioneering Hiro. Makis are the mainstay (standard stuff like California rolls, more complex creations like multi-veg futomaki, and a few unexpected treats like a spicy Crunch & Caliente maki), available à la carte or in value-priced individual and party combo platters. But there are also bento boxes featuring tempura, yakitori skewers, teriyaki, stir-fried veggies, and udon noodles. Another branch is now open in Miami's Upper Eastside. \$

Heelsha 1550 NE 164th St., 305-919-8393

If unusual Bangladeshi dishes like fiery pumpkin patee (cooked with onion, green pepper, and pickled mango) or Heelsha curry (succulently spiced hilsa, Bangladesh's sweet-fleshed national fish) seem familiar, it's because chef/owner Bithi Begum and her husband Tipu Raman once served such fare at the critically acclaimed Renaisa. Their menu's mix-and-match option allows diners to pair their choice of meat, poultry, fish, or vegetable with more than a dozen regional sauces, from familiar Indian styles to exotica like satkara, flavored with a Bangladeshi citrus reminiscent of sour orange. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

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 entrees (with soup or salad plus starch), including tempting vegetarian and seafood meals for noncarnivores. \$\$

Kebab Indian Restaurant 514 NE 167th St., 305-940-6309

Since the 1980s this restaurant, located in an unatmospheric mini strip mall but surprisingly romantic inside (especially if you grab one of the exotically draped booths) has been a popular destination for reasonably priced north Indian fare. Kormas are properly soothing and vindaloes are satisfactorily searing, but the kitchen will adjust seasons 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. \$\$

Kings County Pizza 18228 W. Dixie Hwy., 305-792-9455

If your feelings about Brooklyn-style pizza have been formed by Domino's floppy-crust, ketchupy, cheese-soaked pies, stop here to sample a slice of the real thing. Admittedly, the crusts are not those of the coal-fired classics from Brooklyn's legendary Totono's or Grimaldi's, but they're similarly medium-thin and crisp – though not like a cracker; you can fold them for neat street eating, and they taste like honest bread, not cardboard. A variety of toppings are available even on slices. There are also whole pies with varied toppings. The "large" is humongous. \$\$\$

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. \$

Lime Fresh Mexican Grill 14831 Biscayne Blvd. 305-949-8800

Like its downtown and Midtown siblings, this Lime Fresh serves up 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. \$

Laurenzo's Market Café 16385 W. Dixie Hwy., 305-945-6381

It's just a small area between the wines and the fridge counters – no potted palms, and next-to-no service in this cafeteria-style space. But when negotiating this international gourmet market's packed shelves and crowds has depleted your energies, it's a handy place to refuel with eggplant parmesan and similar Italian-American classics, housemade from old family recipes. Just a few spoonfuls of Wednesday's hearty pasta fagirole, one of the daily soup specials, could keep a person shopping for hours. And now that pizza master Carlo is manning the wood-fired oven, you can sample the thinnest, crispiest pies outside Napoli. \$\$\$

Little Saigon 16752 N. Miami Ave., 305-653-3377

This is Miami's oldest traditional Vietnamese restaurant, but it's still packed most weekend nights. So even the place's biggest negative – its hole-in-the-wall atmosphere, not encouraging of lingering visits – becomes a plus since it ensures fast turnover. Chef/owner Lily Tao is typically in the kitchen, crafting green papaya salad, flavorful beef noodle pho (served with greens, herbs, and condiments that make it not just a soup but a whole ceremony), and many other Vietnamese classics. The menu is humongous. \$\$\$

The Melting Pot 15700 Biscayne Blvd., 305-947-2228

For 1950s and 1960s college students, fondue pots were standard dorm accessories. These days, however, branches of this chain are generally the only places to go for this eating experience. Start with a wine-enriched four-cheese fondue; proceed to an entrée with meat or seafood, plus choice of cooking potion (herbed wine, bouillon, or oil); finish with fruits and cakes dipped in melted chocolate. Fondue etiquette dictates that diners who drop a skewer in the pot must kiss all other table companions, so go with those you love. \$\$\$

