

BISCAYNE *Times*

June 2014

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Volume 12 Issue 4

Private Spaces

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014499 Dr. Valeria Soltanik

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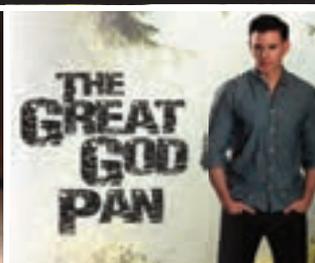
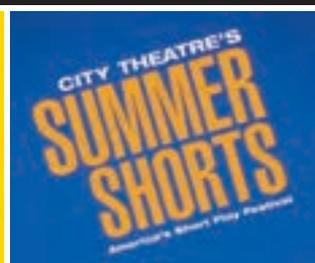
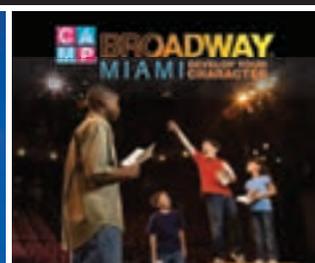
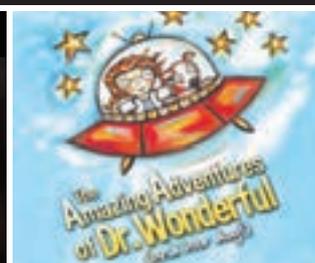
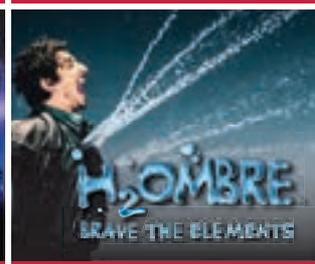
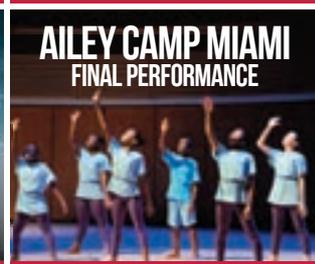
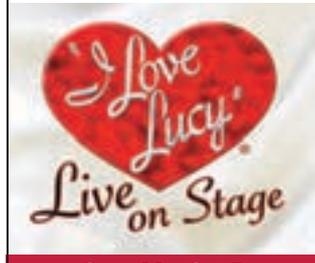
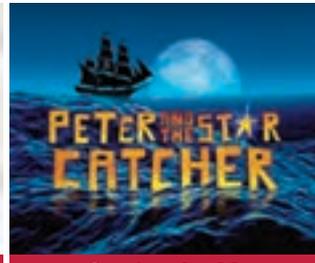
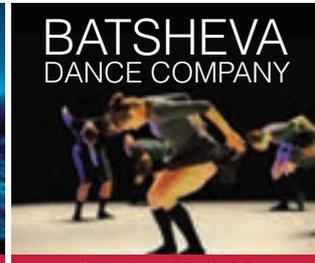
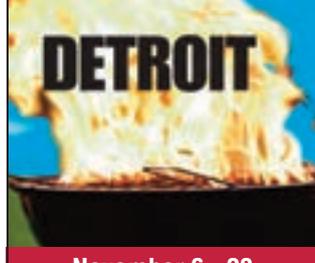
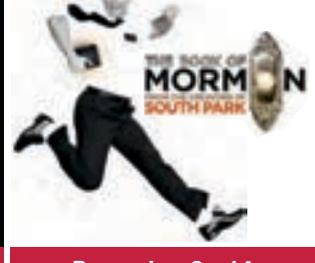
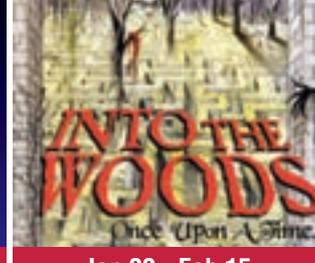
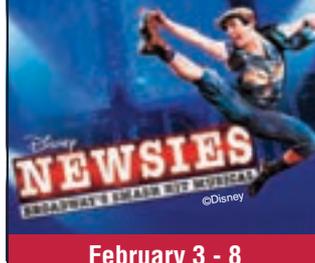
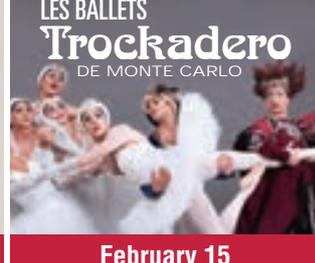


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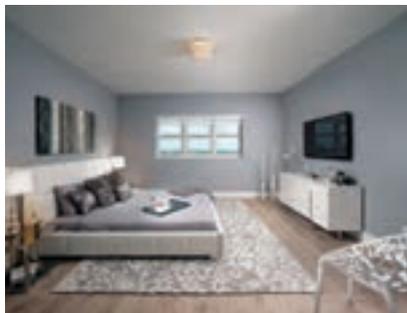


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PUBLISHER & EDITOR

Jim Mullin
jim.mullin@biscaynetimes.com

CONTRIBUTORS

Erik Bojnansky Senior Writer
erik.bojnansky@biscaynetimes.com

Anne Tschida, Arts Editor
anne.tschida@biscaynetimes.com

Jay Beskin, Pamela Robin Brandt,
 Crystal Brewé, Terence Cantarella,
 Christian Cipriani, Bill Citara,
 Janet Goodman, Gaspar González,
 Margaret Griffis, Jim W. Harper,
 Ken Jett, Jen Karetnick, Jack King,
 Derek Michael McCann,
 Dinah McNichols, Silvia Ros,
 Mark Sell, Jeff Shimonski,
 Melissa Wallen, Harriette Yahr

BUSINESS MANAGER

Sal Monterosso
sal.monterosso@biscaynetimes.com

ACCOUNT EXECUTIVES

Marc Ruehle
marc.ruehle@biscaynetimes.com

Nancy Newhart
nancy.newhart@biscaynetimes.com

Sandra Glorian
sandra.glorian@biscaynetimes.com

ART DIRECTOR

Marcy Mock
marseadesign@mac.com

ADVERTISING DESIGN

DP Designs
production@biscaynetimes.com

CIRCULATION

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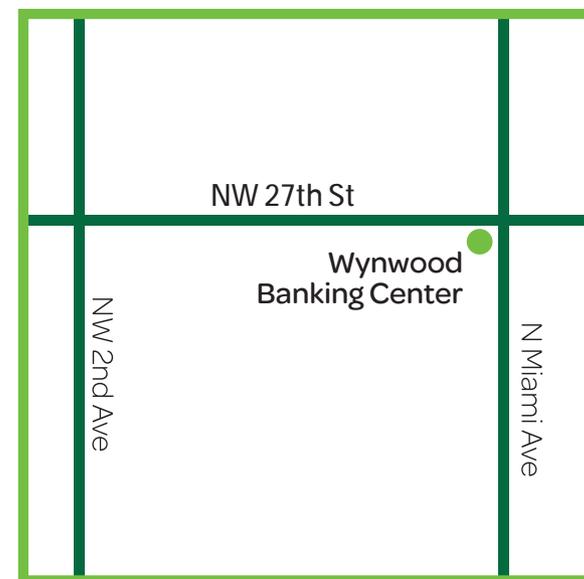
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June						
	9	10	11	12 4 pm ET Brazil vs. Croatia	13 12 pm ET Mexico vs. Cameroon 3 pm ET Spain vs. Netherlands 6 pm ET Chile vs. Australia	14 12 pm ET Colombia vs. Greece 3 pm ET Uruguay vs. Costa Rica 6 pm ET England vs. Italy 9 pm ET Ivory Coast vs. Japan
12 pm ET Switzerland vs. Ecuador 3 pm ET France vs. Honduras 6 pm ET Argentina vs. Bosnia-Herzegovina	12 pm ET Germany vs. Portugal 3 pm ET Iran vs. Nigeria 6 pm ET Ghana vs. USA	12 pm ET Belgium vs. Algeria 3 pm ET Brazil vs. Mexico 6 pm ET Russia vs. South Korea	12 pm ET Netherlands vs. Australia 3 pm ET Spain vs. Chile 6 pm ET Cameroon vs. Croatia	12 pm ET Colombia vs. Ivory Coast 3 pm ET Uruguay vs. England 6 pm ET Greece vs. Japan	12 pm ET Costa Rica vs. Italy 3 pm ET Switzerland vs. France 6 pm ET Ecuador vs. Honduras	12 pm ET Argentina vs. Iran 3 pm ET Germany vs. Ghana 6 pm ET Bosnia-Herzegovina vs. Nigeria
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
12 pm ET Belgium vs. Russia 3 pm ET Algeria vs. South Korea 6 pm ET Portugal vs. USA	12 pm ET Netherlands vs. Chile 12 pm ET Australia vs. Spain 4 pm ET Croatia vs. Mexico 4 pm ET Cameroon vs. Brazil	12 pm ET Italy vs. Uruguay 12 pm ET Costa Rica vs. England 4 pm ET Japan vs. Colombia 4 pm ET Greece vs. Ivory Coast	12 pm ET Nigeria vs. Argentina 12 pm ET Bosnia-Herzegovina vs. Iran 4 pm ET Ecuador vs. France 4 pm ET Honduras vs. Switzerland	12 pm ET USA vs. Germany 12 pm ET Portugal vs. Ghana 4 pm ET South Korea vs. Belgium 4 pm ET Algeria vs. Russia	ROUND OF 16	
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
12 pm ET Match 51: Winner Gp B vs. Runner-up Gp A 4 pm ET Match 52: Winner Gp D vs. Runner-up Gp C	12 pm ET Match 53: Winner Gp E vs. Runner-up Gp F 4 pm ET Match 54: Winner Gp G vs. Runner-up Gp H	12 pm ET Match 55: Winner Gp F vs. Runner-up Gp E 4 pm ET Match 56: Winner Gp H vs. Runner-up Gp G	July		QUARTER FINALS	
29	30	1	2	3	4	5
		SEMI FINALS				
		4 pm ET Match 61: Winner Match 57 vs. Winner Match 58	4 pm ET Match 62: Winner Match 59 vs. Winner Match 60		12 pm ET Match 57: Winner Match 53 vs. Winner Match 54 4 pm ET Match 58: Winner Match 50 vs. Winner Match 49	12 pm ET Match 59: Winner Match 55 vs. Winner Match 56 4 pm ET Match 60: Winner Match 51 vs. Winner Match 52
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
THIRD PLACE						
					4 pm ET Match 63: Loser Match 61 vs. Loser Match 62	
FINAL						
3 pm ET Match 64: Winner Match 61 vs. Winner Match 62	Join us on the patio to cheer on your team!					
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Commentary: LETTERS

Good Cover, Good Coverage

Erik Bojnansky turned in a great cover story on the quirky past and questionable future for the Intracoastal Mall property under its new ownership (“The Hunt for Waterfront,” May 2014). The photo coverage gave a sense of how massive the beachfront condominium towers are in Sunny Isles. They literally overshadow the natural beauty of the shoreline. No more of that, please.

As for the Dezers, they seem overawed by Trump fairy dust. I hope they grow to feel as much affection for North Miami Beach, which will have to live with their Intracoastal Mall development project long after they are gone.

*Dolores Cleeve
Miami*

A Business Owner Responds

Just curious: Which part of Jen Karetnick’s column (“Retail Rights and Wrongs,” May 2014) was *not* mean-spirited? She writes that she paid the \$101.12 that she owed my store “in part to keep my conscience clear and in part because I knew someday I would write about it.”

Guess she figured she would get even by writing in her column that a small-business owner like me would have the audacity to try to collect money he is owed.

I think that is very vindictive and shows a lack of impartiality as a journalist. If I had overcharged her by mistake, she would have expected the money back and I would have been happy to give it to her.

I guess I should have “eaten the mistake” to avoid the wrath she would fling upon me for trying to make ends meet and run a business that depends on so little foot traffic, but repeat customers.

I’m sorry that she had a bad experience in my store that day in May 2013 because I was out at a funeral. Now I have to relive that episode, over one year later, by her trying to destroy my business and getting even with me.

I usually go out of my way for my customers, and I would have done the same for her. I did try to call and reach her by the number she had on her invoice. I left several messages for her as soon as the mistake was realized (the next day) and a few days after, but did not receive a call-back.

It was only when I was doing my sales tax calculations that I saw an e-mail address. I contacted her by e-mail

and got a response. I explained that I’d left several messages on her home answering machine (which she said she never got) and that now time had passed when I finally got her by e-mail.

So her clear conscience (as she put it) that she got by paying what she owed still entitles her to be vindictive.

I know I wouldn’t have a clear conscience if I’d written an article like that. I guess she has no problem sleeping at night. I have been so upset by this that I have lost many nights’ sleep. So I guess she got even, and then some.

*Sam Camhe
Mostly Modern
North Miami*

Unclear and Misguided

I’m writing in regard to Jen Karetnick’s May column, “Retail Rights and Wrongs.” The intention behind Ms. Karetnick’s rant, with all its puffed-up indignation, was unclear; nor did it educate or amuse. However, she did manage to demonstrate how mistaken and mean-spirited she appears to be while not so subtly plugging her upcoming book.

I am quite certain that Ms. Karetnick was aware of the accounting error (in her favor) and took advantage of the situation until she was called out, and then rightfully forked over the hundred bucks.

Sam Camhe, the owner of Mostly Modern, is one of the kindest, most honest men I know. He is a small, independent owner, a one-man retail operation, and he happened to be attending his brother’s funeral during the incident. A friend of his filled in for him during his absence.

I do not know who Ms. K.’s cadre of retail friends are who came up with “the consensus” that the store owner must “eat” a mistake, but I do question their moral code. And, yes, it is an issue of morality.

Her column brings into play other issues, as well, like empathy or the lack thereof, community, and fair play.

Shame on her for also dogging another small-business owner who was going out of business. Hard as it is for one to believe, I am sure that woman had a few things on her mind besides Miss Fancy Pants, who of course would gladly reap the benefit of clearance pricing on vintage luxury goods but then somehow

Continued on page 14

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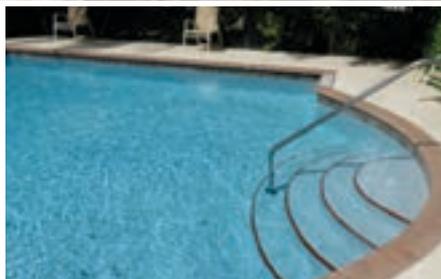
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Commentary: LETTERS

Letters

Continued from page 12

feel a creepy compulsion to kick the poor girl on her way out. Petty and despicable.

Here's a little lagniappe for Ms. K. Check your face, girl, and right yourself, because you've got it all wrong. Very little is given for nothing in the world we live in. And let's be very clear: The reason your ass is kissed is because you clearly use your profession as a weapon or reward.

And that is anything but professional. It's appalling.

Those who share your misguided sense of entitlement and enjoy winning while watching others lose have always been on the wrong side of history, politics, and humanity.

*Perry Tortorelli
Jacksonville*

Remember Nature? Remember Biscayne Bay? Long, Long Ago....

Thanks to Erik Bojnansky for drawing attention to the issue of public space in your recent article "When Public Isn't Public at All" (May 2014). Parcel B is one of our last remaining "open spaces" on the downtown waterfront. Sadly, Miami has a history of having such spaces be eaten up by buildings, often with little regard to open space for people, pets, and what passes (these days) for natural areas.

As Richard Louv writes in his important book *Last Child in the Woods* (2006), our children — and by extension all of us — have a "nature deficit disorder" that needs more attention in our hyper-modern world. Check out his work and website.

My one complaint about the article is that the Urban Environment League was mentioned only briefly and without context. Our organization has spearheaded many struggles to preserve open space on our waterfront since its founding in 1996 — from Virginia Key Beach Park to the Miami Circle, Bicentennial Park, and now we're battling David Beckham's plan to block off even more waterfront.

Our forum less than a month ago (with Miami Neighborhoods United and the Downtown Bay Form) attracted a large audience and helped draw attention to the issue of Parcel B. It stimulated lively discussion, including commitments for open space and an

open public design process from Commissioner Audrey Edmonson. We thank her for her efforts.

Check out our website or Facebook page, and get involved in the UEL. Miami needs more people who engage beyond the Internet — in advocacy organizations in the public interest. Otherwise, the public interest and urban open spaces may become a distant memory.

*Greg Bush, vice president
Urban Environment League
Miami*

Dissent Is Not Yellow

I would like to add to what Nancy Liebman said about the agreement with Cushman School to close a public street, in response to Ken Jett's column "A Good Walk Spoiled" (April 2014).

It was not a unanimous decision by the MiMo Biscayne Association board for this street to be given away. As a board member, I was one of three dissenting votes and was completely against vacating the street to Cushman. The minutes from that last meeting record me as being the lone dissenter, but there were two other board members who could not be present but who let it be known ahead of time that they were against the giveaway.

We three thought that a guard gate would suffice for the protection the school said it was seeking. Not surprising, then, that I support Ken Jett's viewpoint.

We don't know the extent of any "scholarships" that Cushman awards, and it would seem that a public school without the prestige of Cushman would never be given this type of agreement by the city. Would they even dare to ask? My further objection to streets being vacated for the benefit of a developer or other entity such as a school is the precedent it sets.

Far from engaging in "yellow journalism," as one letter-writer described Ken Jett's opinion piece, I feel *Biscayne Times* did a service by presenting, along with that opinion, facts the general public would not otherwise have known.

*Ginger Vela
Shorecrest*

Oh, Chute!

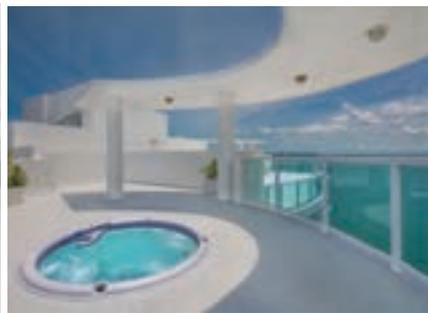
I noted with interest the two stories in your April issue about horse racing at

Continued on page 16



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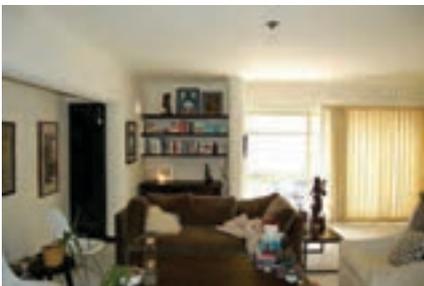
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Commentary: LETTERS

Letters

Continued from page 14

Gulfstream Park (“Race Wars” by Terence Cantarella and “Here’s a Clever Way to Bring Slots to Miami” by Erik Bojnansky) and mention of the Gulfstream Park Thoroughbred After-Care Retirement Program (GPTARP). Inasmuch as I used to work for the great “Joe T.” at Gulfstream back in the 1990s, I enjoyed the detailed history the cover article gave.

I have been handling PR for the horsemen for the past three years and actually wrote the Phil Combest op-ed piece referenced in the cover story.

I want to flag some misinformation in the second piece, by Erik Bojnansky. State Rep. Rob Schenk’s name was misspelled, and the reference to the “new” part of the Gulfstream track is wrong.

The GPTARP “races” actually took place in the seven-furlong chute, which has existed for the entire history of the track. It was not built especially for that purpose, as the article suggests.

*Jennifer Pierce, director of marketing and community development
Colodny, Fass, Talenfeld, Karlinsky,
Abate & Webb, P.A.
Fort Lauderdale*

A Response Is in Order

It comes as no surprise that Biscayne Park Commissioner Fred Jonas’s April issue letter to the editor in response to Erik Bojnansky’s “Border Wars” (March 2014) is filled with false logic, ad hominem attacks, and a dearth of facts.

To set the record straight, everyone on the prior Biscayne Park commission heard the idea of funding a few additional police officers with annexation revenue to cover the area to be absorbed by Biscayne Park.

But when village staff were asked to provide eastern area crime statistics to compare with our own, the report never materialized. Analysis would have shown if our police could cover the annexed areas without hurting existing service.

Worst-case scenario? Officers would be pulled from patrolling existing streets and current duty to keep homes, residents, and families safe — and get bogged down in a crime quagmire outside our existing boundaries. The drain could also lead to more rapid fiscal failure since annexation would ultimately cost more than the added revenue.

Why didn’t Jonas didn’t discuss such data? Readers should visit <http://nation.maps.arcgis.com>. By locating southeast Florida and zooming in to Biscayne Park, it becomes obvious that our village is a relatively tranquil oasis with an average crime index (CI) of 33.5 and a personal crime index (PCI) of 24.

(The website notes that an index of 100 is average; a CI of 120 indicates that crime in that area is 20 percent above the national average.)

However, the eastern area is a relative war zone. The northern census block group that Jonas and the majority on the commission want to absorb has a CI of 282 and a PCI of 466. If the county can’t adequately protect residents in this area, how can we?

Jonas writes that the proposed annexation area “has little in it that could draw the attention of our code officer,” and that “given its zoning and purpose, it is quite well kept.” Readers should drive through the area and the adjacent streets the county will likely force us to take on, and see for themselves.

Why did Jonas fail to mention that former village manager Ana Garcia spoke about a post-annexation ability to “clean up” the area? And how can he state that the east currently “has its own zoning” and still believe that no tension will arise when a stricter Biscayne Park code takes effect?

As to his claim that I worked to undermine the BP code, Jonas gives no examples. His assertion that I would overthrow it if I could perhaps originates from his own confused projections.

Last, look at Jonas’s recent vote on the FPL concrete utility pole project being forced on us. And know that he recently agreed to cease commissioner e-mail broadcasts to notify village residents on this issue, apparently to limit the spread of resistance that arises when a huge concrete power pole threatens a resident’s front yard with decreased property aesthetics and value.

Good code and good budget decisions can protect our residents. Let’s start by asking Jonas to poll neighbors on his street and beyond to determine the number of us who support ties with Miami Shores, and who oppose FPL’s concrete monoliths in our front yards before he again tries to fool the readers of *Biscayne Times*.

*Bryan Cooper, past commissioner
Biscayne Park*



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The Southerner, Explained

Insular, backward, fundamental: Is this Florida or Afghanistan?

By Jack King
BT Contributor

The South Florida insanity of celebrity worship is hot right now. Beckham-mania, along with Beckham-mania money, is flowing over all, and our local politicians no doubt are hoping for the chance of a photo op and an envelope full of cash from Beckham and his boys. Hopefully, the locals will remember Marlins-mania long enough to tell the British carpetbagger to take a hike.

Through all this, few have paid attention to two of north Florida's wonderful representatives who've made complete asses of themselves.

We start with U.S. Congressman Ted Yoho, who during his last campaign suggested that only property owners should be allowed to vote. At another campaign stop, he praised Gov. Rick Scott for reducing the number of early voting days to just eight.

Yoho also noted that we used to have laws limiting the vote to property owners. However, he failed to add that Congress changed those laws because they were discriminatory, both racially and economically.

Then we have one of Yoho's north Florida sidekicks, State Rep. Charles Van Zant. Speaking in March at the Operation Education Conference in Orlando, Van Zant warned that the officials implementing Common Core are "promoting as hard as they can any youth that is interested in the LGBT agenda."

Their aim, Van Zant warned, was to "attract every one of your children to become as homosexual as they possibly can." The Republican then apologized to the crowd. "I really hate to bring you that news," he said, "but you need to know."

Common Core is not some hippy-dippy liberal idea. It came out of a group of current and former governors led by Jeb Bush. Since Bush is not exactly a left-wing ideologue, this begs the larger question: Where in the hell does this stuff come from?

Both Yoho and Van Zant are graduates of the University of Florida. One's an architect, the other a veterinarian, so you'd think they've got enough brain power to make reasonable judgments. What gives?

I did some research on Common Core and found that it offers guidelines for learning math, reading, and science. What can be bad about that, you ask? Quite a bit, it seems.

I recommend a new book, *The Indicted South: Public Criticism, Southern Inferiority, and the Politics of Whiteness*, by Angie Maxwell (University of North Carolina Press). Her well-reviewed thesis is this: In the aftermath of the Civil War, the South was a mess.

On his scorched-earth march through Georgia, General Sherman burned the innards out of the Confederacy, including its heart and soul, Atlanta. The plan was to reduce to the Confederacy to nothing so it could be rebuilt. But the plan didn't work. There was nothing left.



Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman's strategy of total destruction crippled the South.

The South stayed a small agrarian economy, with its people struggling. Education rarely went beyond the fifth grade. The port towns grew, but everything else went backward. Whites blamed blacks for their woes. Blacks blamed whites for theirs. And there was no Marshall Plan for the vanquished.

So for 50 years after the Civil War, Southerners toiled in the fields by day and read the Bible by night. That's how they obtained their reading and science skills. When people think of the Bible, they tend to regard it either as a book of family sagas, tales, and teachings that have great value, or as a book of compiled stories. Few take it literally. Well, everybody in the South did. It was all they had.

In 1920, the State of Tennessee outlawed the teaching of evolution in its schools. In the preceding decades, Darwin's theories had found acceptance in scientific communities and among educated lay people around the world. Finally, in 1925, a Tennessee science teacher named John Scopes agreed to teach from the evolution section of his classroom's state-required textbook, and to submit to arrest for violating state law.

The strategy was to challenge Tennessee law; the American Civil Liberties

Union, backed by local businessmen and northern newspapers, offered to pay legal fees for any teacher who would break the law. It worked. The "Scopes Monkey Trial" became one of the biggest PR disasters the South has ever seen.

For months during the trial, national and international newspapers and magazines examined every aspect of the proceedings. It was a year's worth of humiliation, portraying Southerners as country bumpkins. And they went back to reading the Bible even more. The more insular they became, the more fundamental they grew.

That's why now, if you run for elected office in the South, you have to be anti-science, anti-intellectual, and anti-progress, and can only read certain books, the Bible among them.

Maybe the biggest star of Scopes trial was William Jennings Bryan, who testified for the prosecution. He changed his politics from liberal to conservative and was the only three-time loser in presidential politics.

Oh, yes, Scopes was found guilty. He admitted his "crime" on the stand. He never spent a day in jail.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com



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BizBuzz

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

By Pamela Robin Brandt
BT Contributor

On June 28, it's officially summer. And few expatriates from up north who move to Miami during this season, as we did, will ever forget learning what summer in Miami really means; the experience is burned into you — literally.

After an idyllically balmy winter weekend vacation 20 years ago, we impulsively bought two condos sight unseen (with the "help" of two friends who were decidedly not real estate professionals), and arrived in late June to find temperatures hovering around 350 degrees. We also found that one of the condos had no floor.

While moving our stuff into the second condo, a sudden torrential rain descended (out of nowhere, it seemed; who from a drizzle-all-day locale knows about in-fast/out-fast tropical-type summer storms?), drenching everything — including a metal sofa frame, which slipped from our hands, smushifying a toe.

It went on. Turning the van around and driving back to New England started to seem like the sanest idea.

But that night, after the storm stopped and the bay breezes brought the heat down, we limped out for a walk and discovered the upside of Miami summers: they're for locals. On this particular evening, it was about 50 neighborhood residents gathered to watch a movie that a popular restaurant/lounge was

projecting on the wall of an adjacent parking lot — a casual happening that wouldn't have been possible during the business's frenetic high-tourism season.

Numerous BT advertisers have timely special sales and other things planned this month to ensure you have fun in the sun (or storms).

The **Shops at Midtown Miami** (3401 N. Miami Ave. #132, 305-573-3371) can do a lot better than a flick in a parking lot, too: summer's "Moonlit Movies," presented in lovely Fountain Plaza, are back. Free films are scheduled for every other Wednesday at 8:00 p.m., and this summer the Shops will be hosting games before each movie at 7:00 p.m. This month's schedule: *Mr. Peabody & Sherman* June 11, and *Anchorman 2* June 25. Additionally, for soccer fans, there will be special World Cup-watching parties almost every day in June on the covered outdoor dining patio area just east of the fountain, with drink/dining specials from adjacent restaurants and multiple TV screens provided by sponsor Coors Light. See this issue's ad for days and times.

World Cup madness and NBA Playoff partying are also highly encouraged at **Taperia Raca** (7010 Biscayne Blvd., 305-751-8756). The casual-hip hangout/tapas bar, from the guys behind nationally acclaimed Eating House, will be showing all games on a huge new outdoor HD projector. Thanks, but all we want to see are the small plates and wine menus.

To meet your Wynwood neighbors in air-conditioned comfort, surrounded by



some truly cool art, come to the June 25 "Wine Down Wednesday," designed by very locals-oriented **C1 Bank** (2632 N. Miami Ave., 305-702-6810) as a regular monthly wine-and-cheese mixer for businesses in the area. The interactive open houses are free, and fun.

Farther afield at **Hialeah Park Race Course & Casino** (2200 E. 4th Ave., 305-885-8000, www.hialeahparkcasino.com), something that'll get residents in touch with their roots (and Miami's) instantly: a Willy Chirino concert celebrating the 40th anniversary of his first album. The concert isn't until July 5, at 8:00 p.m., but tickets (\$15-\$50) go on sale the first week of June due to anticipated demand.

What made it possible, that June day 20 years ago, for us to limp around and discover how great Miami summers can be when you live here, was emergency-room care at new advertiser **Mount Sinai Hospital**. Some wonder about quality of care in often-frenetic ERs, but

trust us: Mount Sinai ER doctors actually did save my life by noticing, and taking time to investigate, certain symptoms having nothing whatever to do with the emergency. There are actually two Mount Sinai locations, with ERs at both: the well-known Miami Beach original (4300 Alton Rd., 305-674-2200), and Aventura's newer facility (2845 Aventura Blvd., 305-692-1000).

At the time of my misadventures, **Medi-Station Urgent Care Center** (9600 NE 2nd Ave., 305-603-7600) wasn't around; Dr. Carlos Sanchez and his wife, Kathy, the hardworking couple who run the comprehensive, affordable walk-in clinic, are actually just this month celebrating Medi-Station's fifth anniversary. And you're invited! On June 27 at 6:00 p.m., the fiesta includes food, music, gifts, and a raffle with prizes ranging from an iPad Mini to a first-aid kit. RSVP at Medi-Station's office when you come

Continued on page 22



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BizBuzz

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in for the free medical screenings being given June 22-27.

This month **Biscayne Dental Center** (14771 Biscayne Blvd., 305-945-7745) is also celebrating an anniversary, the practice's third year in business. But don't send a gift. Instead they're giving you three: 20 percent off any dental treatment, teeth whitening for just \$299, and \$600 off any orthodontic treatment, including Invisalign.

And **Leung Healthcare**, a multi-office practice that offers both medical and dental care, also has a June special offer for you: affordable teeth whitening and/or implants. Call or drop in to the dental office (16200 NE 13th Ave., 305-760-2950) for more details.

How we wish we'd known, 20 years ago, what the Miami-born family running **Busy Bee Car Wash** (10550 Biscayne Blvd., 305-891-5889) is telling you now: Summer's rain and intense heat can damage your car's finish badly. Rainwater doesn't clean; it contains sediments that hasten oxidation, rust, and corrosion. And not just people get sunburned. Cars do too! What helps are frequent car washes, which are entirely affordable, thanks to the Bee's Unlimited Wash plans.

June is also the month when, with school out for summer, you have to figure out what to do with the kids. How about sending them right back to school? Well, really, school summer camps, where learning is tempered by fun. At **Monsignor Edward Pace High School** (15600 NW 32nd Ave., 305-623-7223), camps, which begin June 9, are not limited to high school-age kids; the age range is 6-18. Camp programs are offered in both athletics and more academic/artsy-type enrichment: soccer, baseball, basketball, flag football, acting, drawing, writing, even a "geek week" for computer enthusiasts. Go to www.PaceHS.com for more info and registration.

Miami Shores Presbyterian Church School (9405 Park Dr.) has an unusually toddler-friendly summer camp June 2-August 1 for kids 18 months to second grade. Activities include music, arts and crafts, cooking, sports, water play, field trips, and more. Session run during the workweek and, also a boon for working parents, hours are 8:00 a.m. or 9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Reasonable daily, three-day, or five-day rates,

too. For info, contact Jessica Timmreck (305-759-2548).

For kids 7-10, the **Museum of Contemporary Art** (770 NE 125th St., 305-893-6211, www.mocamiami.org) is offering three differently themed summer camps: "Learn, Discover, Create: Building Blocks of Art," June 9-20; "Discover! Nature in Miami," July 14-25; and "Create! Imaginarium," July 28-August 8. For slightly older kids, MOCA has "Teen Summer Intensives": "Mocazine" (a journalism program, where kids publish a literary arts journal) June 16-July 11, and "Summer Studio," July 14-August 8.

At **Allison Academy** (1881 NE 164th St., 305-950-3922), summer school starts June 16. If you're seeking an inspiring, culturally diverse education for your kids, here's a description that founder Dr. Sarah F. Allison sent us of a recent luncheon designed to teach students how people in the Second and Third Worlds live. To summarize: First-world students (11% of the world's population) ate a nutritionally balanced meal with tasty choices (beef or chicken, risotto, mixed veggies, salad, chocolate cake or apple pie, choice of beverage) at tables with linen tablecloths, silverware, and glassware. Second Worlders (20%), at a plain table with benches, ate chicken followed by mostly starches plus cool water. Third Worlders (69%) ate rice, beans, and warm water from a paper bowl with one plastic spoon, and sat on the floor on newspaper. That's the kind of lesson that sticks, eh?

Also for kids, the Cartoon Network's "Move II Movement" tour comes to **The Village at Gulfstream Park** (501 S. Federal Hwy., Hallandale Beach) June 8, from noon to 4:00 p.m. The event offers a mindboggling array of phys ed fun: an obstacle race, the PGA of America driving range, a soccer shootout challenge, football running/passing drills, a timed basketball challenge (with prizes), and more. The tour is part of Cartoon Network's efforts to provide encouragement in the battle against childhood obesity.

If you've already lost that battle, **Jackson Health Care System** is offering free bariatric seminars at Jackson North (160 NW 170th St.) on June 5, and at Jackson South (9333 SW 152nd St.) on June 12. To learn about which specific surgery best suits you (gastric bypass, gastric banding, gastric sleeve), register for either seminar at JacksonCanHelp.org.

Writing about people exercising always makes us hungry, but also too tired to food shop — especially too tired to shop for

those who eat organic, which requires a lot of running around to find certified-organic stuff. The owning partners of **Farms to You** (305-677-9824, www.farmstoyou.com), Morten Due and Johnny Arroyo, have a more convenient concept: choose from four frequently changing, all-organic assortments (vegetable, fruit, fruit/veg, or juicing basket); choose your assortment's size; choose delivery time. Then their drivers bring your bounty to you. New: a selection of healthy grains that can accompany your produce order.

Summer's no time to sweat over a hot stove — and you'll spend almost no time at the stove if you provision yourself at new advertiser **Mr. Pasta** (9725 NE 2nd Ave., 305-751-4300). Whatever you choose from the huge variety of superb stuffed and plain homemade fresh pastas (sold frozen, but with no discernable decline in quality), two minutes in boiling water is all the cooking required. No sweat regarding sauces, either; the shop sells those. Note: Yes, this is a new location for the same Mr. Pasta whose original Miami Beach store has drawn foodies for many years, and from many miles away.

If you'd rather opt out of cooking totally, lovely light summer meals are served at new advertiser **La Crème de la Crêpe** (14881 Biscayne Blvd., 305-354-8882). With a menu including starters, soups, charcuterie/cheese plates, even a daily special entrée, the cute crêperie is almost more like a bistro. But don't miss the authentic Breton crêpes, savory ones made from buckwheat flour, sweet ones from white. Mention this issue's ad for 20% off your first meal.

At **Bagels & Company** (11064 Biscayne Blvd., 305-892-2435), David Cohen & Company have again extended their breakfast special: two eggs, home fries, bagel or toast, and coffee for \$3.99. Just remember to present this issue's ad coupon when ordering.

Have time for a quick drink? At new advertiser **Batch Gastropub** (30 SW 12th Ave., 305-808-5555), it'll come very quickly indeed, due to the place's unique concept: cocktails made from scratch with fresh ingredients, but pre-made, so they're on tap. If you'd like to wait for the blazing sun to set thoroughly before venturing out, last call is 3:00 a.m. Sunday-Thursday, 5:00 a.m. Friday-Saturday. And dinner (great gourmet bar bites) is served until midnight.

On Father's Day, June 15, **The Butcher Shop Beer Garden & Grill** (165 NW 23rd St., 305-846-9120) will be

offering a deal on the traditional man's meal: a terrific steak special dinner, featuring the Shop's USDA-certified Prime Black Angus — a grade given to only 3% of beef produced in the U.S., and rarely offered outside of the most fancy-schmancy steakhouses. There are new charcuterie/cheese plates priced nicely, too: three for \$15, five for \$25.

Joe Blair Garden Supply (320 NW 79th St., 305-757-5554), in business since 1928 so they know the territory, is offering two particularly appropriate specials for a season where rainfall gets the grass growing like weeds: discounted-for-dads Toro lawnmowers. The Personal Pace Recycler, whose automatic drive system senses and adapts to your walking speed, is \$379.95 and, for those with space constraints, a cleverly foldable Recycler with Smart Stow is just \$349.99.

At **Laurenzo's Italian Market** (16445 W. Dixie Hwy., 305-944-5052), David Laurenzo suggests that for Father's Day you gift the King of the Castle/Condo/Single-Family Home with the King of Cheeses: Millesimato Reggiano Parmigiano. He's laying in a large stock of this often hard-to-find but truly special specialty, made from the especially nourishing milk produced in the first 100 days after calving. Compared to regular Parm, it's milder, rounder, smoother — never pungent and aggressive — so though unbeatable grated on pastas, it's also an amazing table cheese.

Our friends at North Miami's **Whole Foods Market** (12150 Biscayne Blvd., 305-892-5500) send along news about a Whole Foods-sponsored entertainment opportunity you can enjoy without venturing from your couch: the popular food/wine/travel radio show "Eat This, Drink That, Go!" is now also a TV show, presented by Whole Foods. Featuring guests that are often from *BT* territory, the show debuts new episodes every Monday at 8:00 p.m. on ATT-U-verse TV and The Beach Channel.

Finally, looking ahead, please note the ad for **Luis Fernandez**, who is running for U.S. Congress as an Independent in District 24. You'll be seeing many more political ads as elections near, and while *BizBuzz* never tells readers who to vote for, we do urge you to vote — after researching candidates' positions first, which you can do in this case at luisfernandezforcongress.com.

*Something special coming up at your business? Send info to bizbuzz@biscaynetimes.com. For *BT* advertisers only.*

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A vibrant tropical outdoor space. In the background, a white building with a colorful sign that reads "HOTEL" in red, teal, pink, blue, and yellow letters. The scene is filled with lush greenery, including palm trees and various tropical plants. A swimming pool with a blue and white tiled border is visible in the foreground. The overall atmosphere is bright and sunny.

HOTEL

Private Spaces

By Sondra Schneider
Photos by Silvia Ros

When you make your home your own, when it pleases without pretension, that's *wabi-sabi*





Have you ever wondered if those glossy, picture-perfect interiors shown in most magazines are actually inhabited by humans? They appear to be stage sets rather than homes.

Homes are places in which real people eat dinner in front of the TV, sleep in beds without dozens of decorative throw pillows, kick off their shoes, and hardly ever put anything away as soon as they finish using it.

Among my personal interior-design pet peeves are photos of high-end kitchens. These gigantic spaces, easily the size of a one-bedroom apartment in a new Miami condo building, are always empty of anything to do with food preparation. At best, one perfectly placed lemon or an artfully arranged fruit bowl may grace the miles of otherwise empty countertops.

In these impossible kitchens, frying garlic or spilling gravy or leaving a tea kettle on the stove would be the equivalent of a capital offense. Does anyone live like that?

Why would someone covet a living room so ill-designed for use that only Elastic Man could reach from the sofa to the coffee table to put down a drink? Why have shelves of books with dust jackets made of paper that matches the décor? Is that supposed to make the residents look intelligent?

Do children or grandchildren ever visit or live in these spaces? Would they want to if their parents or grandparents were always yelling at them not to touch anything?

This lifeless, comfortless sterility is supposed to be aspirational. It's the "look" we're supposed to be inspired to achieve in our own homes. Older generations,

raised on a diet of shelter magazines whose raison d'être was selling expensive furnishings installed by expensive decorators, are still cool with this, as are the nouveau riche who always seem to equate money with elegance.

Younger, hipper generations and creative people of any age think it's boring, old-hat stuff, and it's totally off their radar. They prefer an approach to living spaces that better suits their vision of what really matters in their lives. While alternative decorating is hardly a new idea, it's an idea that never goes away.

During the last great global financial bubble, a movement called Post-Materialism developed in Japan and Europe. In terms of interior design, it fathered a flurry of magazines dedicated to showing informal photos of interiors in everyday use, off-beat living quarters,

1. Minimal small-scaled furniture and an openwork room divider make the living/dining area appear much larger than the actual size.

and furnishings that suited their owners' eccentricities.

In 2008, Nick Curry wrote in his blog for the *New York Times's T Magazine*: "What would a post-materialist interiors magazine be like? It would probably avoid glossy, catalog-like spreads and apartments that look like upscale hotels styled by celebrity designers. It would show more old stuff than new stuff, focus on dash rather than cash, put texture, personality, and patina above glitz, and aspire to

Continued on page 28



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Private Spaces

Continued from page 26

the possible rather than the impossible. There'd be glamour, but it would be the wabi-sabi charm of the much-loved and the well-used. Personality would trump pomp."

Take note of the Japanese term *wabi-sabi*, whose roots lie in Zen Buddhism. It's not a decorating style, but a mind-set that values the underplayed, the patina of age, and those possessions you so love to use that they become worn and a tad shabby.

In one of the many articles about Chatsworth, the grand ancestral seat of the Dukes of Devonshire, there was a photo of the current duke lying on a sofa in a palatial room, reading a book. The sofa is upholstered in red velvet so old and threadbare that most of the nap is long gone, but the duke seems perfectly content.

A *wabi-sabi* home may be chic or charming, but it is never in your face. *Wabi-sabi* inspires comfort and ease, but

never envy. It's casual and informal, but not sloppy or dirty. (You might be careful using this term with your kids. Messy rooms and unmade beds are not practicing the art of *wabi-sabi* living, even if the kids opt to interpret it that way.)

What *Biscayne Times* proposes to do with "Private Spaces" is bring this post-materialistic sensibility to Miami, a city obsessed with glittery façades. Every month we'll feature interesting people living in highly individual, everyday interiors. We will leave to other publications the gloss and glitz, the coldly impersonal, the celebrity designers in evening gowns.

We hope you'll find this concept as refreshing as we do. In fact, if you or someone you know seems to fit our profile, we'd welcome your suggestions for future columns, which will begin with the July issue. Send photos, tell us who you are, and we'll take it from there: sondra.schneider@biscaynetimes.com.

For openers, we are going to show you a house and a condo, both creatively reimagined to suit the lifestyles of their owners.

There are rare cases when a home is so special that walking into it is akin to visiting the inside of the owner's head. Before you even get through the front door of the abode that Michael Salmons created from a typical two-bedroom/one-bath Miami casita in Palm Grove, you get the full flavor of this artist/designer's personality.

Three years after moving to Miami and looking at about 20 properties, Michael found his house in the Upper Eastside. It took a designer's eye to recognize the good bones of the 1950s structure under the fake "hacienda" paint job and additions, but the spacious backyard, with its free-form pool and tiny guest cottage, clinched the deal. The entire renovation, both exterior and interior, took only three months, practically a speed record by

2. The kitchen is small but efficiently laid out for serious cooking. Note the chalkboard door next to the refrigerator — a perfect place to jot down a shopping list.

Miami's mañana standards.

The façade was cleaned up and a vertical brick panel was added to the side of the entrance to provide textural interest. New windows and a glass door were installed. Everything, both inside and out, was painted white.

Since the rooms are small and he owns a lot of paintings, books, and sculpture, Michael kept the furnishings minimal. In the living room, a wooden Swedish sleigh coffee table sits in front of a beautifully worn leather sofa on steel legs from Danish designer Poul Kjærholm.

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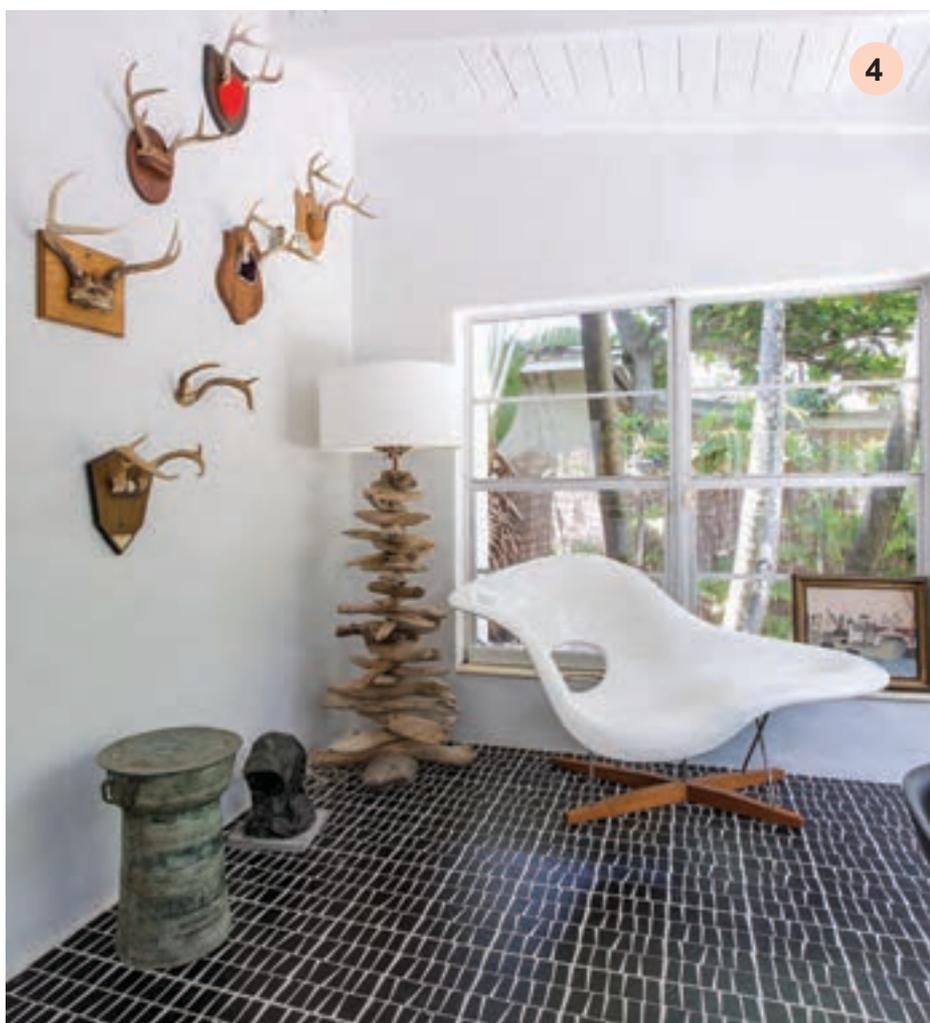


3

3. All the vintage softball catcher's masks over the sunroom table were found in an antique store.

4. In the sunroom, the rustic antlers and driftwood floor lamp create an interesting contrast with the sleek modern chair.