New China Buffet 940 North Miami Beach Blvd., 305-957-7266

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

Oishi Thai 14841 Biscayne Blvd., 305-947-4338

At this stylish Thai/sushi spot, try the menu of specials, many of which clearly reflect the young chef's fanatical devotion to fresh fish, as well as the time he spent in the kitchen of Knob: broiled miso-marinated black cod; rock shrimp tempura with creamy sauce; even Nobu Matsuhisa's "new style sashimi" (slightly surface-seared by drizzles of hot olive and sesame oil). The specials menu includes some Thai-inspired creations, too, such as veal massaman curry, Chilean sea bass curry, and zingling filet mignon with basil sauce. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Panya Thai 520 NE 167th St., 305-945-8566

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

Paquito's 16265 Biscayne Blvd., 305-947-1027

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. \$\$

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Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

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., 305-947-1076

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 esoteric like abalone with sea cucumber. The extensive third menu offers dim sum, served until 4:00 p.m. A live tank allows seasonal seafood dishes like lobster with ginger and scallion. Recently installed: a Chinese barbecue case, displaying savory items like crispy pork with crackling attached. \$\$\$

Shing Wang Vegetarian, 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. \$\$\$

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. \$\$

Sports Grill

2995 NE 163rd St., 305-944-4552

Like the other five locations of this popular local mini chain (which originated more than 20 years ago), NMB's family-friendly sports bar/grill has walls lined with flat-screen TVs and a menu packed with all the classic game-watching munchies, some with Old South twists, like jalapeño poppers with pepper jelly dipping sauce. Must-haves are the charbroiled "special wings," meaty and mild. But for those who prefer more highly spiced wings, there are six additional varieties. Cool down with a craft beer from a list that changes weekly to avoid boredom. \$\$\$

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 house-made. 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 matzo 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

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

Vegetarian Restaurant by Hakin

73 NE 167th St., 305-405-6346

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

Yakko-San

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

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

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. \$\$\$

Betto's Ristorante Italiano

1009 Kane Concourse, 305-861-8166

After roughly 25 years as Caffè Da Vinci, this romantic remodeled, renamed space is now managed by Betto Di Carlo,

also a 25-year Italian cuisine veteran (as former owner/effusively charming host of Surfside's neighborhood favorite Café Ragazzi). Best make reservations. Though off the tourist track, the place draws hungry hordes for homemade pastas like pappardelle ai porcini (toothsome wide noodles with fresh mushrooms). Veal piccata, lightly floured and sautéed medallions with a caper-studded lemon white wine sauce, and thicker mozzarella-stuffed chops are also popular. \$\$\$

Le Pine

1052 Kane Concourse, 305-861-1059

This upscale Lebanese restaurant serves dishes with the sort of understated sophistication that makes clear why Beirut was called the Paris of the East. You'll find familiar Middle Eastern favorites, but many have refinements that lift them above average: pita that's housemade, charmingly fluffy when warm from the oven; falafel incorporating flavorful fava beans with the usual ground chickpeas. Especially appealing are more uncommon items like crisp-fried cauliflower with tahini, fateh (a chickpea casserole "iced" with thick yogurt), and buttery cheese/herb-filled sambusak pastries. Finish exotically with a hookah. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Open Kitchen

1071 95th St., 305-865-0090

If we were on Death Row, choosing a last meal, this very chef-centered lunchroom/market's PBLT (a BLT sandwich with melt-in-your-mouth pork belly substituting for regular bacon) would be a strong contender. Co-owners Sandra Stefani (ex-Casa Toscana chef/owner) and Ines Chattas (ex-Icebox Café GM) have combined their backgrounds to create a global gourmet oasis with a menu ranging from light quiches and imaginative salads to hefty balsamic/tomato-glazed shortribs or daily pasta specials (like wild boar-stuffed ravioli). Also featured: artisan grocery products, and Stefani's famous interactive cooking class/wine dinners. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

The Palm

9650 E. Bay Harbor Dr., 305-868-7256

It was 1930s journalists, legend has it, who transformed NYC's original Palm from Italian restaurant to bastion of beef. Owners would run out to the butcher for huge steaks to satisfy the hardboiled scribes. So our perennial pick here is nostalgic: steak à la stone — juicy, butter-doused slices on toast, topped with sautéed onions and pimentos. This classic (whose carb components make it satisfying without à la carte sides, and hence a relative bargain) isn't on the menu anymore, but cooks will prepare it on request. \$\$\$\$