5. Michael's shelves hold a large collection of design books, which he often uses for reference.



4



5

BT photo by Jacqueline Doulis

Private Spaces

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A classic (it's still in production today) 1955 Tapiovaara wood slat chair in white completes the seating.

The sofa faces a long wall of shelves holding stacks of books, a flat-screen TV, and various sculptures. As shelves go, these are spectacular. They have the thickness and heft of an architectural element, but Michael, who designed them, claims they cost no more than Ikea ready-made shelf units.

The trick, he says, is to forgo Home Depot's offerings and have a carpenter make long, seamless, "hollow" shelves (like boxes) with interior braces to prevent warping. Paint them white and splurge on chrome store display-shelf hardware. (Feel free to copy this. It's a great idea.)

Michael is also a gifted cook who entertains frequently. While a good-looking kitchen was important to him, his biggest outlay went for top-of-the-line stainless steel appliances.

Continued on page 32



3 Bed/3 Bath 1,841 Sq.Ft.

FOR SALE \$975,000



Amazing direct East ocean front views in this 3 bed, 3 bath. Italian kitchen cabinets, stainless steel appliances, marble floors, & granite counter tops. Beautifully surrounded by the ocean! Beach club resort towel & cot service at the beach. With shopping, dining. Great for investors.

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3 Bed / 3 Bath 2,158 Sq.Ft.

FOR SALE \$2,799,000



Spectacular 3 bed, 3 bath direct bay unit with Downtown Miami skyline and Fisher Island views. Icon is a unique and contemporary residence condo in South Beach. This beautiful Philippe Starck creative unit has minimalist package with limestone floors in bathrooms and white cabinetry. The balcony is also 358 sq.Ft.

ICON South Beach
450 Alton Rd #903, Miami Beach

Rich Tallman 786-554-2353
Realtor Associate rich@laplaya-properties.com

FOR SALE \$319,900

1 Bed / 1 Bath 794 Sq.Ft.

Edgewater - Quantum on the Bay is one of the hottest buildings in Miami's Edgewater area. This spacious 1 bedroom / 1 bath unit has gorgeous Biscayne Bay views from the 36th floor that you have to see for yourself. Enjoy living in the heart of it all, with Margaret Pace Park as your backyard. This building has 2 pools, spa, gym, restaurant and movie theater.

Quantum on the Bay
1900 N Bayshore Dr #3610, Edgewater

Rich Tallman 786-554-2353
Realtor Associate rich@laplaya-properties.com



FOR SALE \$412,000

3 Bed / 3 Bath 1,909 Sq.Ft.

Beautiful one of a kind 3 bed, 3 bath, Barcelona model located in Cascada Isles of Monterra. Upgrades all throughout the home including double insulated impact windows, upgraded stainless steel appliances. Counter depth built in refrigerator w/water & ice dispenser. Wainscot on main floor & upgraded tiles. Recessed lighting, crown molding, stone back splash espresso wood cabinets & spacious kitchen. Immaculate home w/amazing view of a lake. Oversized 2 car garage with full paved drive way.

Cascada Isles at Monterra

3061 Tortola Way, Cooper City
Marc Ruehle 786-514-7080
Realtor Associate marciamiarealtor@gmail.com



1 Bed / 1 Bath 663 Sq.Ft.

FOR SALE \$260,000



Edgewater - Amazing Miami Beach skyline and bay views in this 1 bed, 1 bath. Modern kitchen, stainless steel appliances, cherry laminated wood floors, granite counter-tops and carpet in bedrooms. Building offers gym, pool and social room. No pets.

23 Biscayne
601 NE 23 ST #901, Edgewater

Linette Guerra 305-915-0148
Managing Broker laplayamiami@yahoo.com

3 Bed / 2 Bath 1,792 Sq.Ft.

FOR SALE \$825,000



Amazing 3 bed, 2 bath SE corner unit with direct views of Biscayne Bay through Key Biscayne. Built by Florida's most prized developer & designed by Arquitectonica. Walking distance to American Airlines Arena and the Pérez Art Museum. Amenities include world class fitness & business center, bayfront dining, pool & concierge.

One Miami West
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FOR SALE \$449,000

2 Bed / 2.5 Bath 1,355 Sq.Ft

Edgewater - Amazing Townhome - 3 Story, 2.5 bath with huge open space on the lower 1st level. Located in the heart of the city of Miami, minutes away from Midtown, Downtown, Beaches, fine restaurants. Beautiful garden views. Building offers gym, pool and a social room.

23 Biscayne
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Rich Tallman 786-554-2353
Realtor Associate rich@laplaya-properties.com



FOR SALE \$265,000

1 Bed / 1 Bath 724 Sq.Ft.

Edgewater - The views from this 1 Bed, 1 Bath unit of Downtown Miami skylines are simply Amazing. Modern kitchen, stainless steel appliances, cherry laminate wood floors, granite countertops and berber carpet in bedrooms. 23 Biscayne amenities include a full gym, covered secure parking, a swimming pool and more. Absolutely a must see, this won't last for long!

23 Biscayne
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LA PLAYA
P R O P E R T I E S

Private Spaces

Continued from page 30

For the cabinets, he chose simple stock white Ikea, white subway tile for the walls, and tiny, ceramic honeycomb tiles for the floor. It looks very high-end — another example of flair over money. The kitchen is open to a small dining area, and off that is one of the most charmingly creative rooms in the house, an airy sun room overlooking the garden.

An antique French farm table on iron legs supplements the Saarinen tulip table in the dining area for large dinner parties. A thin wall between the windows over the table displays a collection of antique softball catcher's masks that look more like scary sculptures than headgear.

At one end, the iconic 1948 Eames chair, "La Chaise," sits next to a floor lamp Michael built from a pile of driftwood pieces he collected on Costa Rican beaches. The wall next to it is hung with a witty collection of tiny antlers mounted on wood. The flooring that ties all these disparate elements together is a strong geometric pattern in black and white Italian tiles.

In most of the homes of this vintage, a long hallway opening off the living room leads to the sleeping quarters. Typically there is a bedroom at each end and a bath in the middle, and it's a dark and dreary space.

Michael's solution is a showstopper. He papered the hallway with overlapping stripes of varied widths in brightly colored duct tape. (This is another great idea to copy.)

The master bedroom is further example of mixing old and new with great finesse. A 19th-century apothecary chest with marvelous patina sits beneath the garden-facing windows. The deep sill of the high windows over the bed display one of Michael's recent sculptures, a pastiche of painted cut-metal forms suspended in an open wood frame.

The bed is covered with a heavily embroidered Indian throw studded with tiny mirrors. A new, modern nightstand topped by a vintage 1970s cowhide lamp sits next to the bed.

In this room, the stark white of the house is softened. The wall behind the



bed is painted a dusty gray, and the other walls in creamy white, a palette that creates a sense of calm and serenity.

A frosted glass door emblazoned "WC" in bold scarlet letters opens into the all-white bathroom. The toilet and sink were chosen for their sculptural forms. To add visual interest, the walls of the open shower and the adjoining wall are paved with sculpted tiles.

In the smaller second bedroom, old and new are also combined. The brilliant

turquoise metal night tables from CB2 are new, but the wood lamps atop them are antique. The acquisition of the lamps is one of Michael's favorite stories.

He first saw them at a flea market in Paris and really, really wanted them, but the dealer was asking \$10,000 for the pair. Some years later, he spotted an identical pair of lamps in an antique store in St. Louis, his hometown. After a bit of dickering, he bought them for \$50, plus the cost of new shades.

6. It took seven hours of intense labor to paper the hall with multi-colored duct tape stripes.

7. An openwork panel was added to the façade to shield the large living room window from the street.

The large outdoor space that helped sell him the house also has its share of creative thinking. A glass door from the sun room leads to a deck with two comfortable chairs and a table.

A couple of steps down, the patio that surrounds the pool has an umbrella table and chairs for outdoor dining. On the other side of the pool, the roof of the guest cottage sports a sign saying "HOTEL" spelled out in letters of varying sizes, colors, and fonts. Michael illuminated these mostly antique letters with tiny bulbs in order to have "HOTEL" reflected in the pool at night.

At the back end of the deep lot, he hung a mirrored disco ball and added more seating. Wire sculptures that move in the breeze adorn tree branches. It's as much an art installation as a garden, and lends itself perfectly to the large theme parties Michael likes to host.

Continued on page 34

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Private Spaces

Continued from page 32

When the well-known Miami architect Allan Shulman bought his Upper Eastside condo, he was single with one dependent, an oddly colored cat aptly named Picasso.

The apartment was in an older building and had once been joined to the apartment below by means of a spiral staircase. The owner had separated the units, patched up the big open circle in the old-style parquet floor and rehabbed the kitchen, albeit with typical builder's cabinets and appliances.

The bathrooms, while modernized, were also far from luxurious, and the entire living area was done up with traditional

baseboard, dado and cornice moldings.

Since Allan's aesthetic ran to natural materials like wood, stone, and concrete, he might have passed on the sale had he not been an experienced architect. The average buyer probably would have thought the apartment was a total gut job, but Allan saw the potential to remake the unit to suit his taste without such drastic measures.

He kept what he considered not important enough to change (the kitchen, the baths, and even the funky wood floor) but pulled off all the wall coverings to expose the concrete behind them.

To separate the bedrooms from the living areas, he designed a movable wall — a series of wide wood vanes set on pivots that could open or close completely. Furnished with original mid-century modern, the apartment

changed identity, becoming the perfect, cool bachelor pad.

Then life intervened, as it always does.

Allan met and married Rebecca, a retired opera diva who had just moved to Miami from New York. Had Rebecca been a chintz-and-flowers girl, there would have been a major problem. Fortunately, among the many things they shared was the same taste in home furnishings. For the most part, Rebecca's belongings (a couple of which she admits to rescuing from the sidewalk on trash day in New York) slotted neatly into Allan's apartment.

Rebecca and Allan have worked together since their marriage, using one of their two bedrooms as a library/home office. Then, a few years ago, their daughter Lara arrived and everything changed. "Being an architect and wanting to design our surroundings" says

8. The Shulmans at work in their living room.

Allan, "I still had to recognize that we are a real family and life introduces complexity."

The first casualty was the gorgeous movable wood wall, an invitation to disaster for a small child. A track was installed on the floor to fix the closed vanes in place, leaving a door into each bedroom.

Their library/office became the baby's room, and all the multitude of paraphernalia that always accompanies a child was set cheek-by-jowl next to the classic mid-century furniture.

The shelves that held books were given over to toys, and all the books and papers

Continued on page 36

KIMBERLY O'MAHONY PRESENTS
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585 NE 58TH STREET

Award-winning historic home featured in HGTV and numerous design mags. Stunning Craftsman-Style Estate Home and Guest Residence flawlessly restored and upgraded on large corner lot. Formal in stature yet comfortable in function, all systems modernized while original charm is untouched. Unique tile patterns throughout. Fireplace is art showpiece. Oak flooring, volume tray ceilings, huge rooms, Art Deco gourmet kitchen taken to the top level, pristine original baths, master w/private balcony. 2-car garage.

\$1,790,000



790 NE 72ND STREET

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1965 NE 117TH ROAD

Spectacular waterfront modern home in guard-gated Sans Souci. Only 3 houses off the wide bay and done to perfection. Enter into great room with high ceilings, wood floors, lots of windows (impact) unite interior with glistening water views. High-end features and finishes throughout, wood/granite open kitchen with Subzero/top-of-the-line appliances, marble baths, Marbella pool area with cabana bath, dock. True open Florida feel.... Don't miss this beauty. **\$1,695,000**



1240 NORTH BISCAYNE POINT ROAD

Spacious and airy split-level Mid-Century, stylish 4/3 home with maid's room with many updates on oversized lot with pool in guard-gated Miami Beach neighborhood. Unique Fifties style, open spaces, open renovated kitchen, large family room with doors open to pool, split floor plan, Cuban tile and wood flooring, huge upstairs master suite, 1-car garage. Move-in condition and amazing potential to be a show stopper as well. Lots of land, private backyard and pool. A great and rare find in Miami Beach! **\$749,000**



2152 NE 122ND ROAD

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1148 NE 105TH STREET

Fantastic waterfront opportunity in Miami Shores! Recently upgraded waterfront bungalow on large lot in quiet location. This home is a 2/2 with the square footage of a 3-bedroom and plenty of room to expand. Upgrades include newer windows, tile floor, new kitchen with granite counters, updated baths, newer roof. One of the larger waterfront lots. Fantastic swimming pool and plenty of green space. One bridge to bay allows for smaller boats, jet skis to have direct ocean access.

\$799,000



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Private Spaces

Continued from page 34

ended up in the living room and master bedroom. Even Picasso, who regarded the open vanes of the wall as a kind of cat slalom course, adjusted to the change.

Since Rebecca is an avid reader who tears through a book faster than most people chew a stick of gum, there are books in piles on every surface, including the dining table, which needs to be cleared to serve dinner every night.

Architecture is still a paper-based business, so the papers Allan carries home from the office join the books, along with the student papers he reviews as associate professor of architecture at the University of Miami, and the research papers he's using for his next book on architecture.

A space that was designed for a guy and a cat is now being lived in by a family, but they've made it work. The minimal open look may be gone but it's been replaced by the clutter of people leading active and interesting lives. Picasso has gone to cat heaven, but a couple of new kittens have moved in.

The Shulmans still love their apartment and the ease of condo living, but their need for more space and an outdoor play area for Lara has driven them to buy a house. They wanted to stay in the MiMo neighborhood, and after a lot of property hunting, they recently settled on a 1940s Shorecrest home sited on a huge lot with magnificent old trees. Allan is already at work designing the necessary alterations. Will it be a glossy showplace like so many of the houses his firm has designed for clients? Probably not.

In Rebecca's view: "We are focused on private life and quality of life for ourselves rather than thinking of our space as an extension of our professional lives or some kind of validation thereof."

Allan agrees completely. "People really do *live* in Miami," he says. "We lead very busy lives and we need to find

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10

9. A central seating arrangement allows space for Lara to ride her scooter around the apartment.

10. Lara's bright bedroom was the former study/office. The walls of bookshelves are now in the master bedroom.



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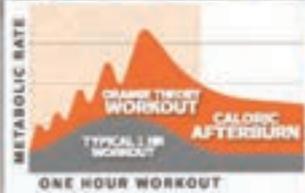
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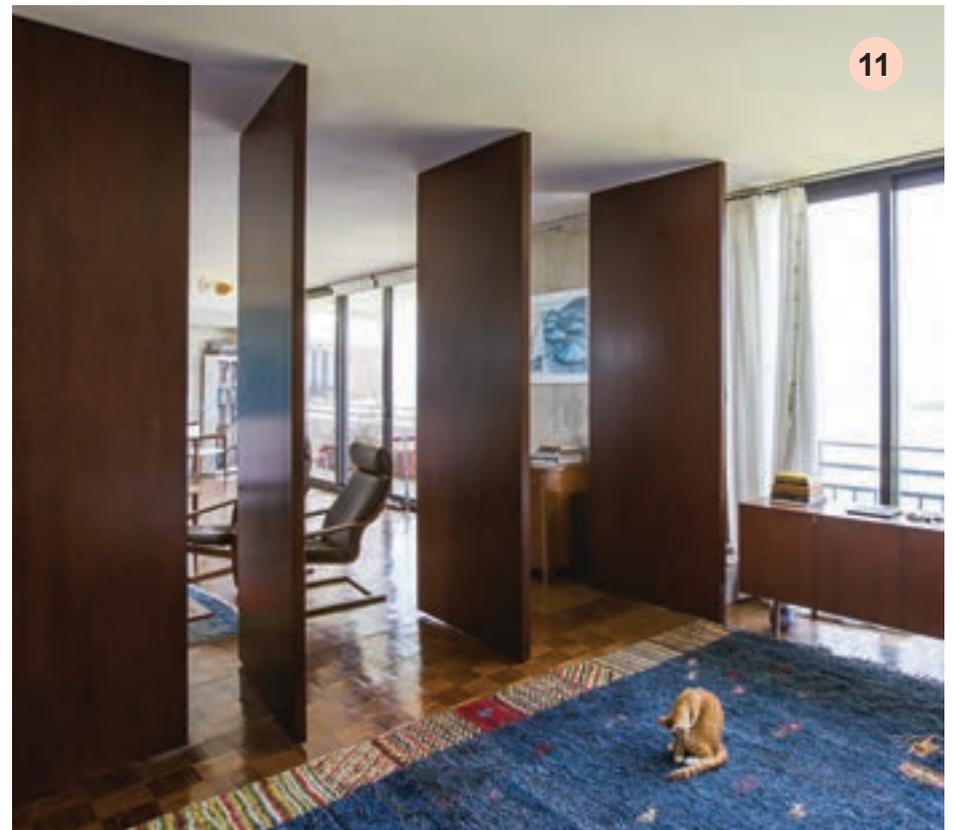
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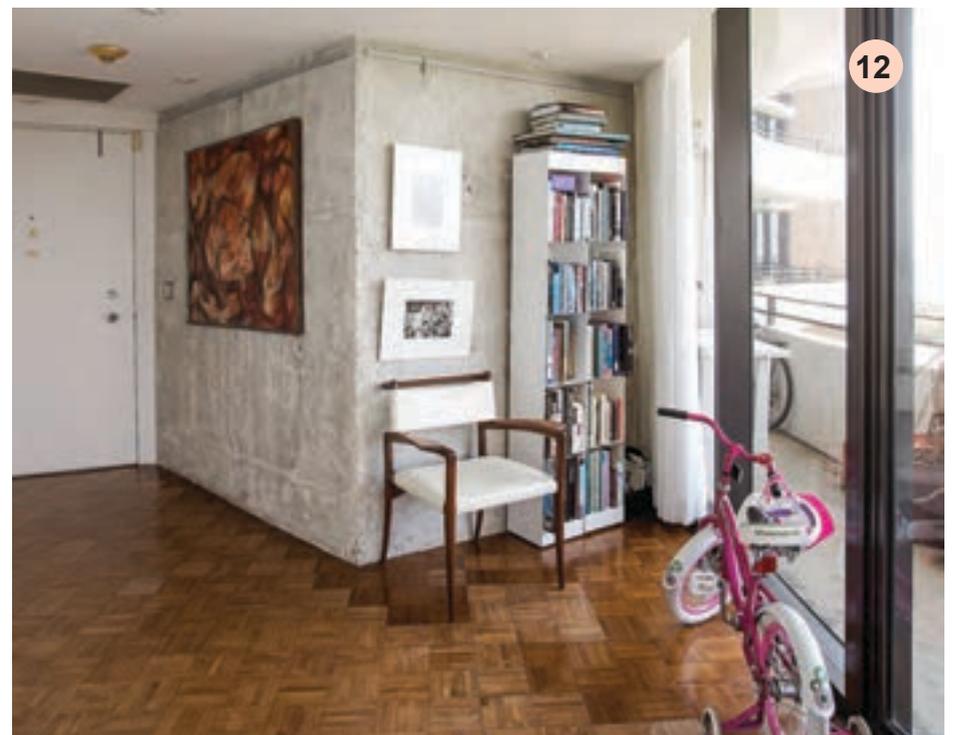
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11



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Private Spaces

Continued from page 36

a balance between mess and sterility.”

Meanwhile, they have no intention of selling their apartment. They will likely try to rent it just in case home ownership isn't their cup of tea. Besides, they can't bear to give it up.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

11. While the central vanes are fixed in place, the end vanes will open to allow views through to the bedrooms.

12. A raw concrete wall in the entry sets the wood, glass, and concrete motif of the apartment.

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\$298,000 **Wide Bay and Sunny Isles Beach Skyline Views**



Actual View

TOWNHOUSE \$699,000
POINCIANA ISLAND

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- Water Views
- Boat Dock Included



CONDOMINIUM \$180,000
EASTERN SHORES

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NORTH MIAMI BEACH
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Great Opportunity - 2 bedroom 2 bath TOTALLY REMODELED - best wide-bay views in Eastern Shores. Kitchen w/wood cabinets and black granite countertops, SS appliances. Washer/Dryer in Unit. Marble floors thru-out. *Direct on the Intracoastal*

CONDOMINIUM \$169,000
EASTERN SHORES

- 2 Bedroom 2 Bath
- 1,085 SQ FT
- Water Views
- 55 and older



\$425,000

Actual View

Approx 1,400 SQ FT



NORTH MIAMI BEACH
EASTERN SHORES / 2 BR 2 BTH

Fantastic direct Intracoastal water views from this totally updated penthouse corner unit located in the guard-gated community of Eastern Shores. 3 assigned parking spaces in covered underground garage. Just minutes to the beaches in Sunny Isles.

Actual View **\$288,000**

30 FT BOAT DOCK SPACE INCLUDED



NORTH MIAMI BEACH
EASTERN SHORES / 2 BR 2 BTH

Smack on Intracoastal - Beautiful water views from updated unit. Kitchen, Bathrooms and Living room all redone. 30 FT boat dock space included. Direct Ocean Access, No fixed bridges to Haulover Inlet. Walk to Shopping, Movies & waterfront dining.

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They Built It, and Yes, People Are Coming

A new center for architecture and design is energizing downtown Miami

By Helen Hill
Special to the BT

On a recent Thursday evening, the usual after-business quiet permeated most of downtown. But at 100 NE 1st Ave., in the city's very heart, the Miami Center for Architecture & Design (MCAD) was abuzz. Inside the historic building, which once housed the city's post office and courthouse, an audience of professionals, students, and interested residents gathered for the latest in the center's "Urban Design" lecture series. Tonight's speaker, architect Bernard Zyscovich, would address "Real Urbanism: How Cities Work."

The evening's gathering was typical of the vibe MCAD has brought to downtown's cultural life since the center opened this past December. Housed in a Miami landmark, MCAD serves as headquarters of the Miami chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA), which is also the center's sponsor, and offers events and lectures, meeting space for professional groups and

organizations, and exhibits related to architecture and design. MCAD programs are helping to refocus downtown's after-hours activity westward from the residential east side.

"Our attendance ranges from 25 to 300," says Cheryl Jacobs, executive vice president of the AIA Miami chapter. "We estimate that about 4000 people have come through our doors in the past four months."

MCAD also houses the Downtown Miami Visitors Center in partnership with the Downtown Development Authority (DDA). The presence of the Visitors Center, aimed at tourists, reinforces the DDA's long relationship with AIA Miami. The Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Greater Miami Hospitality Association also partner with MCAD.

Alyce Robertson, executive director of the DDA, recalls that she'd been impressed during visits to AIA centers around the country. "I thought it would

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The Miami Center for Architecture and Design is in the heart of downtown.



A striking, cantilevered staircase of raw steel plates connects the first and second floors.

Photos by Robin Hill

It Takes a Village to Catch a Thief

A local resident detains a suspected burglar, but the cops take the credit

By Erik Bojnansky
BT Senior Writer

Nextdoor.com is a social-media platform created by Silicon Valley venture capitalists in 2010. Its purpose is to allow neighborhood residents to share information about garage sales, contractors, and parties. But neighbors and the police often use Nextdoor to communicate about criminal activity occurring in the community.

On May 1, the Nextdoor network for El Portal was abuzz about the apprehension that day of a prolific burglar. Corp. Manuel Casais of the El Portal Police Department posted that the alleged perpetrator was

busted thanks to cooperation among the sworn officers of the Miami Shores, El Portal, and Biscayne Park police departments.

"The subject was apprehended by the K-9 officer, his K-9 [police dog], and additional officers in that immediate section of the perimeter," wrote Casais. "The final briefing advises that there was only one subject, and the individual is in custody, therefore the items taken were able to be recovered, processed, and returned to the owner. Outstanding Multi-Agency Collaboration!!!"

Compliments to the police flowed in. "Wonderful work! Word will be out on the street that El Portal and Miami Shores is NOT the place to steal. You



Burglary suspect Eli Binder: Who should get credit for taking him down — cops or a brave civilian?

WILL get caught!" wrote one resident.

"Awesome work!" declared another. "I am hoping that with your continued diligent work, El Portal and Miami Shores

continues to develop a reputation for being TOUGH ON CRIME!"

The arrest even got publicity in a May 8 newsletter from Miami Shores Vice Mayor Jesse Walters, who thanked the MSPD "for their diligent work in capturing the serial burglar."

But Casais left out a detail, revealed on Nextdoor by an El Portal homeowner: "A BIG THANK YOU to the resident who played a major role in capturing the burglar by Macing and tackling the subject to the ground. Although this individual would like to remain anonymous, I feel it's important to share the courageous actions of this individual. THANK YOU!"

The homeowner who Maced the alleged burglar (but didn't literally tackle him) is still apprehensive about the lime-light. But his wife believes he should get some credit. "I just thought it was really rude to not even mention that a courageous citizen [helped catch the burglar],"

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Miami-Dade County Corrections

Out of the Slump and Into the Future

The Biscayne Corridor in Miami is undergoing big changes — and fast

By Erik Bojnansky
BT Senior Writer

The development slump is over. Banks are lending again, cautiously, and property owners are once again flooding Miami City Commission agendas with applications for zoning changes across the Magic City.

Brickell, downtown Miami, and the Design District are fueling much of the momentum. Yet that energy is also flowing outward. In this story, we update six areas along the Biscayne Corridor in Miami.

Edgewater More than ten condominiums totaling 2400 residences have been completed, are under construction, or are slated to break ground in Edgewater, according to real estate analyst Peter Zalewski in an April column for *The Real Deal* real estate news website. In this old neighborhood, the small apartments and single-family homes are being rapidly replaced by high-rises.

It's within this 19-block area that Russian mining oligarch Oleg Baybakov sank \$40 million buying a mere 2.7 acres of land. Most of his land was acquired within a three-month period and lies east of NE 5th Avenue between NE 26th Terrace and 26th Street. It includes a 12-story, 58-unit apartment complex on the bay built in 1982; a 35,000-square-foot vacant lot; a 7000-square-foot single-family home built in 1932; and three apartment buildings developed between 1926 and 1961 that house 32 residences.

But Baybakov isn't finished. The *Real Deal* also reports that he bought two parcels just west of NE 5th Avenue on May 15 from a Bay Harbor Islands-based company owned by Israel Kopel for \$1.4 million. In 2003, Kopel bought the properties (consisting of a vacant lot and a nine-unit apartment building) for \$576,000, according to the *Real Deal*.

Baybakov hasn't announced plans for his growing fiefdom. Coral Gables attorney Steven Cronig, the registered agent for Baybakov's Miami-based company, didn't return phone calls or respond to a BT e-mail inviting comment. The zoning on most of Baybakov's land allows for a

high-rise as tall as 36-stories. The 12-story bayfront apartment building on his land was going to be the site of the proposed 39-story MBay tower.

Baybakov used to be an executive of Norilsk Nickel, one of the largest producers of nickel and palladium in the world. According to media reports, he is now president of GSC City, a construction and consulting firm in Moscow. His 28-year-old daughter, Maria Baibakova, who has two master's degrees, is a major collector and supporter of the contemporary art scenes in Moscow, London, and Brooklyn. She has been called "the lieutenant" of Mikhail Prokhorov, a six-foot-seven-inch oligarch with a net worth of \$10.8 billion, according to a 2010 *New Yorker* article.

Prokhorov, principal owner of the Brooklyn Nets, reportedly plans to run a second time against Vladimir Putin for the Russian presidency, and once owned most of Baybakov's former company, Norilsk Nickel, the investment fund ONEXIM group, and large stakes in various other Russian companies. (Baybakov has been mentioned in press reports as a minority owner of the Nets.)

Baybakov, who dabbled in real estate investment in New York, isn't the only Russian who has taken a liking to Miami-Dade. Eastern Miami-Dade county is a popular destination for middle-class and wealthy Russians.

In April the English-language *Moscow Times* and CBS 4 reported on the burgeoning travel industry for expectant Russian mothers who want to give birth in Miami. They like the weather, the medical care, and the prospect of dual American-Russian



Baybakov paid about twice market value.



BT photo by Erik Bojnansky

Edgewater, the booming neighborhood where Russian oligarch Oleg Baybakov sank \$40 million.



BT photo by Erik Bojnansky

Baybakov bought this 58-unit apartment building and a block of property behind it.



BT photo by Silvia Ros

Midtown Opportunities is putting up for sale more than 18 acres of prime property.

inside or near Midtown Miami, a 56-acre, pedestrian-friendly, planned development near Wynwood.

Deborah Samuel, Midtown Opportunities' representative and wife of Midtown Miami's original developer, Michael Samuel, confirms that Vadia is hoping to take advantage of Miami's rapidly heating real estate market. "He's into urbanism. He loves Midtown," Samuel says, but "like any smart business person," he wants to exploit current conditions in the market.

citizenship for their babies.

Real estate agent Selda Kirkan, who specializes in working with Russians, says most of them prefer buying condos in Sunny Isles Beach and Miami Beach. Brickell and downtown Miami are also popular destinations for Russians, but it's tricky to build anything there. "There is no land left in Brickell," she says.

But there's still room in Edgewater, and Baybakov has picked himself a good spot. "It's a water location," she tells the BT. "It's a good investment."

That investment came at a cost. According to Zalewski, Baybakov paid twice the market value for his Edgewater properties. His willingness to pay more is driving up land prices in Edgewater and beyond, he says.

Midtown Miami Midtown Opportunities, a real estate fund headed by 29-year-old Alex Vadia, is actively marketing the 18.5 acres of land it owns

Toward that end, CBRE, a global real estate firm, is aggressively marketing the property as the "800-pound gorilla." Gerard Yetming, senior vice president of CBRE, claims there's lots of interest in the gorilla. "The phones are ringing off the hook," he declares. The buyer, he insists, "will be able to control the future development of over 3000 units in one fell swoop."

Vadia's Midtown Opportunities bought 22 acres of undeveloped land, including 7.3 acres of land just east of Midtown Miami (the former Chiquita Banana distribution site along NE 2nd Avenue), for about \$62 million in December 2011. The sellers were Joe and Jack Cayre, a father-and-son development team who partnered with Michael Samuel to acquire the old Buena Vista Rail Yard for \$35 million in 2002. Within a year, they sold the western portion of the land to DDR Corp. for \$35 million.

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Out of the Slump

Continued from page 41

DDR Corp. proceeded to build the Shops at Midtown Miami on its side of the property, while the Cayres (Samuel soon sold his interest) went about building some 900 residential units and 775,000 square feet of retail on their side. Most of those units are now owned by other individuals and investors. (For more on Midtown Miami's history, see "Like a Rocket" April 2012.)

Midtown Opportunities has already sold off some of the land it bought from the Cayres. Jorge Pérez and Stephen Ross bought a vacant lot near 3301 NE 1st Ave. for \$12.1 million where they plan to build a 31-story condo hotel called Hyde Midtown. Chicago-based Magellan Development Group bought a second lot at 3201 NE 1st Ave. for an undisclosed price on February 11, with plans to build a 24-story apartment building.

What remains within Midtown Miami are 11.2 acres of vacant land spread over five sites, where as many as 2240 residential units could be built, according to CBRE's marketing material. Another 1089 units can be built on the 7.3 acre Chiquita site, located just east of the real road tracks at NE 29th Street.

Midtown Opportunities doesn't intend to sell *all* the land it owns in Midtown Miami, Deborah Samuel says. The company still plans to build a 16,000-square-foot, linear group of retail spaces designed by architect Bernard Zyscovich along Midtown Boulevard as a means of buffering the rest of the community from the controversial, 203,000-square-foot Walmart that will be built at 3055 N. Miami Ave.

Allegro Life Unlike Edgewater and Midtown Miami, the MiMo Biscayne Boulevard Historic District isn't zoned for high-rises. It isn't even zoned for mid-rises. Bowing to the concerns of Upper Eastsiders who feared their neighborhoods would be destroyed by developers, Miami Commissioner Marc Sarnoff demanded a 35-foot height limit be placed on new buildings along the

Boulevard in exchange for his support for a new citywide zoning code. When Miami 21 was finally enacted in 2010, so was the height limit.

Property owners claimed the height limit would crush development. However, that hasn't proven to be the case. Instead, modest new retail projects are being proposed while an increasing number of motels are being renovated.

"I think it's very up-and-coming, and it has been up-and-coming for at least a year and a half," says Todd Leoni, whose properties in the district include the recently opened Taperia Raca restaurant



Allegro Life, a ten-unit condo in the Upper Eastside, got in before new zoning took effect.

at 7010 Biscayne Blvd. and the newly renovated Hotel MiMo at 7126 Biscayne Blvd. "I think eventually it'll become something similar to Lincoln Road."

Walter and Shirley Figueroa were among the pioneers. They invested more than a million dollars to renovate the Davis Motel at 6500 Biscayne Blvd. It reopened as the New Yorker Hotel in 2010.

Avra Jain claims it was the New Yorker that inspired her to renovate motels along the Boulevard. So far she owns five historic motels and a 1970s-era office building. Tony Ulloa, a broker with Keyes Commercial Real Estate, says he's working on as many as 20 potential deals for Jain in the Upper Eastside and neighboring Little Haiti. (For more on the New Yorker and Jain's impact on the Boulevard, see "Checking In, Checking Out," January 2013; and "Rebuilding the Boulevard," March 2014.)

But the 35-foot height limit has no effect on properties that don't front Biscayne Boulevard. Allegro Life, a six-story, ten-unit condominium, is being built just outside the MiMo zone on a 7260-square-foot lot just behind the New Yorker Hotel's pool deck. Once complete, the condo will be the tallest structure on this block of two-story apartments and single-family homes.

Allegro Life's developer is Augusto Franchino, a partner in the Argentine company Red Group Life, which develops or promotes real estate projects in Miami, New York, and Buenos Aires.



The sale hasn't closed yet, but it looks like the Little Farm Trailer Park will soon be history.

BT photo by Silvia Ros



Motel Blu, formerly the Gold Dust Motel, has new owners and a new lease on life.

Franchino bought the property at 569 NE 66th St. from Kay Maunsbach of Miami Beach for \$160,000 in November 2011.

Among the amenities touted in an online brochure is on-site parking and proximity to Legion Park, the Design District, American Airlines Arena, Bay-side Marketplace, and Miami Beach.

Bob Powers, president of the Palm Grove Homeowners Association, says buildings as tall as Allegro Life won't be allowed under revised zoning codes governing future development on that block. Allegro managed to get an extra floor

from the city after it agreed to provide parking on the ground floor, Powers says. Those rights were vested when the city issued a special permit in 2008. "They [Maunsbach and Franchino] kept paying their permit fees," Powers explains, "and as long as you can pay your fees, you can keep your original plans."

As a result, Powers says there's "nothing to fight" regarding Allegro Life. He also notes that the value of his own property, located across the street from Allegro, actually increased since the project broke ground. "I can't get mad at these people," Powers says. "They're building something they're allowed to do."

No one from Red Group Life returned phone calls by deadline.

Motel Blu Look up Ventura 77 LLC on Sunbiz.org, and only one name comes up: Orlando Valdes. Yet ask Orlando about his plans for the 68-room, 57-year-old Motel Blu at 7700 Biscayne Blvd., and he defers to his wife, Gladys.

"She's the one doing the work and the decorating and all that kind of stuff," Orlando says. He promises that Gladys will give the BT a call. She never does.

Fortunately, their broker, Tony Ulloa, has studied the property. "It took me a year to close on this deal," he says.

The Valdeses bought the Motel Blu in February from Pretish and Prieshe Patel. "They're going to basically renovate it completely and take it up to boutique hotel standards,"

Ulloa says. The first steps of the renovation, a roof replacement, began in mid-May.

This isn't the couple's first hotel. They owned the Delores and Eva Hotels on South Beach, selling them both in February for \$17.5 million. That same month, they bought the Cavalier South Beach for \$12.5 million and the Motel Blu for \$4.2 million. The Motel Blu is their first Miami hotel.

Motel Blu wasn't always the Motel Blu. In 1957 it was the Gold Dust Motel,

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Out of the Slump

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home to the Gold Dust Lounge, an after-hours club that operated in a basement-like space by the Little River. The Gold Dust used to serve up drinks and good jazz after the Playboy Club across the street closed for the night. The Playboy Club closed for good in 1983. An Advance Auto Parts store now stands where the club used to operate. The old Gold Dust Lounge, meanwhile, has been used as storage space for decades.

The motel has had its ups and downs. One of the partners of NYMI Enterprises, which bought the motel in 2003 for \$1.3 million, died of a heart attack while the building was undergoing renovations, Ulloa says.

From 2008 to 2012, Motel Blu was home to Kris Wessel's popular Red Light restaurant, which closed amid licensing problems, much to the dismay of many devoted diners.

Then there was the mysterious 1920s-era city easement that cut right through the property. "Nobody caught it for over 50 years,"

Ulloa says. But when its existence was discovered, the easement managed to slow down the sale until the city agreed to abandon it.

Besides fixing up the rooms and opening a new restaurant in Red Light's old space, Ulloa says, the new owners plan to reopen the Gold Dust Lounge.

And if things don't work out, they can always tear the place down. Motel Blu is located just outside the MiMo Historic District, so permission from the city's Historic and Environmental Preservation Board isn't necessary.

Not that demolition is in the current game plan. "No, no, no, no, no," Orlando Valdes tells the BT when asked if bulldozers will be visiting the motel soon. "We're not planning on doing any of that stuff. We plan to make it nicer, and maybe change the name."

Little Farm Just outside of Miami's borders, hidden behind a defunct



Precision Art Design + Construction

The vacant lot at Biscayne Boulevard and 87th Street will become the Biscayne Design Center.

supermarket at 8500 Biscayne Blvd. and nestled within the tiny hamlet of El Portal, is Little Farm, a 12-acre trailer park that's been there since the 1940s. About 1000 people call Little Farm home, the vast majority of whom are low-income individuals and families.

They may soon need to find another place to live.

Michael Goldstein, an environmental attorney, confirms that he's under

contract to buy Little Farm Trailer Park from Madison Capital, a New York financial company that foreclosed on the land last year. Part of the attraction, Goldstein admits, is the fact that it's undergoing environmental remediation for high levels of arsenic.

"We are always interested in environmentally challenged sites that are located in infill communities where restoration can benefit a community," Goldstein says. "We think that's the case here."

As previously reported in the April 2014 Biscayne Times article "Vanishing Breed," Madison Realty is seeking to sell the Little Farm for \$15 million. The current owner has also been working with the Village of El Portal to create zoning guidelines for a town center-type project with tree-lined streets, retail, mixed-income housing, and buildings between two and eight stories tall. Even without such guidelines, a developer can build retail buildings up to 50,000 square feet, as well as low-rise apartments,

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Architecture and Design

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be great if we could do that here." The Downtown Development Authority eventually gave MCAD a grant of \$40,000 to facilitate moving into a new facility.

Plans for an architecture center began after the national AIA convention was held in Miami Beach in 2010, when the chapter's net proceeds from the event were designated as seed money. A series of AIA Miami charrettes (design workshops) followed, exploring options and ideas for a center.

"We did a great deal of due diligence and looked all over the city for a suitable location," says John Forbes of Forbes Architects and Construction, an AIA Miami board member and the center's lead architect. "People on the AIA committee really stayed on the case."

The organization narrowed the search to either Coral Gables or downtown Miami. "We wanted to be part of the bigger city, in its cultural and historic heart, where we could have a civic presence," says Allan Shulman, principal of the architectural firm Shulman + Associates in Miami, who became MCAD's design architect.

Downtown won out. The chapter selected the 1912-vintage post office, the first major federal building in



Courtesy of HistoryMiami

The 1912 structure, designed by Wenderoth and Kiehnel, was the first major federal structure in Miami.



The bustling post office seen here in 1914.

Miami. Listed in the National Register of Historic Places in January 1989, it was designed by Oscar Wenderoth and Richard Kiehnel, who introduced the

Mediterranean Revival style here.

The masonry-and-steel structure, with its Spanish clay-tile roof and wide overhangs designed for the local climate, brought an impressive high style to a city of mostly wooden buildings. It was used as a courthouse, main post office, and office space until 1931, when the new U.S. courthouse opened at 300 NE 1st Ave. In 1937, the building was converted to a bank, the first savings and loan association chartered in the United States; and an L-shaped extension was added in 1947.

Old photographs capture the building's transition from a bustling post office lobby in the early days to a more somber financial workplace decades later. The bank maintained a branch office in the building until 1990. Later, that space was converted into conventional retail space with dropped ceilings, vinyl floor tiles, and alterations to the

original features. For various reasons, the building remained empty for ten years following the departure of an Office Depot store.

In 2000, developer Scott Robins, who'd helped revive Miami Beach's flagging Art Deco District, saw the potential of a downtown renaissance and bought the five-story, 35,455-square-foot property for \$1.65 million, according to Miami-Dade property records.

"I fell in love with the old post office," he says. "It was a beautiful building in a great location with special qualities. I said, 'Wow, I have to have it!'"

In 2012, Robins leased 5000 square feet on the first two floors to AIA Miami for its newly planned architectural center. "From my experience in Miami Beach," he tells the BT, "it's good to create an atmosphere and environment that makes a place special."

AIA Miami embarked on serious renovations with a budget of only \$350,000, fortified by in-kind donations of expertise, furniture, lighting, glass, carpet, wood floors, even hardware and audio-visual equipment. The chapter ultimately achieved the renovation for a remarkable \$60 per square foot.

"We couldn't restore the interior to its original, as it had already been changed in the 1930s, and our budget was limited," says Shulman. "But we could treat the remaining resources with respect."

Shulman decided to make the space contemporary in accordance with

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Catch a Thief

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says Jane Harper. “For the neighborhood, it might even be encouraging.”

Richard Harper, who has lived in El Portal with his wife for nearly a decade, is more modest. He points out that the police were already closing off streets as they looked for the burglar.

However, he agrees that they could have given more recognition (without disclosing names), not just for his efforts, but also for those of his neighbors who alerted police to the suspect’s movements. At least one homeowner chased the alleged burglar from his yard. “It was a combined effort,” he says.

Skeptical of police claims that the arrested man, 27-year-old Eli Binder, worked alone, Harper asked that *Biscayne Times* not reveal his name, or his wife’s, or his address. In accordance with his wishes, their names have been changed for this story.

His concern stems from a murder that occurred last year within the 256-acre village. In January 2013, 26-year-old Kori Clark was killed in a drive-by shooting. No arrests have been made.

Later that year, two armed men burglarized three homes in the Miami Shores-El Portal area in the span of six days. The spree stopped on September 4, when John Beaubrun of Miami Gardens was arrested by El Portal police.

Beaubrun was caught using one of the victim’s credit cards and charged with criminal use of a person’s identity and theft, but not armed robbery. As the *BT* noted at the time (“Two Villages Facing a Common Threat: Home Invasions,” October 2013): “He’s just the guy they caught using the stolen cards.” Harper points out that none of his accomplices was ever caught.

Police from both the El Portal and Miami Shores insist that crime is low in the area.

Miami Shores Police Chief Kevin Lystad says his municipality was once a favored target for burglars because the old-fashioned doors in some of the houses opened inward, making them easier to kick in. (Following Hurricane Andrew, new houses had to have doors that open outward, making them more resistant to high winds and burglars.) Nevertheless, 2013 had the lowest incidence of burglary since 1987. “As of right now,” Lystad explains, “we’re tracking 18 percent below last year.”

El Portal, meanwhile, has hardly any crime at all. “We haven’t had any home

invasions [this year],” says Casais, “and burglaries, we average maybe one a month. Things have been nice, quiet, and low-key.”

It was in the interest of continued safety, Casais says, that he didn’t post information about the neighbors’ participation in Binder’s apprehension. If civilians give credit to each other on Nextdoor.com, that’s fine, he adds, but “at the end of the day, the police department is not going to release information like that.”

The story, however, doesn’t end here.

Richard Harper and Miami Shores police have different accounts of how Eli Binder was ultimately taken down. Either way, he went to jail with bite marks on his right armpit.

Binder, whose last known address is near the Brownsville Metrorail Station, has had a long history with Miami Shores law enforcement.

In 1997, at the age of 11, he was arrested for purse-snatching, says Chief Lystad. He’s been arrested about six times in the Shores alone, according to police records. “He’s a career criminal, for lack of a better term,” Lystad says. “He’s a frequent customer of ours.”