AVENTURA / HALLANDALE

Anthony's Coal Fired Pizza

17901 Biscayne Blvd., 305-830-2625

When people rave about New York pizzas' superiority, they

don't just mean thin crusts. They mean the kind of airy, abundantly burn-bubbled, uniquely flavorful crusts that can only be consistently produced by a traditional coal (not wood) oven — like those at Anthony's, which began with one Fort Lauderdale pizzeria in 2002 and now has roughly 30 locations. Quality toppings, though limited, hit all the major food groups, from prosciutto to kalamata olives. There are salads, too, but the sausage and garlic-sautéed broccoli rabe pie is a tastier green vegetable. \$\$

Bagel Cove Restaurant & Deli

19003 Biscayne Blvd., 305-935-4029

One word: flagels. And no, that's not a typo. Rather these crusty, flattened specimens (poppy seed or sesame seed) are the ultimate bagel/soft pretzel hybrid — and a specialty at this bustling Jewish bakery/deli, which, since 1988, opens at 6:30 a.m. — typically selling out of flagels in a couple of hours. Since you're up early anyway, sample elaborately garnished breakfast specials, including unusually flavorful homemade corned beef hash and eggs. For the rest of the day, multitudes of mavens devour every other delectable deli specialty known to humankind. \$\$

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

Blu Sushi

600 Silks Run Rod., 954-744-4398

Even hard-core sushi-bar addicts must admit that many such establishments suffer from a certain sameness. Not Blu. At this restolounge in the Village at Gulfstream Park, part of a mini-chain originating in southwest Florida, the specialty makis are outdone in outrageousness only by extravagant cocktails.

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Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

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. \$\$\$\$\$

BurgerFi 18139 Biscayne Blvd., 305-466-0350

It's not surprising that this Florida-based "better burger" franchise is one of America's fastest-growing. With décor that's relaxing retro yet futuristically earth-friendly (think recycled Coke bottle chairs), beverages ranging from milkshakes to craft beers, and sourced hormone/antibiotic-free, grass-fed Angus burgers on branded buns, for prices rivaling those for fast-food junkburgers, what's not to love? There are also vegetarian quinoa burgers or Kobe dogs, plus "accessories" including hand-cut fries, killer crisp-battered onion rings, freshly made, all-natural frozen custard, and toppings galore. \$

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. \$\$\$

Fresko

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

Fuji Hana

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

The Grill on the Alley

19501 Biscayne Blvd. (Aventura Mall), 305-466-7195
Ensnared 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. \$\$\$\$\$

Il Migliore

2576 NE Miami Gardens Dr., 305-792-2902
This attractive trattoria gets the food right, as well as the ambience. 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. \$-\$-\$-\$

Kampai

3575 NE 207th St., 305-931-6410
At this longtime neighborhood favorite Japanese/Thai restaurant, many come just for the slightly pricey but very generous sushi specialties. Most makis are cooked, but for raw-fish fans the tempura-flake-topped crunchy tuna/avocado roll with spicy mayo, and tuna both inside and out, is a people-pleaser. Don't neglect Thai specialties, though, especially red and green curries customizable as to heat (mild, medium, hot, and authentic "Thai hot"). And for a bargain light lunch, try tonjiru, miso soup jazzed up with veggies and pork. \$-\$-\$-\$

La Estancia Argentina

17870 Biscayne Blvd., 305-932-6477
At this market/restaurant, there's a small but quality selection of Argentine grocery staples and wines, plus a butcher counter where backyard BBQers can find everything necessary for a Parrillada party. Alternatively, grab a table and let La Estancia do the cooking — anything from tapas and elegant miga mini-tea sandwiches to hefty grilled Parrillada plates. Most irresistible, though, are the savory and sweet baked goods, especially elaborately frosted layer cakes and delicately crusted empanadas plumply stuffed with hand-cut flank steak, mushrooms in onion sauce, much more. \$-\$-\$