Binder has tangled with Shores K-9 dogs, too. In 2006, he was walking down an alleyway, carrying a laptop computer and a pellet rifle with a scope, and jewelry in his pockets, items he’d burglarized from a Miami Shores house, according to MSPD reports. A Shores police officer spotted him and ordered him to stop. Instead he ran, jumping over at least two fences before hiding in some shrubbery. Jake the K-9 found Binder and lunged at him, biting him on the left knee.

Binder pleaded guilty to third-degree grand theft, armed burglary, burglary of an occupied structure, and attempted burglary of an unoccupied structure. He was sentenced to three years’ probation.

In 2009, Binder violated his probation and was sent to prison for five years. Soon after his release, the slender six-foot-one Binder — now with tattoos on his arms and neck — was back to burglarizing in the Shores. Besides having friends in the area, he had a girlfriend in El Portal, according to Lystad.

Lystad says his officers believe Binder had burglarized at least two houses in Miami Shores before breaking into another house on the morning of May 1. According to a police report written by Officer Zabelinsky (the reports use last names only), Binder pried open a lower awning window and this time managed to stuff three laptops into

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Catch a Thief

Continued from page 45

a black canvas bag and miscellaneous jewelry into his pockets while the alarm went off before dashing away.

When Binder saw the police, he dropped the bag and ran toward El Portal, according to police reports. He tried to hide in a shed, but the patriarch of the house spotted him.

“What are you doing in my storage room?” the neighbor asked, as recounted in the MSPD report.

“Police,” Binder replied as he walked away.

He ran into the Harpers’ yard, and that’s when the versions of his apprehension begin to diverge.

Harper says he spotted Binder hiding behind his wife’s car, grabbed a can of pepper spray, ran outside, and started yelling at him to get down on the ground. When Harper began to signal the cops by whistling, Binder tried to make a break for it but got stuck while trying to scale a fence. “He tried to jump my gate,” Harper recounts, “and got hung up over his belt and flipped upside down.” Harper says he “basically pulled him back by his pants.” He then sprayed Binder, “which neutralized him.”

When the cops cuffed the suspect, Harper remembers, they were fist-pumping and high-fiving. Then Harper went back to his kitchen to wash residual pepper spray off his face.

But in the Shores report version, it is Officer Castellanos and his canine partner, Ace, who accomplished the takedown.

Reports by Zabelinsky and a police officer named Rivera did acknowledge that Harper tussled with Binder, but state that it was Castellanos and Ace who apprehended Binder.

Castellanos’s report doesn’t mention Harper at all. Castellanos wrote that Ace guided him to Harper’s yard: “I ordered Binder to stay on the ground or I would release my dog. Binder continued to try and get up, at which point K9 Ace apprehended Binder underneath his right armpit. I called K9 Ace off Binder and he was taken into custody by Officer Vickers without further incident.”

“It’s completely false,” Harper asserts. “The guy was hanging off the fence when the police dog came.”

Says Chief Lystad: “He must have broken free. Otherwise the K9 wouldn’t get involved.”

Later that day, Lystad did shake Harper’s hand for his help in apprehending Binder. A Channel 7 news crew tried to interview Harper, but he declined.

Harper may dispute the accuracy of Castellanos’s report, but he’s also hesitant to challenge the Shores version of events: “You know, if he [Castellanos] feels better saying he apprehended the guy, I don’t mind if he gets the credit. I don’t need any credit for that.”

Binder faces charges of burglary of an occupied dwelling, grand theft in the third degree, resisting an officer with violence, and trespassing. He was scheduled to be arraigned June 2. His court-appointed attorney, Ashley Askari, declined comment.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

Out of the Slump

Continued from page 44

under current zoning regulations.

Thanks to the increase of development along Miami’s Biscayne Corridor, Goldstein is sure he can transform Little Farm into an economic asset for El

Portal and the surrounding community. “We think we can resolve the environmental issues [on site] and create better and more sustainable affordable housing,” he says. “We also want to create more jobs and activate that part of the corridor in a very interesting and catalytic way that will result in even more

investments from private enterprise.”

But Goldstein hasn’t bought the land yet. The attorney suspects it’ll be another two months before any deal is closed.

“I don’t know if he’s representing a larger group of people, in terms of being developers,” says El Portal Councilman Adam Gold.

If a deal is signed, affordable housing will only be a portion of the total project, Goldstein says. As a result, there may not be enough affordable units to provide housing for all of Little Farm’s residents, some of whom are at risk of

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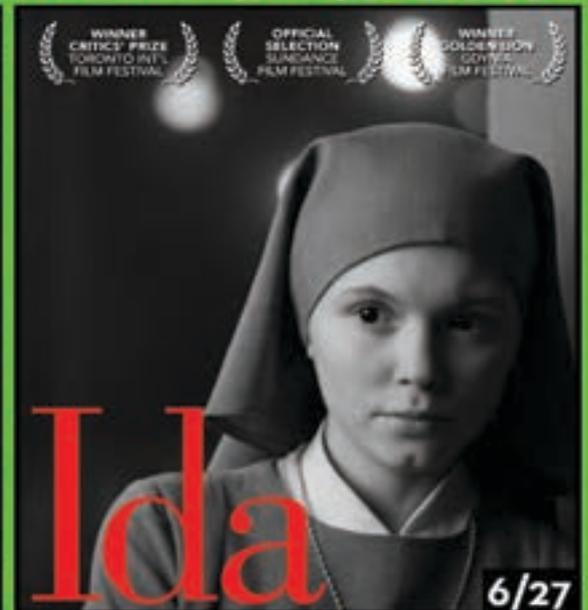
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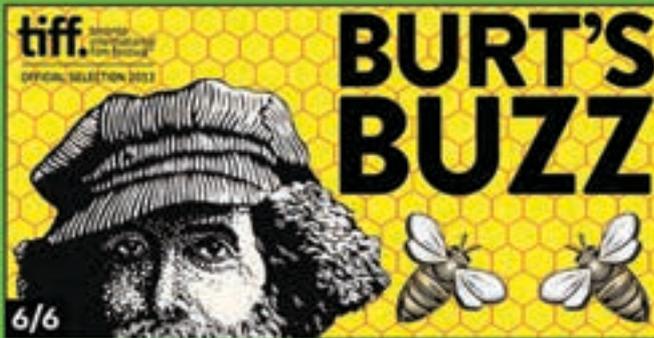


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Architecture and Design

Continued from page 44

Miami's modern image. He designed the rear half of the space for open-plan offices along a back wall of raw brick. Panels can be closed for privacy or opened for a more public space.

The front part of the former lobby, facing the street, provided some pleasant surprises. Removing the ten-foot dropped ceiling revealed an actual ceiling height of about 15 feet. "We knew we were on to something when we realized that there were no structural obstructions above," recalls Forbes. "I said, 'Holy cow! This is going to be a really special space!'"

The lobby's columns, once uncovered, revealed beautiful brick-and-marble vaulted arches. "We reconstructed the parts of the vaults that had been chopped away as ghosts of what they were," says Shulman.

Multiple layers of vinyl tiles concealed a beautiful marble-and-limestone floor from the 1930s (Shulman guesses the original floor was brick). The designers left as much marble as possible and filled in the cavities with polished concrete.

A striking, minimalist staircase of raw steel plates resolved the problem of connecting the center's two levels directly, without having to use the elevator out in the hallway. The staircase, with a 17-foot rise, had to span a long vertical distance, yet it only touches at the ground and second floor. The rest is cantilevered in such a way that it seems very light and offers an unfinished counterpoint to the refined character of the

marble in the vaulted area. A 30-by-15-foot map of Miami will be mounted on a wall alongside the staircase.

Sympathetic restoration has brought character and soul to the building. It has also brought awards to the designers, to date: the Dade Heritage Trust Preservation Award for Outstanding Restoration and Adaptive Reuse of an Historic Site (2104); the Florida Trust for Historic Preservation Award for Outstanding Achievement in the field of Adaptive Use (2014); and AIA Florida's Honor Award for Excellence in Design and Renovations (to be presented in July at the AIA Florida state convention).

The MCAD schedule of events includes the "Downtown Conversation Series," the "Tequesta Preservation Project," and a "Future Vision M.Path/Greenlink." July will feature an international photography competition and exhibition; a discussion on "Soccer Stadium: Where and Where Not," and a "pop-up store."

Discussions are also under way with professional and arts organizations for joint programming on topics of mutual interest, says Jacobs. A number of groups are now meeting at MCAD regularly and have become virtual partners, she adds.

MCAD's "Historic Architecture Walking Tours of Downtown Miami" are due to begin later this month, to be followed by other architecture-related tours in the fall. Meanwhile, the Visitors Center at MCAD has become a useful resource for information on the city's architectural history.

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Architecture and Design

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Alyce Robertson of the DDA welcomes the architectural tours, predicting that they'll help promote downtown's architecture, as well its performing and visual arts. "I've been working in downtown for 35 years and only now am I looking up at buildings to see features I've never seen before," she says.

Reviewing the past few months, Robertson adds, "In a short time, the center has become a place for interesting, lively discussions, and an anchor for exploring our cultural institutions. It reinforces the city's livability as a place to live work and play."

Shulman adds that MCAD plugs into a dynamic local architectural scene amplified by a boom in real estate development, civic institutions, and infrastructure construction. "The center is intended to contribute to the discourse about what is happening in Miami by connecting the often disparate worlds of universities, museums, cultural organizations, city officials, and advocacy groups," he says.

Robins says he's happy that MCAD has brought the old post office back to life. "I think Miami will change more



Courtesy of MCAD

Cheryl Jacobs: "We estimate that about 4000 people have come through our doors in the past four months."

than any other city in the U.S. Wynwood and the Design District are just starting, and I predict we're going to see a solid ten- to fifteen-year run as the central business district booms."

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

Out of the Slump

Continued from page 46

losing manufactured housing that they actually own. "Our hope is that by providing some level of mixed-income housing," Goldstein says, "that some of the residents may also be able to stay on-site once the property is redeveloped."

Biscayne Design Center Anil Kakar, owner of Kakar House of Design, is making a transition from interior designer and furniture store owner to developer. He's making the transition partly because he's feeling inspired by the MiMo Historic District's resurgence.

"The motels are being redone on Biscayne Boulevard, and there's a lot of buzz and excitement," Kakar says. "Biscayne is becoming the grand majestic boulevard that it used to be, and I want to be a part of it."

Kakar also senses opportunity. The Antiques & Design Plaza at 8650 Biscayne Blvd., where Kakar House of Design currently operates, is in the midst of an expansion project. Yet even though it's growing from 26,500 to 39,500 square feet of furniture retail, that's still not enough space to accommodate all the furniture stores being displaced from

the Design District, he says.

So he's building yet another plaza for furniture stores, called Biscayne Design Center, right across the street from Antiques & Design Plaza. "It'll be five stores, with each store two stories in height," Kakar explains. "And possibly one of the five stores could be a very good restaurant."

The other four store spaces, Kakar envisions, would be filled with an eclectic range of home furnishing stores.

Biscayne Design Center LLC bought the future site for this mall, a vacant 9240-square-foot lot at the southeast corner of Biscayne Boulevard and NE 87th Street, for \$1.2 million in August 2013.

Kakar has already hired Corey Lafferty, president of PrecisionArt Design+Projects, as the architect. According to plans provided to the BT, Lafferty's vision is for each store to have an upstairs area and for both floors to have high ceilings — 17-foot ceilings for the first floor and 14-foot ceilings for the second.

Kakar's ultimate goal is to contribute to the overall energy along Miami's Biscayne Corridor. "I want to add to the excitement of this dynamic city we're living in," he says. "I want to keep it growing by leaps and bounds."

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The Park the City Forgot

A downtown gem is part history, part business venture, and all but hidden from view

By **Adam Schachner**
BT Contributor

I wish this could simply be a story about the charm of Fort Dallas Park, more popularly known as the restaurant Bijan's on the River, a downtown riverside spot you may never have noticed. But this is Miami, so we have some surreal details to cover.

My recent introduction to Fort Dallas Park has underscored the need to correct Miami's ranking as a lowly 94th out of 100 major U.S. cities in terms of park acreage per 1000 residents. Our miserable score: 2.8 acres per 1000 residents (compared to 4.5 for New York City and 6.2 for Los Angeles). This dubious distinction comes courtesy of the respected

nonprofit group Trust for Public Land. But first some clarification: Fort Dallas Park is *not* Fort Dallas, a plantation structure that was relocated more than two decades ago to Lummus Park, farther upriver along NW North River Drive.

I learned about the park while shooting a video project. I asked a friend with the City of Miami to recommend a backdrop along the Miami River, and he took me on a Metromover ride to Riverwalk Station. From there we walked less than a block toward the James L. Knight Center.

We hung a quick right toward the river, onto an unassuming walkway nestled between a wrought-iron fence and the River Park Hotel. I would have otherwise missed it, since the hotel's valet traffic was backed up against the



By photos by Adam Schachner

The former Bijan's serves no food but does shelter squatters.

walkway entrance, obscuring it.

Weaving between the cars and into this space was like traversing the legendary wardrobe into Narnia. On the other side was a slice of downtown I'd never imagined existed.

Fort Dallas Park preserves the final remnants of Miami's development boom from the 1890s. On the site is a pair of modern buildings (one being the former Bijan's restaurant), some riverfront public space, and a singular, ancient (by

Miami standards) Henry Flagler-era building. Visitors can get to the park from SE 4th Street as they take the bend from the S. Miami Avenue Bridge.

You can also get to it via the Hyatt Regency Hotel's lobby. Walk down the back steps to Miami Riverwalk, a break in the lineup of high-rises and hotels, and stroll upriver a short distance. With sprawling ficus, oak, Royal Poinciana, and palm trees, this spot offers a refreshing break from downtown's bustle.

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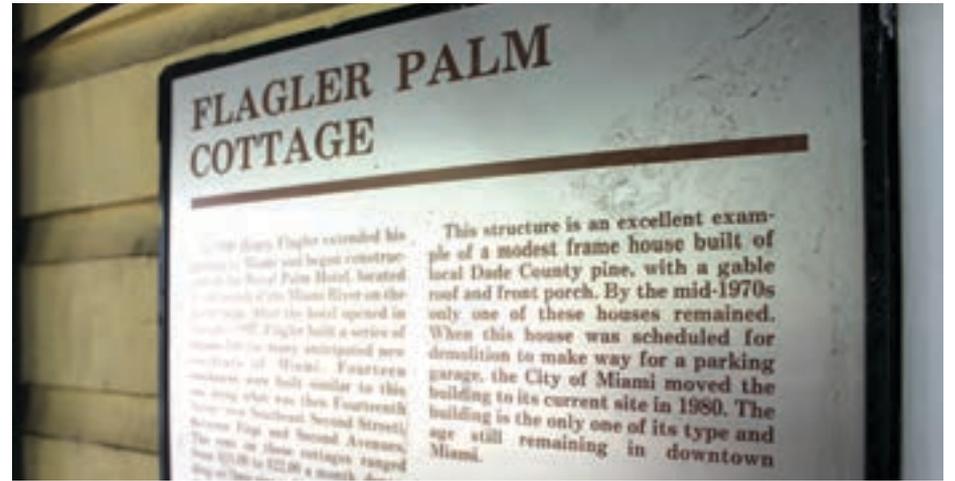
The historic Flagler "Palm Cottage" dates from the late 1890s.

Yet despite the quaint layout and inviting colors, something is off.

A wood-frame, two-story house, dubbed Flagler Palm Cottage, is intact but closed to visitors. Metal cages surround a dilapidated cabana just a few tropical storms away from collapse. A decorative fountain is filled with refuse and green rainwater. Girders for a series of canopies are rusting away, skeletal without their canvas and sporting the decomposing remains of a fan and lighting system.

Viewed from across the river or from either entryway, Fort Dallas Park seems like a sunshine-dappled community center that offers inviting recreation spaces and greenery. Closer inspection, however, reveals the rust and desolation.

The sad part is that the park was designed to transform Miami's history into a viable component of its present. The attempt just never took hold. This space could be remarkable if it would just be remembered.



A plaque explains Henry Flagler's role in Miami real estate.

Placards displayed about the lot explain the site's modern history, which began in 1891, when "Mother of Miami" Julia Tuttle converted one of the Fort Dallas residences into a house. (Fort Dallas had been occupied by U.S. troops during the Seminole Wars and the Civil War.)

There, Tuttle developed Miami's first up-scale community, dubbed Fort Dallas, working throughout the 1890s on what she envisioned would be a major trade and port city. Her entrepreneurial spirit

drew industrialist Flagler to join her efforts. Today's Fort Dallas Park houses the remnants of their collaboration.

Local historian Arva Moore Parks describes the area as Flagler's staging ground for his expansive investment in South Florida, adding that "when Flagler started building the railroad and Royal Palm Hotel, he bought a whole street of houses called the Flagler Cottages. They

Continued on page 52

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River view: The structure at right housed an outdoor bar.

Fort Dallas Park

Continued from page 51

were built for Miami's early residents, including John B. Reilly, [our first mayor]."

The last of the Flagler Cottages was moved to its current location in 1979, when ground broke on the I.M. Pei's Miami Tower. The cottage remains intact and, according to Moore Parks, "may be the last around that Flagler was alive to build." Today a squatter takes shelter on

the porch, siphoning power through a series of extension cords to keep his cell phone charged.

Trying to understand the park's status with the city is a challenge. The county property appraiser's website reveals a convoluted mess of municipal oversight and commission transcripts.

According to the website, Fort Dallas Park actually consists of two plots of land, one of which is listed as a park and the other zoned for a restaurant. Enter Bijan's.



Squatters have made themselves at home at Bijan's.

Local restaurateur Bijan Nakhjavan opened his eponymous Bijan's on the River more than 25 years ago. What followed makes for a typical Miami story, i.e., what seem like the best of intentions led to confounding outcomes — so much so that former city commissioner Michelle Spence Jones noted during a commission meeting in July 2012: "This seems like we just uncovered ... a hornet's nest."

The hornet's nest involved ongoing commission discussions about city

properties rented to restaurants that hadn't kept up their lease payments. Bijan's on the River became one of a series of such rental issues. It may have been an enchanting idea, but it failed to deliver either rent payments or crowds of diners.

For many years the property has sat empty, attracting only stray cats and vagrants. Finally, in August 2012, the city initiated court action against the Miami River Group, the company Nakhjavan founded in 1987. In April of last year, a

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The outdoor bar was abandoned with nearly everything in place.

judge granted Miami a writ of possession, allowing the city to take control of the property. Since then, however, the case has dragged on, and a trial is scheduled to begin July 7.

While never zoned residential, Fort Dallas Park is now home to some unknown number of people who've made pragmatic use of the old restaurant building, setting up recycling bins, erecting a camping tent under the Bijan's overhang, and even plugging in a deep-fat fryer.

Maggie Fernandez, an appointed member of the city's Parks & Recreation Advisory Board, tells the *BT* that "the city has historically focused on a handful of parks. It's embarrassing. They put a lot of funding into creating Grapeland Water Park with [local pop artist Romero] Britto, but they've overlooked the urban pocket parks in favor of large regional and corporatized parks. It's so tacky."

Fernandez says she remains optimistic that future turnover in parks



You'd think this was an active, well-maintained Miami city park.

management will bring the attention back to these forgotten public spaces.

Fort Dallas Park may be forgotten, but it is absolutely worth visiting. Just do so during daylight hours, and come equipped with a willingness to envision its potential as a restaurant site, a gathering place, a recreation center, and an appealing riverfront vista.

Restoring Fort Dallas Park is an opportunity waiting to be seized. There's no reason why this historic site should be

excluded from Miami's development boom.

"I don't know why the city has let this happen," says historian Moore Parks. "Fort Dallas Park needs to go back out for someone to operate as a restaurant. It's not a bad use for that space, and it's downtown, where people are coming. ... The city needs to go out with a request for proposals. They need someone else to operate it."

Any takers?

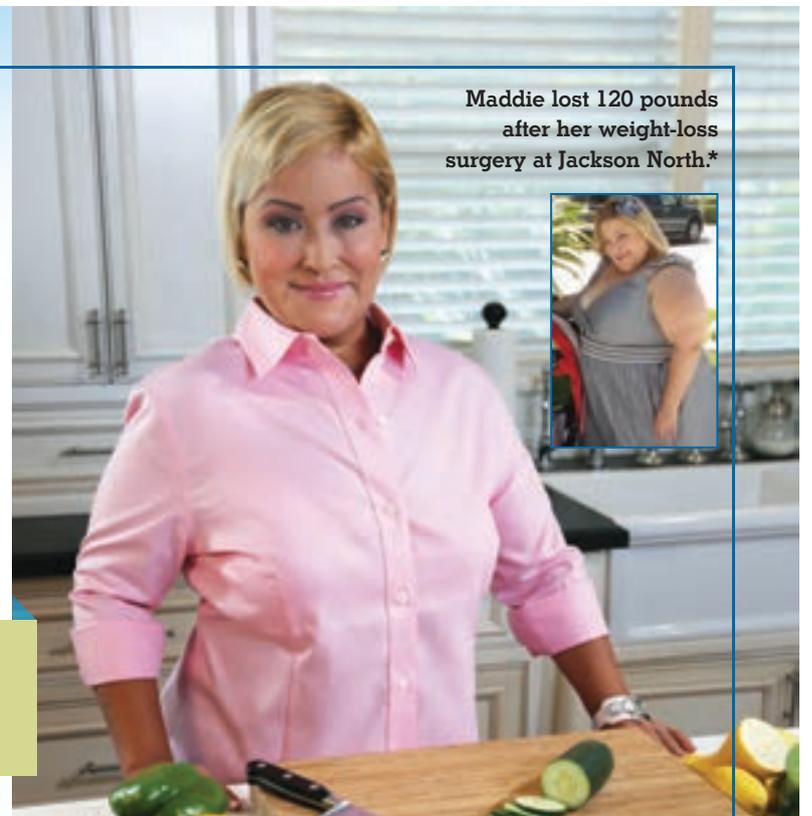
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Show Us the Money

Why does the City of North Miami seem to have a bottomless till?

By **Mark Sell**
BT Contributor

Monday through Wednesday, May 19-21, were days of shock and awe in North Miami, and more nasty surprises may lie ahead.

As we all know, Mayor Lucie Tondreau was indicted with three others — a mortgage broker, a disbarred lawyer, and a fellow radio host, two of them reportedly fugitives in Nigeria and Haiti, as of this writing — on conspiracy and wire fraud charges, federal offenses that carry a maximum of 30 years in prison.

“Stand tall, North Miami!” Tondreau declared after bonding out at \$50,000 and before ducking into a waiting car, hanging tough and cool.

Of course, Creole radio hosts went bananas, urging rallies for her and

transforming her into some kind of Joan of Arc.

The indictment accuses Tondreau of using her Creole-language radio show to recruit “straw” borrowers to buy 20 South Florida homes at vastly inflated prices, while defrauding \$8 million from various mortgage lenders between late 2005 and 2008.

Now that Gov. Rick Scott has suspended her and her picture is off the wall, a special mayoral election is scheduled for August 26 to fill out her term, which ends next spring. The regular mayoral and council election will come in April, when Scott Galvin’s and Marie Steril’s seats will be in play. Until the August election, Councilman Philippe Bien-Aime, in the rotating position of vice mayor, will assume mayoral duties. “Business as usual,” we’re assured. Right.



BT photo by Cathi Marro

You’ve got an interim mayor, an interim city manager, an interim police chief, even an interim Museum of Contemporary Art that’s caught in a tug-of-war between the city, which wants to keep MOCA where it is, and the museum’s board, which wants to move the collection to Miami Beach and merge with the Bass Museum of Art.

It’s not a stretch to call North Miami “Interim City” or “North Interim,” in the words of Jim Garrett, a former city auditor and disillusioned Tondreau supporter.

The museum dispute attracted the attention of the *New York Times* on May 18. Twenty-something Columbia grad and curatorial prodigy Alex Gartenfeld, with the “full confidence of the board,” is working from the museum as interim director and chief curator. The city’s choice, Senegalese-born, Sorbonne-educated polymath Babacar M’Bow, effectively operates as director-in-exile from North Miami City Hall next door. M’Bow’s name is not on the museum’s website.

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Nor is the name of founding director Bonnie Clearwater, who has been at the Museum of Art Fort Lauderdale since last year. Even MOCA's formerly funky and charming gift shop has been stripped to SoHo neat-freak white.

Yet if the museum is a big issue, money may be way bigger.

Stephen Johnson's departure from his city manager job on April 11, with just four days' notice, threw off the gyroscope. The city council voted 3-2 to give him \$60,000 severance after 30 years' service as a cop, police chief, and city manager. Put it all altogether, and his parting package was \$282,000.

He went on to take a \$145,000-per-year position as the Miami Gardens police chief. While that's a cut from his \$240,000 package as city manager, he's just doing fine when you add his North Miami pension of just under \$100,000.

That was just the appetizer.

You're getting closer to the main course when you talk about the Deferred Retirement Option Program, known as DROP. Fifty city employees and 11 police officers with 21 to 27 years' service took early retirement and 70 percent

lifetime city pensions when the city council voted on November 8 to institute the program.

Council members Scott Galvin and Carol Keys voted against it. Keys, echoing and amplifying Galvin's objections, said DROP would represent a "loss of institutional knowledge that will just cripple this city" and said, "I think it's going to be a financial disaster."

We'll soon find out, as the first DROP pension checks came out in April.

At the September budget hearings, will there be blood? Initial projections were that the program would cost the city up to \$2 million a year over five years, which makes a nice dent in North Miami's \$58.5 million budget. Consultants and Johnson said that the projected \$3.3 million in savings from salary and personnel cuts would outweigh the costs, and would actually add \$1.3 million to the city's coffers.

But do the math, and it raises more questions than answers.

If retiring employees average, say, \$60,000 to \$70,000 a year in their positions, a 70 percent pension comes to about \$45,000 a year. Multiply that by 61,

and that's better than \$2.7 million. Factor in medical and dental at \$600 a month or so, and you're over \$3 million, not \$2 million. And that may be conservative.

So where are the savings? In ex-city manager Johnson's calculations, it would work like this: To move those scales around, city management in February changed the titles of many employees from "officers" to "managers," hence lowering their titles and scale, if not their salaries.

If this is starting to sound to you like three-card Monte, join the club. DROP calculations based on age plus tenure should equal at least 60, with a minimum of 20 years' service to fully qualify. That means, theoretically, that a 40-year-old with 20 years' service could get a 70 percent pension for the remaining 45 or 50 years of actuarial life. That's a lot of cabbage.

So summer will be hot. Expensive litigation will continue with the MOCA board of trustees, a number of whom live in Miami Beach, dominated by glittering billionaire names like Braman, Muss, and Soffer. Litigation might even take place with Biscayne Landing, over 194,000 cubic yards of contaminated fill the developers do not want to move. And,

of course, there is Tondreau's criminal case, which has nothing to do with city business. (Who will pay Ben Kuehne, Tondreau's lawyer?)

Big as all that is, these are sideshows next to a possible fiscal neutron bomb.

For six months in 2012 and 2013, for instance, the city wasn't receiving payments on its water bills because of "computer software problems." Water and sewer provides roughly 30 percent of the city's revenues, or \$18 million a year. So where was the money coming from while the city wasn't collecting \$9 million?

City management just kept saying "funds were available," but from where exactly? Just what's in the till in each fund? What now goes unfunded?

It's time for an independent forensic audit — now, before the budget hearings — one that will be conducted by a respected firm that has never done business with the city.

Galvin and Keys would probably vote for it. The swing vote is the fiscally conservative Bien-Aime. How about it, Mr. Interim Mayor?

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Feelin' Carnivoracious?

Summer means burgers, brat, and beer

By Ken Jett
BT Contributor

Summertime is upon us! Surprisingly, summer here in Miami means more burgers, brats, and beers — just as it did in our last hometown, in the Midwest.

Maybe old habits die hard, or I haven't quite acclimated to the seasonal differences here, or (and this is what I'm hoping) somehow we crave these smoky, fire-grilled foods more in the swelter of summer because of some evolutionary predisposition.

Add to this that longer daylight hours afford us more time to dine out or grill out with friends, and that hotter temperatures somehow make ice-cold beer taste better than any other time of the year.

As my internal meat monster is awakened from its seasonal slumber, it's with utter glee that I share a trio of places that

feed my hankering for a hunk of meat and a pint of ale: Tap 79, Proper Sausages, and Royal Bavarian Schnitzel Haus.

Tap 79, a gastropub with indoor and outdoor dining, is the newest venture by Bin No. 18 chef/owner Alfredo Patino. A welcome addition to the Upper Eastside offerings, it offers upscale pub grub that is varied and scrumptious. The craft and tap beers go well with the artfully made burgers, artisan cheese boards, and grilled goodness. Wine is also available.

Chef Patino's Tap 79 burger is a blend of Angus short rib, brisket, and chuck smothered with aged Cheddar, adorned with two strips of thick hickory bacon, and crowned with a slice of fire-roasted tomato.

On a glistening brioche bun, the mountain of beef and the delicious



Photo courtesy of Proper Sausages

toppings were almost more than a mouth could handle. Paired with truffle fries, it is bar-and-grill food refined. And although I'm writing about meat this month, the tantalizing warm fig "brûlée" salad with drunken figs, walnuts, blue cheese, and greens cannot go unreported. The delicious concoction called fried cheesecake finished a recent dining experience with a mix of intrigue and guilt.

Friendly service and attentiveness ensure that I will return often to work my way through the menu of tasty offerings. When the meat monster rears his head, Tap 79 will provide a great place, especially when I want the celebration and tastes of summer without having to be the host. And, yes, pets are welcome on the patio.

Proper Sausages is the brainchild butcher shop of husband and wife



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owners Freddy and Danielle Kaufmann. Danielle moved here from England about six years ago to be with Freddy, who previously worked in the kitchen at Michy's. It didn't take her long to notice that sausages aren't relished in Miami to the degree they are back home. Sure, we can buy brats in the local grocery; but you couldn't find a *proper* sausage around here — that is, until about a year ago, when the couple opened their storefront butcher shop in Miami Shores.

Danielle and Freddy have elevated the sausage to artisanal status by creating links that exceed those I've tried in London. Using their signature Berkshire pork, spices, fruits, truffles, and such, along with creativity and culinary prowess, they have created an array of flavorful, delectable sausages.

Their namesake sausage, the Proper sausage, combines Berkshire pork, sage, mace, and black pepper. Another sausage called the Black Tie blends Berkshire pork with cherrywood-smoked pork, black truffles, and chanterelles. There is a sausage for everyone, even a lamb and harissa one.

The butcher shop also features house-made bacon, Florida-raised Wagyu beef,

chicken, and duck. Visit in person or virtually, or call to see when the next "sausage and beer" or "sausage and wine" tasting is scheduled. Online ordering should be available by the end of this month.

While this is a butcher shop, it does offer three prepared sandwiches: the Sausage, Egg, and Cheese; the Sausage, Peppers, and Onions; and the BLT. (I recommend ordering all three and splitting them with friends ... good stuff.) Friendly and knowledgeable, the staff is happy to offer cooking tips for their products.

The Kaufmanns have elevated the sausage so high that you may have to drink wine with these masterpieces. Fear not, as they sell wine and cold craft beer. Rest assured that your summer grill and taste buds have not seen this kind of flavor and artistry before. So good that you won't put these sausages on a bun — you'll allow them to take their rightful place where the steak used to be.

Royal Bavarian Schnitzel Haus has to be mentioned any time sausages are discussed. Chef/owner Alex Richter offers a full line of German comfort food fit for a royal on his menu. Alex has created a Bavarian fairy tale, with theme

décor, lighting, and a unique music mix of familiar songs recorded in German with a techno style. His biergarten offers an outdoor dining experience in a secluded oasis that transports you from the chaotic Miami bustle.

As I work my way through the entire menu, I constantly find new favorites. Remember, though, we are talking true German-style bratwurst here. You won't find these sausages served on a bun. They are front and center in three versions: beef/pork, garlic beef/pork, and veal.

The trio sausage platter is fantastic, to the point that I order it every time I go. Mashed potatoes or spaetzle on the side make it a great meal. The apple fritters are phenomenal, with a serving so large that when it arrives, you feel compelled to share it.

The menu, of course, extends beyond bratwurst, delivering super schnitzel, savory sauerbraten, and plate-sized potato pancakes. The beer and *bier* selections are broad enough that I usually just describe what I'm in the mood for and let the staff select, and haven't experienced anything from the tap that I didn't enjoy. *Wunderbar* for

the atmosphere, food, royal treatment, and the beer selection. Royal Bavarian Schnitzel Haus is a great place that never disappoints.

The only difficulty is that Tap 79 sits next door. With two excellent options so close to each other, it's hard to choose between them, but either way, you can't go wrong. Just invite a few friends, a healthy appetite, a thirst for the exceptional, and you'll be guaranteed a great time.

Whether you decide to host your own backyard grill-out using Proper Sausages or you'd rather leave the grilling to the pros at Tap 79 and the Royal Bavarian Schnitzel Haus, your meat monster is sure to be satisfied.

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Nope, it's just the *Enquirer* heading north

By Jay Beskin
BT Contributor

Journalistic integrity here in South Florida took a major hit recently with the announcement that the *National Enquirer* would abandon its Boca Raton headquarters this month after more than four decades of enlightenment and move north to the rarefied atmosphere of New York City.

It is not clear whether this shows that the *Enquirer* has so grown in stature it expects to be embraced by the New York media or whether the New York media have so shrunk in stature to create that expectation.

In any case, this closes another chapter in the Era of Eccentricity that

gripped South Florida throughout the 20th Century.

Everyone in the country has read the *Enquirer* at some point, although you there may not want to admit this publicly. It has been the king of the tabloids for at least 60 years, always a bit more reliable than its sister publications like the *Examiner* and the *Star* and the *Globe*, not to mention the *Weekly World News*, which shuttered in 2007.

Those publications manage to avoid lawsuits over inaccurate reporting by the simple expedient of writing things so ridiculous, so ludicrous, so inconsonant with any recognizable version of real life on the planet as we know it that they can defend anything in court as obviously not intended to be taken seriously.



The *Enquirer*, by contrast, served as the “true” tabloid, the pages in which the slinky, the sneaky, the snarky, and the quirky facts of life could get an airing. This role gave its attorneys a much bigger headache because they had to find more subtle defenses. Until 40 or so years ago, the *Enquirer* would take a kernel of truth, a modicum of fact, and embellish it with a great deal of supposition.

I guess the *New York Times* does a bit of that as well, but these folks at the *Enquirer* did it on steroids. Their legal fallback was that the one bit of truth in the piece had been thoroughly verified — plus they would print apologies and retractions in later issues when they were really pressed.

That model made some money but few friends, and the publishers deemed it prudent to move their offices out of New York

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to sunny South Florida in the early 1970s.

Here they were surrounded by transients, hustlers, tourists, snowbirds, and rejects from other communities. The environment could hardly be more hospitable to a bunch of boorish provocateurs with no respect for the individual, society, or the truth.

But the law caught up with the *Enquirer*, thanks to Carol Burnett, the goofy but lovely comic actress, and Henry Kissinger, the serious Mr. Serious who took his seriousness seriously.

This unlikely pair happened across each other of an evening in a Washington, D.C., eatery. They were introduced without incident. No doubt Henry went off to pontificate to his dinner companions about the serious events being handled seriously in his office while Carol turned back to her own party with lighthearted grace.

At some point during this fateful evening in 1976, Carol ordered a chocolate confection for dessert and allowed the diners at nearby tables to enjoy nibbles of the eye-catching treat.

The *Enquirer* got word of these two celebrity ships passing in the night and

reworked their encounter into a story that involved a tipsy Carol Burnett who was "traipsing" around the restaurant making diners taste her dessert and eventually getting into a loud argument with Kissinger. When Carol complained, the *Enquirer* ran a retraction. She sued the tabloid anyway and won. Without boring you with the details, the court said the *Enquirer* had to get its facts right in the future. After appeals, they still had to write Burnett a check for \$150,000.

Thenceforth, the ink-stained wretches were told to keep their imaginations in check. Ironically, this tabloid with the provocative red headlines ultimately became fairly accurate in its reporting. It was still too embarrassing to read in polite company, but in the barber shop or the dentist's office, without witnesses, some of us would sneak a peek.

Over the years the paper even broke some big stories, not least of which the story of presidential candidate John Edwards visiting his love child in a Beverly Hills hotel while his wife was battling cancer back home in the Carolinas.

Still, the paper could never shake its painted-lady tabloid taint. The great

Donald E. Westlake wrote a clever novel, *Trust Me on This*, describing the unique atmosphere inside the *Enquirer* building in Boca Raton while satirizing and caricaturizing the employees as a bunch of alcoholics and flakes on the bottom rung of the journalistic ladder who'd sold what was left of their souls for salaries well in excess of what they could hope to get anywhere else.

Some of the local disdain for *Enquirer* employees was tempered, however, after the paper was inexplicably targeted in the anthrax mailings that followed the attacks of September 11. The killer sent his poisonous packages to centers of power in this country, from then Senate majority leader Tom Daschle to the ABC and NBC studios in New York.

The packages did little damage in those offices, but the package sent to the *Enquirer* killed one of the employees. No one could claim that the act was designed to put down the tabloid industry; on the contrary, it weirdly elevated it to the level of the elite media.

I once asked a friend why he thought the *Enquirer* letter killed a person in Boca while the major networks and the

government offices escaped without injury. "Those places knew there was nothing important in an envelope addressed in childish block letters," he said. "The *Enquirer*, on the other hand, probably got their best tips in similar packages from anonymous informers."

Well, all that is behind us now. The tabloid has taken off for greener pastures up north. There were some murmurings about trying to move away from print toward a more powerful web presence, and about how our state isn't noted for its strength in Internet business.

Fair enough. But we choose to see it as yet another sign of a fascinating 21st-century phenomenon: normalization.

South Florida is being seen less as a wacky, offbeat, touristy venue, where all the flops and burnouts seek asylum. Young people move here now, family people, community-minded people, dynamic people who want a low tax rate, where they can put in a hard day's work and sit on the patio with a daiquiri under a palm tree at night.

Speaking for myself, I like this trend.

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Phone Home

An art project links Miami Cubans with island relations

By Anne Tschida
BT Arts Editor

On a steamy May evening, visitors wandered into the downtown nonprofit, artist-run Dimensions Variable exhibition space to see “Equipajes Personales” (“Personal Luggage”). But the art on display was not typical white-cube fare — paintings hung on the wall or a series of sculptures.

What they encountered was a singular structure looking like a replica of a high-rise housing complex, gray with windows illuminated by white light. Sprouting from the top of the building were facsimiles of antennas and other communications equipment; the roof was formed with a collage of images of crumbling, Soviet-era buildings in San Agustin, Cuba, a Havana suburb.

This odd piece began to take on a life of its own as people moved in closer and could hear prerecorded conversations coming from the windows — and then discovered that they, too, could talk to the installation.

The artist behind the work, Cuba-based Candelario (he goes by one name), was on hand to dial up actual phone



The artist Candelario and his installation for the “Personal Luggage” exhibit.

numbers in Cuba if visitors asked. And they did. Throughout the evening, people “talked” to the building, to their real relations on the island. The art sculpture was imbedded with a Bluetooth device so that people could speak to the structure, which acted as one big microphone.

In one moving moment, Celestino Gil, who arrived from Cuba three years



Photos courtesy of Dimensions Variable and Candelario

Candelario’s tower, a replica of a housing project in San Agustin, Cuba, also functions as a real communications tower.

ago and is studying for a degree in speech therapy, smiled broadly when he called his daughter in San Agustin. Others wiped tears from their eyes after conversing with family members in Cuba; so close and so far, half a century for many.

The complexity of Candelario’s project, LASA (Laboratorio Artístico de San Agustin), was just starting to emerge with this lit-up installation on a forlorn Miami street.

Sitting outside the gallery before the opening and holding a wooden box — a

small piece of luggage that will sit against a wall during the exhibition — Candelario explains its contents, and the history of his project.

Although he has shown internationally, this visit is his first to the United States. Miami, he says, is so much like Cuba. After decades of hostile relations between these two neighbors, the inevitable reconnection seems more credible and real by the minute.

First off, after some cold years post-September 11, it’s easier for Cubans to obtain travel visas to the United

States, and for Americans to visit Cuba. Which is why the curator of the exhibit, Miamian Elizabeth Cerejido, was able to travel to Cuba and to invite Candelario to come here relatively freely to continue his exploration of interactive art and interventions in public spaces.

This exploration began in San Agustin in 2008, Candelario explains, as he opens the wooden box to reveal a small TV screen and a maquette of San Agustin. The community is crammed with drab Soviet-style public housing that

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has been neglected and left to deteriorate, and plays a crucial role in Candelario's psyche and his project.

As a resident of this working-class district, Candelario, along with Aurelie Sampaer, decided to create a local artists' collective. The result, LASA, would invite painters, architects, designers, and artists in other disciplines to create public artworks and undertake "socially engaged" projects around Havana. The idea was to break art free from the traditional gallery space and create a vehicle for experimental action.

Eventually, they picked up numerous commissions from the Cuban government. LASA's interactive pieces included inviting a Colombian artist to produce a hip-hop event, which resulted in an actual dance school. Candelario also created a pirate TV station, known as MAC|SAN, to broadcast what the project was doing, circumventing official television and Internet restrictions.

But thematically, the projects remain rooted in San Agustin, a neighborhood of lost voices in a country that discourages expression, but which is also a universal metaphor when it comes to the impoverished and ignored inhabitants of the world.

When Candelario opens the wooden suitcase and reveals the maquette of San Agustin, he describes what you hear when you put on the headphones. It's an interview with a 70-year-old man who remembers the city both before and after 1959. "He knows every home, who lived where and when," says Candelario. "We can communicate with the past and present."



Visitors can actually talk to relatives in Cuba through the sculpture, which is wired for telephone service.

The little piece of luggage can connect current and former residents of San Agustin with its history; it can connect an underserved district with its surroundings, and then connect it with a broader world.

Adds curator Cerejido: In this suitcase the residents of San Agustin "are virtually present anywhere."

That kind of interaction is what brought Candelario to Miami — to bridge a gap that has existed for too long between Cuba and Miami, and between neglected urban spaces and the affluent peripheries. He was excited that people he knew who now live in Hialeah would attend the opening, along with artists who left the island and make Miami home.



MAC|SAN TV is another of Candelario's communications projects, currently taking place in Cuba.

So he came up with the idea of a communications tower, where people could literally talk with the old homeland. It would also represent the real-life circumstances of people in non-tourist Cuba, a situation not unlike Miami. The setting here — a downtown street where some are still wary of venturing — is intentional.

According to curator Cerejido, Candelario and the LASA project intend to breach barriers on many levels, including those of the traditional art world, where art is confined both physically and conceptually to a certain space or aesthetic sphere.

The next phase will be to send Miami artists to Cuba, and for Candelario to return to Miami for further interactive projects and to form partnerships with artists and community organizations.

Two decades ago, this exchange would have been hard to imagine, much less bring to fruition. But it is a different world. The ideological vitriol has died down on both sides of the Florida Straits.

"We have a much more nuanced conversation now," says Cerejido. "We have many more diverse voices in the Cuban diaspora here, more differing political opinions than ever before."

Added to that, Miami has become a serious art destination. In the past, she notes, Cuban artists would bypass South Florida as a dead-end location; now it's a place known for its museums, art fairs, and well-known artists — a place where dialogue of all sorts can find a conducive home.

Candelario and LASA's MAC/SAN TV project will be featured at the Bienal de La Habana 30th anniversary exhibition through June 22, in Havana; LASA space in San Agustin; www.lasa-cuba.blogspot.com. "Equipajes Personales" by Candelario runs through June 22 at Dimensions Variable, 100 NE 11th St., Miami, with various talks and events scheduled. For details: dimensionsvariable.net.

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GALLERIES

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786-286-7355
www.albertolinerogallery.com
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"El tiempo y el espacio en la escultura de Jimenez Deredia" by Jimenez Deredia

ALEJANDRA VON HARTZ FINE ARTS

2630 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-438-0220
www.alejandravonhartz.net
Through June 7:

"Painted/Stacked" by Russell Maltz

June 12 through August 16:

"Works from the '70s" by Marie Orensanz
"New Dialogues" with Leyden Rodriguez-Casanova,
Lori Nozick, Artur Lescher, and Matthew Deleget

Reception June 12, 6 to 9 p.m.

AREVALO GALLERY

151 NE 40th St., Ste. 200, Miami
305-860-3311
www.arevalogallery.com
Through June 30:
Karen Rifas

ART NOUVEAU GALLERY

348 NW 29th St., Miami
305-573-4661, www.artnouveaumiami.com
Through July 24:

"Art Lab" by Arturo Quintero

BAKEHOUSE ART COMPLEX

561 NW 32nd St., Miami
305-576-2828
www.bacfl.org
Through June 8:

"Symbiotic Promise" by Ernesto Kunde

"Recently Acquired V" with Pamela Palma, Troy Simmons, Ted VanCleave, Valeria Yamamoto, and Harvey Zipkin

BAS FISHER INVITATIONAL

122 NE 11th St., Miami
DWNTWN ArtHouse
www.basfisherinvitational.com
Call gallery for exhibition information

BLACK SQUARE GALLERY

2248 NW 1st Pl., Miami
786-999-9735, www.blacksquaregallery.com
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 15:

"Mi-No" with various artists

BUTTER GALLERY

2930 NW 7th Ave., Miami
305-303-6254
www.buttergallery.com

Ongoing:
"HOX" by Douglas Hoekzema
"Sym City" by Yuri Tuma

CAROL JAZZAR CONTEMPORARY ART

158 NW 91st St., Miami Shores
305-490-6906
www.cjazzart.com
Call gallery for exhibition information

CURATOR'S VOICE ART PROJECTS

299 NW 25th St., Miami
305-502-5624
www.curatorsvoice.com
Call gallery for exhibition information

DAVID CASTILLO GALLERY

2234 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-573-8110
www.davidcastillogallery.com
Through July 5:

"3 Dollars & 6 Dimes" by Sanford Biggers

DIANA LOWENSTEIN FINE ARTS

2043 N. Miami Ave., Miami
305-576-1804
www.dlfinearts.com
Through June 6:

"Your Forest for My Trees" by Michael Scoggins and Alex Gingrow

June 14 through July 31:

"Diarios de una isla" by Ibrahim Miranda
"Cognate" by Carlos de Villasante

Reception June 14, 6 to 9 p.m.