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. \$\$\$

Mo's Bagels & Deli

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

Mr. Chef's Fine Chinese Cuisine & Bar

18800 NE 29th Ave. #10, 786-787-9030
Considering our county's dearth of authentic Chinese food, this stylish eatery is heaven-sent for Aventura residents. Owners Jin Xiang Chen and Shu Ming (a.k.a. Mr. Chef) come from China's southern seacoast province of Guangdong (Canton). But you'll find no glopplily sauced, Americanized-Cantonese chop sueys here. Cooking is properly light-handed, and seafood specialties shine (try the spicy/crispy salt and pepper shrimp). For adventurers, there's a cold jellyfish starter. Even timid taste buds can't resist tender fried shrimp balls described this way: "With crispy adorable fringy outfit." \$-\$-\$-\$

Pilar

20475 Biscayne Blvd. 305-937-2777
Chef/owner Scott Fredel previously worked for Norman

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

Pizza Roma

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

Sushi Siam

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

SUNNY ISLES BEACH

Alba

17315 Collins Ave., 786-923-9305
From bad-boy celeb chef Ralph Pagano, Sole resort's seaside Italian/Italian-American eatery has an irreverent retro Rat Pack vibe and a menu featuring "naked ravioli" from the Gnudi Bar, fresh seafood, homemade pastas, classic and contemporary pizzas, and old school "red sauce joint" entrées, some upscaled. (When lobster Française is available, why settle for chicken?) Almond-sage butter-sauced buttermilk squash gnudi is a best bet. And meals end with another best bet: the "Vinny D Split," a game enabling tables to win their meals for free. \$\$\$

Chef Philip Ho

16850 Collins Ave., 305-974-0338
Deep-pocketed diners who ate at the Setai when Jonathan Wright was executive chef already know chef Ho's work. His dazzling dim sum were the menu's highlight. Now they're affordable for all. Dumplings (chive and shrimp, green tea duck, truffle-spiked scallop, more) have skins delicate enough to see through; open shrimp dumplings with dried scallops are almost flower-like in appearance; steamed cheung fan (rice noodle crêpes) rolled around Chinese crullers are simply sinful, as are flaky-crust egg custard tarts. And the regular menu measures up to the small plates. \$-\$-\$-\$

Copper Chimney

18090 Collins Ave., 305-974-0075
At this family-owned (and kid-friendly), white-tablecloth Indian restaurant, prices are more upscale than average, but so is the food's elegant presentation — plus features like a full bar, live Bollywood/belly dancing on weekends, and, among familiar North Indian fare, dishes blending contemporary touches with traditional tastes. Especially enjoyable: starters inspired by street snacks, like bikaneri chaat (fried gram flour crisps, chick-peas, and yogurt) served with two chutneys; anything featuring paneer cheese, from classic spinach-cheese palak paneer to creative khazze-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 stand 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 homemade rare roast beef; shrimp or chunky smoked whitefish salads; fresh baked goods. \$\$\$

The H Restaurant

17608 Collins Ave., 305-931-9106
This friendly, family-owned bistro is the sort of homeaway-from-home found every few blocks in France — here Gerard and

Karin Herrison, plus chef son Julien, formerly had a restaurant — but they're rarely found in South Florida. Burgers, et al., are available, but with garlicky escargots, a savory/sweet-dressed salad of duck confit atop frisée, pan-seared foie gras with port, raspberry sauce, fish with an impeccable lemon beurre blanc, and a satisfying steak/frites (with peppery cognac cream sauce). We'd leave the American stuff to the kids. \$\$\$-\$-\$-\$

Il Mulino New York

17875 Collins Ave., 305-466-9191
If too much is not enough for you, this 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 counter, 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, cannellini 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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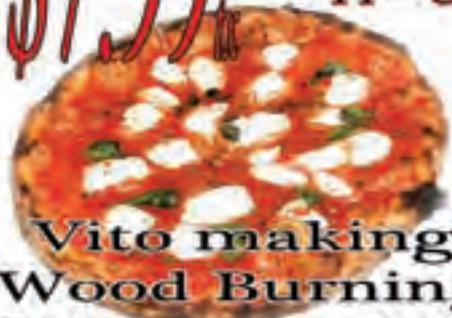
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