DIMENSIONS VARIABLE

100 NE 11th St., Miami
DWNTWN ArtHouse
305-607-5527
www.dimensionsvariable.net
Through June 22:

"Equipajes Personales (Personal Luggage)" by Candelario

DINA MITRANI GALLERY

2620 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
786-486-7248
www.dinamitrani-gallery.com
Call gallery for exhibition information

DOT FIFTYONE GALLERY

187 NW 27th St., Miami
305-573-9994, www.dotfiftyone.com
Through July 5:

"Reverse, Rewriting Culture" with Consuelo Castañeda, David Rohn, Eduardo Rivera Salvatierra, Fernando Bayona Gonzalez, Jonathan Wahl, Juan Pablo Ballester, Nereida Garcia-Ferraz, and Fernando Garcia



Sanford Biggers, *Hoodoo*, assorted textile, oil stick, tar, acrylic, spray paint, and silkscreen on archival paper, 2014, at David Castillo Gallery.

Mason, Nathlie Provosty, Gaby Collins-Fernandez, Nicole Wittenberg, Ann Liv Young, and Christy Gast

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www.guccivuitton.net
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JUAN RUIZ GALLERY

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786-310-7490
www.juanruizgallery.com
Through July 5:

"It's Only a Paper Craft" with Kcho, Carlos Quintana, and Ruben Torres Llorca

KABE CONTEMPORARY

223 NW 26th St., Miami
305-573-8142
www.kabecontemporary.com
Through July 31:

"En blanco y negro" with Antonio Asis, Carla Arocha and Stephane Schraenen, Jorge Pedro Nuñez, Paulo Castro, Sigfredo Chacon, and Adriana Jebeleanu

KAVACHNINA CONTEMPORARY

46 NW 36th St., Miami
305-209-0278
www.kavachnina.com
Call gallery for exhibition information

KELLEY ROY GALLERY

151 NW 24th St., Miami
305-447-3888
www.kelleyroygallery.com
Through June 7:
Red Wolf

LELIA MORDOCH GALLERY

2300 N Miami Ave., Miami
786-431-1506

www.galerieleliamordoch.com
Through June 28: Lim Dong-Lak

LOCUST PROJECTS

3852 N. Miami Ave., Miami
305-576-8570
www.locustprojects.org
Through June 14:

"Exhaustion" by Justin Beal and Jesse Willenbring
"Performative Intimacy" by David Jang

MICHAEL JON GALLERY

122 NE 11th St., Miami
305-521-8520
www.michaeljongallery.com
Through June 21:
"Surfboard" by Yann Gerstberger

MINDY SOLOMON GALLERY

172 NW 24th St., Miami
786-953-6917
www.mindysolomon.com
Through July 26:
"Mythmaker" by Marc Burckhardt



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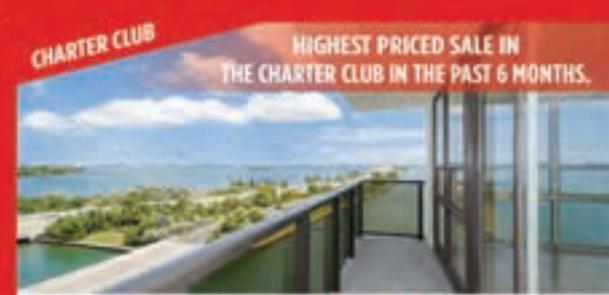
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Culture: GALLERIES + MUSEUMS

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786-332-4736
www.nnamdicontemporary.com
Through June 14:

"Window Seat" with Ed Clark, Frank Bowling, Deborah Dancy, Gary Kulak, Gregory Coates, Allie McGhee, Antonio Carreno, Nanette Carter, Neha Vedpathak, Robert Colescott, Rashid Johnson, Lucy Slivinski, Thornton Willis, and Al Loving

O.ASCANIO GALLERY

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

PAN AMERICAN ART PROJECTS

2450 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-573-2400
www.panamericanart.com
Through June 21:
Edouard Duval-Carrié

PRIMARY PROJECTS

151 NE 7th St., Miami
www.primaryprojectspace.com
info@primaryflight.com
Through June 20:

"The Castle Dismal" by Christina Pettersson

SPINELLO PROJECTS

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

UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI GALLERY

2750 NW 3rd Ave., Ste 4, Miami
305-284-3161
www.as.miami.edu/art
Call gallery for exhibition information

WYNWOOD WALLS

NW 2nd Avenue between 25th and 26th streets
305-573-0658
www.thewynwoodwalls.com
Ongoing: "Wynwood Walls" with various artists

ZADOK GALLERY

2534 N. Miami Ave., Miami
305-438-3737
www.zadokgallery.com
Call gallery for exhibition information

MUSEUM & COLLECTION EXHIBITS

ARTCENTER/SOUTH FLORIDA

800 Lincoln Rd., Miami Beach
305-674-8278
www.artcentersf.org
Through July 6: "Flight: Aloft in the Everglades" with Wendy Call, Lisa Elmaleh, Naomi Fisher, Gustavo Matamoros, Adam Nadel, Trong Nguyen, Rebecca Reeve, Nathaniel Sandler, and Susan Silas, curated by Deborah Mitchell

ARTCENTER/SOUTH FLORIDA PROJECT 924

924 Lincoln Rd., Miami Beach
305-674-8278
www.artcentersf.org
Through June 8:
"Radio Miami" with various artists, curated by Rosell Meseguier and Glexis Novoa



Michael Jones McKean, *we float above to spit and sing* (detail), mixed media, 2014, at Emerson Dorsch.

Melissa's Pick

Michael James McKean's thoughtful Miami debut, "we float above to spit and sing," continues this month at Emerson Dorsch. The exhibition, a quiet meditation on time, matter, and narrative, features a series of shadow boxes juxtaposing technology with representations of natural objects. There's a calm, almost eerie beauty found in these displays showcasing objects that are encased, embalmed, or embedded together, not intended as functional, rather creating new stories. Concurrently exhibiting local artist Cara Despain displays her infatuation with the concepts of frontier optimism and subsequent disappointment in a mixed-media installation. In addition to these exhibitions, visitors can now view Oxenberg Fine Art and Kelley Roy Gallery, both of whom now reside in the same building as Emerson Dorsch.

— Melissa Wallen

BASS MUSEUM OF ART

2100 Collins Ave., Miami Beach
305-673-7530
www.bassmuseum.org
Through July 20:

"Vanitas: Fashion and Art" with various artists
Through August 10:
"Gravity and Grace: Monumental Works" by El Anatsui

CIFO (Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation)

1018 N. Miami Ave., Miami
305-455-3380
www.cifo.org
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DE LA CRUZ COLLECTION CONTEMPORARY ART SPACE

23 NE 41st St., Miami
305-576-6112
www.delacruzcollection.org
Ongoing:

"Looking at Process: Works from the Collection of Rosa and Carlos de la Cruz" with various artists
Through October 11:
"Portraits of Solitude" by Hernan Bas and Kaye Donachie

FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY FROST ART MUSEUM

10975 SW 17th St., Miami
305-348-2890
thefrost.fiu.edu
Through June 22:
"Our America: The Latino Presence in American Art" with various artists
Through June 29:
"Tradition" by Philippe Dodard
Through August 3:
"Sustenazo (Lament II)" by Monika Weiss
June 18 through August 24:
"School of Night" by Arturo Rodriguez

LOWE ART MUSEUM, UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

1301 Stanford Dr., Coral Gables
305-284-3535
www.lowemuseum.org
June 21 through October 19:
"China's Last Empire: The Art and Culture of the Qing Dynasty" with various artists

MIAMI-DADE COLLEGE MUSEUM OF ART + DESIGN

Freedom Tower
600 Biscayne Blvd., Miami
305-237-7700
www.mdcmod.org
Through July 12:
"The Influencers: Prominent Works from the MDC Permanent Art Collection" with various artists
"Impact and Legacy: 50 Years of the CINTAS Foundation" with various artists
"Ceiba: Reconsidering Ephemeral Spaces" by William Cordova

MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART

770 NE 125th St., North Miami
305-893-6211
www.mocanomi.org
Through June 16:
"Video Container: Touch Cinema" with Vito Acconci, Bas Jan Ader, Sadie Benning, Shezad Dawood, Harry Dodge, Kate Gilmore, Maryam Jafri, Mike Kelley & Paul McCarthy, Ursula Mayer, Alix Pearlstein, Pipilotti Rist, Carolee Schneemann, Frances Stark, Valie Export, and Hannah Wilke
Through July 6:
"Flat Rock" by Virginia Overton
"A Fantastic Journey" by Wangechi Mutu

PÉREZ ART MUSEUM MIAMI

1103 Biscayne Blvd., Miami
305-375-3000
www.pamm.org
Through July 27:
"Image Search: Photography from the Collection" with

various artists
Through August 17:
"Caribbean: Crossroads of the World" with various artists
Through August 31:
"Imagined Landscapes" by Edouard Duval-Carrié
Through September 14:
Simon Starling
Shahzia Sikander
Through September 28:
Monika Sosnowska

THE MARGULIES COLLECTION

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

THE RUBELL FAMILY COLLECTION

95 NW 29th St., Miami
305-573-6090
http://rfc.museum
Through August 1:
"28 Chinese: 28 Contemporary Chinese Artists at the Rubell Family Collection" with various artists

THE WOLFSONIAN FIU

1001 Washington Ave., Miami Beach
305-535-2622
www.wolfsonian.org
Through June 15:
"Rendering War: The Murals of A. G. Santagata" by A. G. Santagata
"The Birth of Rome" with various artists
Through August 31: "BUMMER" with various artists, curated by Todd Oldham
June 27 through September 28:
"I Have Seen the Future: Norman Bel Geddes Designs America" by Norman Bel Geddes

Compiled by Melissa Wallen
Send listings, jpeg images, and events information to
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A Finale for SandBox

This year the “SandBox Series” debuted at the Miami Theater Center (9806 NE 2nd Ave., Miami Shores), giving five experimental artists the space to explore performance, dance, music, and theater. The last performance runs from **Friday, June 13, to Saturday, June 28**, and showcases choreographer Carlota Pradera’s dance (with visual installation) titled *Bare Bones*. It explores the “distance invading our cultures and social behaviors, creating a world in which touch is becoming an endangered sense and fear is becoming the predominant vehicle for communication.” Musical accompaniment by electronic musician Juraj Kojs and Ranier Davies; \$15 to \$20; www.mtcmiami.org.

Art in Gothic Places

Christina Pettersson is winding down her solo show at Primary Projects (151 NE 7th St.) space downtown. “The Castle Dismal” has been an exploration of her fascination with Southern Gothic through drawings, installations, sculpture, performance, and a series of weekly events that have included discussions of Southern writers, embroidering mourning handkerchiefs, and cemetery walks. And on **Saturday, June 7**, Pettersson has invited artist Kerry Phillips to lead a **Walking Tour of a Derelict Family Farm**. Wear comfortable shoes as you nose around an abandoned homestead to discover its tragic past. The 30-minute tours begin at 4:00 p.m., 5:30 p.m., and 7:00 p.m.; meet at the gallery beforehand; free; primaryprojectspace.com.

A Lesson in MiMo

Do you really know Miami Modern (MiMo) beyond the 1950s buildings you drive past every day on Biscayne Boulevard? An area particularly rich with it is in North Beach, which will be highlighted during Miami Design Preservation League’s **MiMo on the Beach Walking Tour on Saturday, June 7**. The 90-minute tour begins at 9:30 a.m. By visiting public and private examples of

the style, you’ll learn what makes MiMo unique and an asset to Florida. The tour starts at 73rd Street and Collins Avenue, and costs \$25; www.mdpl.org.

We Love Those Summer Shorts

It wouldn’t be summer without **Summer Shorts**, now in its 19th year. The short-play festival opens **Thursday, June 12**, and runs through early July at the Arsht Center for the Performing Arts. A long-time production of the City Theatre, the 90-minute evenings are filled with plays no longer than 10 minutes each, penned by national playwrights and City Theatre National Short Play Competition winners, and range from the light-hearted to the hilarious. Most performances begin at 8:00 p.m., with some 4:00 p.m. matinees, \$40; check www.arshtcenter.org for times.

Soccer on Ten Screens

When the World Cup gets under way, most of the world stops. This year for a change, the game times will be held at reasonable hours (for us in the U.S., at least). But it’s never fun to watch alone, which is why the Shops at Midtown Miami (3401 N. Miami Ave.), will host a **Coors Light Viewing Showcase Patio**, with ten screens showing *all* the games. Brazilian, Argentine, German, and U.S. fans can all find a home. From **Thursday, June 12,**

through Sunday, July 13, playing hooky while downing brews will be an acceptable, global event. For details, go to www.shopmidtownmiami.com.

Out in the Tropics Turns Five

FUNDArte’s **Out In the Tropics**, the only Miami-Dade arts festival dedicated solely to LGBTQ performances, runs this year from **Wednesday, June 25, through Sunday, June 29**. The lineup features, among others, San Francisco’s Sean Dorsey Dance Company; the Juan Carlos Lerida Dance Company, from Seville; poetry readings from Miami’s Neil de la Flor and Carlos Pintado; and various panels and workshops. In its fifth year, the festival has spread out to various locations, such as the Colony Theatre in Miami Beach, the Miami Beach Botanical Gardens, and the Miami-Dade County Auditorium. For times, locations, and performances, visit www.fundarte.us.org; tickets \$20 to \$50.

Outdoor Botanicals

The Fruit & Spice Park (24801 SW 187th Ave., Homestead) is the only tropical botanical garden in the nation, home to hundreds of tropical plant species, including 150 types of mangoes and 75 types of bananas. And it’s that time of the year to sample many of them during the two-day **Redland Summer Fruit Festival on Saturday, June 21, and**



Mozart and the Masons

Sure, you’ve seen the iconic Miami Scottish Rite Temple (4671 NW 3rd St.), but have you really *seen* it from the inside out? Here’s an opportunity to explore this gem: the **Masonic Mozart** concert on **Sunday, June 8**, at 4:00 p.m., by the 39-member Orchestra Miami. A master Mason himself, Mozart composed works for Masonic rituals, and used Masonic symbolism in some scores. The program includes the Overture to *The Magic Flute* (which features musical motifs akin to Masonic initiation); “Die Maurerfreude” (“The Mason’s Joy”), a cantata featuring tenor Tony Boutté; the Concerto for Clarinet, K. 622, with soloist Richard Hancock; and, finally, the “Jupiter” Symphony, No. 41, K. 551 in C Major. Historian Paul George will speak about the building after the concert. Tickets range from \$20 to \$40; www.orchestramiami.org.

Sunday, June 22, from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The festival features fruit tastings, wine pairings, vendor booths, and other delicious experiences; \$8; www.fruitandspicepark.org.

Miami River Tells All

Instead of getting all agitated waiting for the drawbridge to close on the Miami River, why not glide under it and, in the process, find out about the long history of drawbridges in Miami during the **Historic Miami River Cruise on Saturday, June 28**, from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.. Local historian Paul George guides this tour from HistoryMiami, which explores human life here since Tequesta Indian days. The river has many stories to tell about how people once lived, and how we do today; the group leaves from Bayside Marketplace (401 Biscayne Blvd.) and costs \$44 for members, \$54 non-members, \$25 kids under 12; www.historymiami.org.

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



Ballet Hispanico Adds Miami Flare

The New York-based **Ballet Hispanico** has been around since 1970, yet almost everything about its stop at the Arsht Center for the Performing Arts (1300 Biscayne Blvd.) will be fresh, and with a Miami bent. The program features a world premiere of *Show.Girl*. from Miami choreographer Rosie Herrera. The Paquito D’Rivera Ensemble will accompany *Danzón*, by BH’s artistic director, Eduardo Vilaro. Also on the program: *Sombrerísimo* by Annabelle Lopez Ochoa, a work for six male dancers that employs references to the surrealist painter René Magritte; and *Sortijas* by choreographer Cayetano Soto, to the music of the late Lhasa de Sela. On **Friday, June 6, and Saturday, June 7**, at 8:00 p.m. A post-performance Q&A is set for Saturday; \$35 to \$75; www.arshtcenter.org.

University of Miami: Shaky Start, Strong Finish

A view of our past from the archives of HistoryMiami

By Paul George
Special to the BT

Today the University of Miami is one of the elite institutions of higher learning in the southern United States. But its path to this level of recognition has been characterized by many twists and turns.

Founded in the mid-1920s during the days of Greater Miami's heady real estate boom, the institution's opening was delayed three weeks because of the mighty hurricane of September 1926.

George Merrick, the creator of Coral Gables, is recognized as the catalyst for this institution, since he donated 160 acres of land for the school, and pledged \$5 million for the construction and operation of a beautiful Mediterranean-style campus.

But the collapse of the boom in 1926 led to the suspension of campus construction. Instead, the new institution opened for registration October 15, 1926, in Merrick's half-completed Anastasia Hotel on University Drive, a few miles away.

Known as the Cardboard College, since classrooms were partitioned from other parts of the building by cardboard walls, the university grew slowly amid a lingering financial crisis.

Conditions improved in the late 1930s, allowing the campus to expand. A boon to the university's fortunes came with the onset of World War II, when both the U.S. Army and Navy sent personnel to study and train there.

The Army helped complete the tower, seen here in this 1942 photograph, of the Anastasia building. Thereafter the

Army "rigged" the tower as an arena to simulate flight conditions for training navigators.

With the GI Bill of 1944 and the war's end one year later, a new chapter was under way, as a burst of enrollment led to the construction of the originally designated campus, which became the main venue for the university.

The Anastasia building and the original campus became home to science classes, but the venerable structure fell to the wrecking ball in the late 1960s. Today an historical marker stands on the site of the original University of Miami.



Photo courtesy of HistoryMiami 1989-011-16863

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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Biscayne Crime Beat

Compiled by Derek McCann

He Can Put “Self-Starter” on His Résumé

4100 Block of N. Miami Avenue

If you put things off, others will step in to rectify in their own special way. In this office complex, the rear door (which happens to be in the Thug Comfort Zone of the alleyway) got compromised to the point where a person had “easy access.” On this evening, video captured someone entering through that door, without any effort on his part. Once inside, he broke out the crowbar and stole items from the local businesses inside, including taxi decals. Talk about a do-nothing landlord; sad when the doers are the criminals and the legit folks sit on their hands.

Getting Played

1700 Block of N. Bayshore Drive

Want to play some basketball on beautiful Bayshore Drive? Yes, feel that ocean breeze as it hits your back while you drive to the basket. Wait, that’s the breeze of someone stealing your bag of personal belongings that you left on the side of the court! He was there for several minutes, according to anonymous witnesses; he’s definitely got some skills, as you couldn’t catch him as he ran off. Hope this doesn’t deter you from playing again; wrapping that bag around your body to prevent future theft may slow you down, though. But you’re not LeBron anyway.

Wakeup Call in Paradise

1400 Block of Biscayne Boulevard

We value our tourists since they keep this thing going. It’s a shame we don’t offer orientation classes about the opportunistic crime. A couple of passengers on the bus reached into this tourist’s bag and started to remove items as she exited the rear door. It should be noted that they “unlawfully” reached into her purse, according to the report — as lawful entry into purses by strangers is apparently still allowed. The poor tourist didn’t receive any assistance from others, as they likely were holding on to their own purses. Maybe that loud South Beach shirt with the bleeding colors made her a target?

A Clean Break Would be a Good Idea

7000 Block of NE 4th Court

Oh, those ex-flames will get us every time. The victim’s ex-girlfriend and a friend knocked on his door, asking to use the restroom. Maybe this is a way for her to



get back in his life, by sharing his toilet paper again? She asked for gas money as well (of course), and he handed her \$30, which he said was all he had. She didn’t believe him and went into the bedroom and looked under his mattress, taking his wallet. Those exes seem to know us really well. His cell phone also went missing as

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the ex got into her friend's car and drove off. An arrest warrant is pending; time for this victim to realize she's just not that into him anymore.

Time for a Professional Makeover

5100 Block of Biscayne Boulevard

We can make mistakes when we're young and just getting started in the work force. This 23-year-old employee won't be putting this last job on his LinkedIn page or asking for a reference. He was fired, we gather, for assaulting other employees on several occasions. Maybe the first one got him a verbal or written warning as HR brought the parties together for conflict resolution. Eventually enough was enough, and in his exit interview he threatened to come back and burglarize the business. Someone did, so that employee is suspect number one. We predict a huge employment gap once he is formally convicted.

Keep That Breeze Outdoors Where it Belongs

200 Block of NE 62nd Street

There are many reasons for keeping the back door closed, even if you're home.

Bugs, rats, birds, raccoons, and possums can all make their way in while you watch "Dancing with the Stars." Lying in his bed watching television, this victim rolled over and saw vermin of a different kind, some woman he didn't know, rummaging through his stuff. He screamed and she ran off, but with some of his belongings. Police were in the area and stopped her, and the items were returned. Sorry, Miamians, lock it all up at all times. Your home is your cage, so fix it up nice.

An Open Challenge ... by Text Message?

5700 Block of NE 4th Avenue

A man brought in his car to get his seats reupholstered. The business completed the job several days later for \$400. He came to get his car and asked the receptionist to get the general manager. As she did, he went into the parking lot and used his spare key to drive off in his car. He was kind enough to text the general manager and told him to "Do what you have to do to get paid." Guess social anxiety prevented him from saying this by phone, but getting it documented

via text won't help him in court. So we have a man who really cares what his car looks like and is willing to serve hard time for that desire.

An Example of Functioning Mall Security

400 Block of Biscayne Boulevard

Bayside Marketplace is large; with so many people, it'd accepted that a pickpocket is going to get away with it if you happen to be the victim. This perp reached into a man's pocket and took his phone. The victim notified nearby security and they informed police. And from that came a dramatic hunt for that phone as Miami's finest (and those mall security folk) trailed that thief and cornered him without incident. This is a good story; we hope the entitled thieves who can read will see this blurb and stay away from Bayside because perhaps the tide is turning.

Those Cameras Are Not Just for Customers

3401 Biscayne Blvd.

Employees who steal have been around for decades, but one would think it

would take extra effort (and some intelligence) to pull it off in today's Orwellian workplace. This cashier came up short of money for several days, to the tune of \$1,348. Cameras caught her taking money from the register. Busted by video, the employee gave a written statement and was fired, then arrested. Not only is she criminally dishonest, but also severely lacking in common sense and intelligence. No respectful criminal enterprise will even hire her; talk about being unemployable in all areas of life.

Fraud 3:16

100 Block of NE 1st Street

Being a business owner is challenging, but if one pays with plastic and gets the "approved" message, one must be happy, especially if the item costs nearly \$3000. This woman did that, paying \$400 cash and \$2400 on a credit card. The item was a gold chain with a Jesus pendant. The card though, the owner found out later, wasn't hers. Don't think he wants to turn the other cheek on this one; the report was filed and a warrant has been issued.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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Beach Patrol

World-class sand is just a stone's throw away

By **Jim W. Harper**
BT Contributor

Summer's heat brings the need for breeze. The beach provides a superb way to cool down and chill out, and here we provide an overview from the perspective of a local.

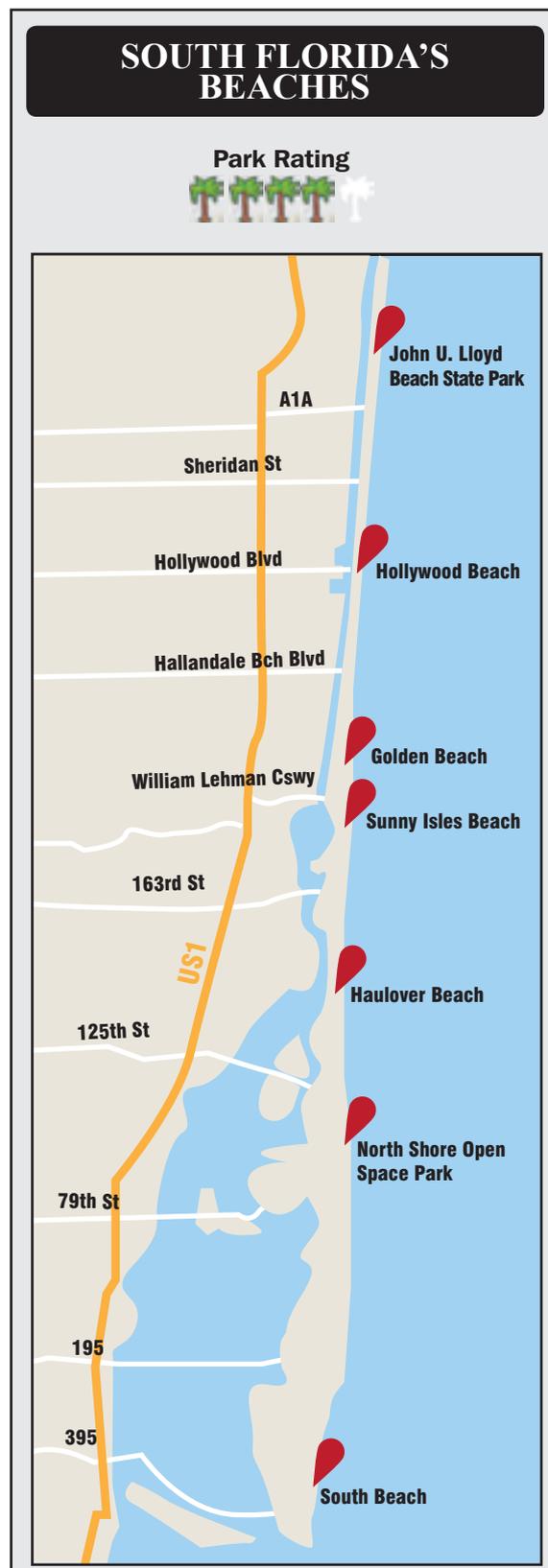
Almost all of the 15-plus miles of beachy sand in Miami-Dade County qualify as public parks, and almost all the beaches are free, which is not universally true across the country. We do get charged in other ways (parking, sales tax), but the space in the sand remains complimentary. Take advantage of it.

Many of Broward County's world-class beaches are close to the Biscayne Corridor, so let's take a dip there before heading south.

John U. Lloyd Beach State Park: When I turned 40, I persuaded a few friends with similar birthdays to hold our bash in Dania Beach. At night after the park closed, bonfires were allowed, which was illegal on most beaches. That night the marshmallows were bronzing instead of the people, and we concocted a South Florida blend of beach breezes, Shorty's Barbecue, and a DJ playing music from the 1980s. Don't tell the rangers, but we danced on the tables.

Perhaps we killed that option, but the setting remains top-notch for a day trip. This state park charges six dollars per vehicle, and the seven large picnic pavilions require reservations, though more than 300 picnic tables are free.

The park's northern border has no bridge over the Port Everglades inlet, so street traffic is nonexistent. Noise can be problematic, however, because Dania Beach is directly under the flight path of the Fort Lauderdale airport.



BT photos by Jim W. Harper

Our beaches are some of the best in the world. The horizon is endless. Summer breezes are calling.



visithollywoodfl.org

Hollywood's boardwalk: When you need some shopping therapy to complement your sand therapy.

The park offers other activities as well: scuba diving from the shore is said to be very good, and nature trails are shaded. Think of it as a shadier, more isolated version of Haulover Beach.

Hollywood Beaches: This stretch offers the ultimate boardwalk experience. Made of concrete instead of boards, the north and south boardwalks are divided by Hollywood Boulevard. Driving here is easy, but parking on the street is not, though a parking garage helps alleviate some of that stress.

Restaurants and stores line the boardwalk as far as the eye can see, and most of them look directly out onto the sand and sea. People-watching is almost to Miami's standards. The atmosphere is both tourist- and family-friendly. This beach is the one to visit when you need some shopping therapy to complement your sand therapy.

Golden Beach: This tiny beach town just south of the Broward border puts the itch in rich. The properties here are so exclusive you can't even walk on their portion of the sand. You can, however, stroll along the beach closer to the water and, from there, peer into the world

of the one percent. And walk you must, because parking is reserved for the residents.

Sammy Sosa bought an estate here in recent years, and Eric Clapton once placed 461 Ocean Boulevard on an album cover. Who knows what celebrity secrets, what tales of the rich and famous are hiding behind those mansion walls?

Sunny Isles Beach: When its colossal high-rise condominiums cast their afternoon shadows, the beach here can feel very small. So why bother? Actually, with a little effort, you'll see why so many people want to crowd onto this sliver of land.

The new (private) pier puts this beach on the fishing map, and Samson Oceanfront Park is an adorable beachside setting that earned three trees in a previous review (see "The Sands of Time," March 2013). Lifeguards and a strong police force make the experience feel safe. Shops are very close. Both the grandparents and the grandkids will be satisfied.

Haulover Beach Park: This Miami-Dade County park earned a near perfect 4.5-tree rating in a previous column (see "A Great Place to Go Barefoot," May 2102), and it still excels. The new lifeguard headquarters, in the form of a lighthouse, adds a bright-yellow landmark, and the doggie park is unique in the area.



Sunny Isles Beach: You'll see why so many people want to crowd onto this sliver of land.



Haulover Beach: This long, undeveloped stretch reminds us of how things used to be.



South Beach: Touristy and busy, yes, yet the sand is so wide the crowds are manageable.

So are the giant kites flying above the marina across the street. Parking your car costs six dollars on weekends.

Haulover's nude section is not for Grandma, unless Grandma never outgrew her hippie roots. People crowd into this fenced section to get back to nature, but crowds are unusual elsewhere because the park is so large. This undeveloped stretch of more than a mile, wedged between the hyper-developed enclaves of Sunny Isles

Beach and Bal Harbour Village, reminds us of how things used to be.

North Shore, Miami Beach: This beach scene produces love-it or hate-it reactions. I love the chaos of Miami and its clashing cultures, so I love this beach. It gets a bit trashy, in every sense, and the popular areas get very crowded in good weather. But parking is easy, restaurants abound, and tourists don't run the show.

Three exceptional features are the band shell, the boardwalk, and North Shore Open Space Park. The park has a concrete path that transitions into a beachside walkway running south, and you can jog for miles in the ocean breeze.

South Beach, Miami Beach: Yeah, I skipped the whole mid-Beach area because that's what I usually do. The boardwalk ends at Allison Park near 63rd Street, and a new one starts at 46th

Street. From this sleepy sidewalk of real boards, the wood transitions into concrete and the insanity of South Beach.

Almost every week I join friends here for a long-distance ocean swim of more than a mile. The many lifeguards and other coastal monitoring make the water very safe, and the experience is exceptional. With usually calm, clear water, the ocean of South Beach is one of my favorite places.

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Sweet Thing

You can grow your own sugar substitute

By Jeff Shimonski
BT Contributor

When I was in college, I had a wonderful plant physiology professor who encouraged us to bring in plants we didn't know so the class could learn to identify them in a proper taxonomic manner.

One of my classmates always brought in the oddest flowers; they were from plants I'd never seen growing here in South Florida. After several weeks of this, the professor finally asked him where he had access to such unusual blossoms. The student was reluctant at first but finally told the class that he was a groundskeeper at a local cemetery, and on class day he'd take a flower sample from a gravesite.

That was a good lesson in several ways, but what definitely sank in was that plants may exist in similar temperature zones, but it's humidity that can severely limit the ability to grow them successfully. The most unusual flowers the student brought in were native to the drier areas of Africa and Australia. We just cannot grow most of that stuff here.

During one class field trip, however, our professor showed us fruit trees from tropical countries that we could grow here with a bit of effort. Among them was one of the most amazing fruits any of us had ever seen.

First, our professor had each of us bite into a piece of lemon or grapefruit

that had been cut up for us; of course they were pretty sour. He then gave each of us a small, red, oblong fruit, perhaps a half-inch long, and told us to chew it gently because of the large seed inside, and to swish it around the inside of our mouths.

A few moments later, he gave more slices of the citrus fruits that we'd tasted previously. We were amazed — the citrus now tasted sweet!

This was *Synsepalum dulcificum*, or miracle fruit — a rather nondescript plant from West Africa. It is small-leaved, has tiny flowers, and produces small red fruits, each with a single seed.

When these fruits are eaten or, more appropriately, swished around one's mouth, sour foods suddenly taste sweet. This all-natural sweetener contains an active glycoprotein called miraculin.

When it is eaten, the miraculin temporarily binds to your taste receptors to block your ability to taste sour flavors. It also alters spicy, salty, and bitter flavors. The flavor change lasts up to an hour or so.

This flavor change is apparently affected by the pH of one's mouth, particularly when pH is low or neutral. Perhaps this is why some people will not notice a change in flavor after eating the miracle fruit. The pH in their mouths may be high or alkaline.

When I introduced this fruit to my favorite chef, Monica, she didn't believe me. So we set up a taste test. She cut slices of grapefruit, lemon, radish, and



BT photo by Jeff Shimonski

Miracle fruit a great natural sweetener.

jalapeño pepper, put them on a plate, and we sat down for a taste test. We both popped a fresh fruit into our mouths and carefully chewed off the pulp and skin. It doesn't taste bad, perhaps a bit sweet.

Monica was delighted with the results, so of course we planned a taste-testing party. There were about ten of us in all, and Monica went all-out to arrange fruits and vegetables having sour, bitter, or hot and spicy flavors. The guests took the miracle fruits, popped them into their mouths, and proceeded to try the flavor samples. Everyone was astounded; Monica's fruits and vegetables were all sweetened or had their sour, bitter, or hot tastes changed so that even the timid of the group, like me, could finally taste hot peppers without going into shock.

In the 1970s, I recall, there was an attempt to get the FDA to classify miracle fruit as a sweetener. After some controversy around the decision, the fruit was instead classified as a food additive. I imagine the sugar industry would not

have been too happy about the miracle fruit taking off as a sweetener.

Since then, we've had several flavor-tripping parties at home, and since I grow plants in the garden, we have a ready source of the fruit. Our native soil is quite alkaline, and the miracle fruit plant would never survive in the ground here. It needs to be grown in an acidic soil mixture, so keep yours in a pot. Since the plants never get too large and can, of course, be pruned, you can keep them on a fairly sunny part of your patio.

Chef Monica has learned to use the fruit as a sugar substitute with drinks, desserts, and even meals. I hope you'll give it a try.

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

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Felines and Canines and Chaos! Oh My!

With a little intervention, worst fears don't have to come true

By Janet Goodman
BT Contributor

Dogs and cats don't always get along, but when they do, it can be a bit of heaven.

We've all seen those viral videos: a Rottweiler nursing orphan kittens; a pit bull playing with an orange tabby; cats riding like bareback acrobats atop an unaware Old English Mastiff.

These are feel-good, "Kumbaya" moments we all secretly long for. Well, at least those of us who own both dogs and cats. It's the stuff that proves the naysayers wrong: that the two species really can live under one roof in peace. We pin our hopes on a Garfield and Odie kind of relationship, while wishing away the Sylvester and Spike rivalry.

According to a 2012 survey by the American Pet Products Association (APPA), more households with pets than ever — 40 percent — own multiple types of pets, and 29 percent of these own a dog and a cat.

For some of us, this dog-plus-cat home life has hellish moments — and it's not just pet aggression issues that fan the flames. Other unwanted behaviors between these two species can make us long to own only one, and that kind of hopelessness fills our animal shelters with unwanted pets. There are better solutions.

Take, for example, the Persistently Empty Litter Box Syndrome. Most homes with indoor cats and dogs have suffered from this condition at one time or another. For the uninitiated, this is where even the most regal of dogs plunders the litter box of cat feces. Proof is in the sand-covered muzzle that greets us at the front door or dog breath that is beyond the smelly pale. A quick fix is to switch over to a hooded, igloo-style box, place it in a corner of the room, and turn the opening so that it's facing the wall. Cats get in and most dogs stay out.

Actual *real* food, like cat kibble, can present a different problem. Dogs love to sneak cat food, but over the long term, the high protein content can lead to kidney and liver failure. Feline edibles are balanced for feline systems, not those of canines. Also, cats that eat less of their own food will become deficient in taurine (which dogs make themselves) and arachidonic acid, which is a fatty acid not needed in dog diets.

Bottom line: It's important to keep the bowls separated. Most dogs finish their meals once the bowl is offered, but cats go back to the bowl and nibble throughout the day. Keeping the cat bowl in a high, unapproachable place like a counter top is a good idea.

Certain toys manufactured for cats can be dangerous around dogs. Small

balls and furry mice toys can be easily ingested, leading to intestinal blockages, or can become lodged in the trachea, causing suffocation. For families with dogs and cats, cat toys are more safely used with human supervision. Beware of toys stuffed with catnip. They cause rather frisky cat behavior that can provoke friction between the two species.

In a perfect world, a pet owner would have puppies and kittens grow up together, which improves the chances of the animals getting along. Sometimes, though, life can't be planned for perfection. Introductions are important and should be done on neutral territory, with dogs controlled on a leash and things kept as underwhelming as possible — one introduction at a time for large packs. Cats should always be given a high escape route; otherwise they'll run up the nearest person, who may find 20 claws imbedded in her scalp (don't ask me how I know).

For those times when human supervision isn't possible (at bedtime or at work), I like to see dogs separated from their new feline family — at least until the owner is absolutely certain of a calm relationship. Kennel crates are preferred, but sometimes

a closed-off room will suffice for older dogs. This individual downtime is a tremendous de-stresser for both dogs and cats; it's a time to rest and feel safe.

Most dogs have some amount of prey instinct — the natural desire to pursue. This can be the biggest cause of despair for someone whose dog loves to chase cats. Playing tug or fetch can provide a positive outlet for this need, and regular play sessions should be considered essential therapy. The exercise can take the heat out of the urge to run after a cat.

Years ago at my kennel in Largo, a friendly feral tabby named Light Kitty would amble up and sit close by during dog-training sessions. Teaching commands in the presence of cats is a powerful tool that can be used to defuse negative dog-cat interactions. Consistent, controlled exposure is the way to arrive at a bigger slice of heaven at home.

Janet Goodman is a Miami Shores-based dog trainer, animal-talent wrangler, and principal of Good Dog Bad Dog Inc. Contact her at info@gooddogbaddogmiami.com.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com





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When Less Is More

How do we deal with global population rates?

By **Jim W. Harper**
BT Contributor

By the time you finishing reading this sentence, the world's population will have expanded by eight people. That number might seem insignificant, but time is a funny thing — it doesn't stop.

By the time you finish reading this column, population growth will have added about 450 people to the existing seven billion-plus on planet Earth. In 24 hours, the net population gain is 219,000 people, according to a United Nations report.

Take that number, double it, and you get the population of the City of Miami. Every two days, the planet's population spawns another Miami. It takes about four years to create another United States. And it just keeps growing.

Population growth is at the core of our environmental problems. More people means greater consumption of natural resources and more pollution.

Population growth rates in southeastern Florida have different causes from those elsewhere around the world, but the result is similar. In 1890, before Miami had become a city, the population of the mainland's southeast coast was under 1000 people. In the 124 years since, the region's population has surpassed six million.

We have to find a way to stabilize human population growth rates. If we don't, Mother Nature will impose stability upon us. She doesn't like a greedy species.

In nature, boom and bust cycles mean that very prolific species are eventually kept in check. Species at the top of the food chain cannot expand beyond the limits of the available prey below them. If one generation eats everything in sight, the next generation either migrates or starves.

People are living longer, thanks to advances in health-care delivery, access to potable water, and improved nutrition and lifestyles. The global average life span has increased by six years since just the mid-1990s, according to a recent study by the World Health Organization. Japan and Iceland rank first; the U.S. ranks 37th, with life expectancy for males at 76 years and for females at 81 years.

This increase is good for individuals, but bad for future generations. They will have fewer resources, and at some point there won't be enough for everyone. Who wants to decide who eats and who must starve?

With fewer deaths, global population cannot reach equilibrium. Various projections exist for the greatest human population that the planet can support: Is it 10 billion, 15 billion, or limitless? Let's not conduct that experiment. Instead, let's ask ourselves what actually works to slow population growth, and what we can do to contribute.

The education of girls works. Girls without an education get married earlier and have more children; girls with an education have alternatives. This approach seems logical and fair.

The United States should continue its support for the education of girls in



Afghanistan, Nigeria, Vietnam, and others regions where population growth is high. We should send more teachers abroad under models similar to the Peace Corps.

The so-called "one-child policy" in China is not a sustainable solution. More likely, we need negative population growth to save our planet and ourselves. Already a score of countries — both highly industrialized with aging populations and impoverished and/or war-torn — have shown trends of near-zero or negative population growth rates. But this is not enough and, in some instance, is a cause for alarm in those countries in terms of future national economic output.

An alternative solution to population control involves a radical rejection of the fossil fuel-based economy and an equally radical shift to low-impact living.

You can't have both high consumption and high population. You can't have an economy based on burning stuff and a population that expands by 160 million people annually. Both are destined to crash.

You individually can't control global population growth, but you can act. Educate yourself and your family about the numbers. The numbers don't lie.

Vote for candidates who recognize this problem and the associated problem of pollution, especially carbon pollution.

These are people who have the power to help your grandchildren.

Give to organizations that educate girls in poor countries. This investment may be the best one you will ever make.

Finally, walk the walk by reducing unsustainable consumption. Work for sustainable practices in your workplace and city. Recognize that your carbon footprint is one of seven billion and counting.

The numbers are hard to fathom. Every day 219,000 new people join the march of humanity, and each person consumes resources and increases demand for them, which forces the world's economies to search for supply. It is relentless.

Every day around the world, approximately one billion cars are burning untold gallons of gasoline; 21 billion meals are needed; 200 billion gallons of water are used. The amount of pollution produced is staggering.

You can choose to close your eyes, but this problem never stops. Just ask the hundreds of thousands of people around the world who will become new parents tomorrow.

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

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Next Up: Philly Stakes

Everyone gets to chime in during the family move

By Crystal Brewe
BT Contributor

Go forward, move ahead, try to detect it ... whip it good. I'm not sure exactly why, but as I write this I can't shake DEVO's 1980s anthem "Whip It." Perhaps there's some hidden message in the lyrics that's the only thing keeping me from crawling into a corner, wrapping myself into fetal position, and rocking back and forth.

Have you ever read that moving is the third most traumatic thing humans can experience? So let's get this straight ... death, divorce, moving. Yikes! We're moving.

I was offered an amazing opportunity in Philadelphia, and my tropical weather-loving family has agreed to the adventure. So this will be my final contribution to what has become my favorite newspaper. Thank you, all of you, for letting me archive my children's lives in this way, and thank you for humoring me and my oversharing, and even thank you for hunting me down in the school parking lot to tell me that you disagree with my parenting style.

My husband's support in this jaunt is amazing since we're a family that craves familiarity and routine. Believe it or not, we gravitate toward a life of predictable structure. We make a menu every week. We have happy hour with our neighbors every Friday. The glasses are put away *this* way. The chair is positioned in *this* direction. My bathrobe doesn't go *there!*

Even with all of the planning and structure, parenting can be crazy. But

throw a cardboard box into the mix, and all of the sudden it's Crazytown, USA. When we moved from Honolulu to Miami, I was so stressed, I got shingles. Shingles! Isn't that something grandparents get?

I'm usually a list maker, but right now I need a list dedicated to all of the lists I need to make. I have a 23-tabbed Excel spreadsheet that has options for the next three months' worth of life decisions. Schools, neighborhoods, camps, moving companies — we're eating the elephant in bite-sized chunks, but we decided to hold off on telling our little ones until dessert.

As disruptive as this process can be for adults, the experience can be intensely more traumatic for kids. Why elongate their stress more than necessary?

My plan of action will be calculated. While our 9- and 5-year-olds didn't have voting power on this life decision, we started to integrate the idea of it slowly into dinner conversations.

Me: So, if we could move anywhere, where would you move?

Matilda (9): Hawaii!

Me: Right, but we lived in Hawaii already. It's far away, it's hard to get jobs, and well ... we left there. What do you think about Philadelphia?

Matilda: I don't know, but I would move if I could have a puppy.

Me: I don't think we could do another dog, but does that mean you'd be up for moving?

Matilda: Yes, if I got a pet ferret out of the deal.

Step 1 in the delivery of the news will not be a ferret, although I do see



Photo by Simon Hare

The Brewe family: They are outta here!

myself having to pay up on this strange deal at some point this year. Step 1 is a Prezi presentation on the joys and many splendors of Philadelphia, complete with sexy pictures of the four seasons and all of the other things that make Philly not Miami. We'll let them weigh in by sharing their opinions after the presentation.

Step 2: We'll let them select (from a few options) the route we'll drive to Philadelphia. Should we stop in Orlando or Jeckyll Island?

Step 3: In an effort to make them feel more in control in a very out-of-control process, we're allowing them to take ownership of the selection of things to keep, sell, or give to charity, with a series of stickers that will identify the category of each item. I reserve the right to veto.

Step 4: Allow them time with friends and neighbors to say goodbye.

Step 5: Let them choose our new home. For now, we've secured a short-term rental so we can get our bearings and in time identify our ideal neighborhood. We'll explore the many corners of Philly and make a decision as a family on our new residence.

There are the things you can plan and the things you can't. I didn't think we'd be in Miami forever, but I couldn't have planned the ache in my heart as I prepare to leave it and the good friends I've made along the way. It has been an amazing ride that feels as though it's ending too soon. But what better way to end a party than to leave still wanting more, right?

Crack that whip / Give the past a slip / Step on a crack / Break your mamma's back / When a problem comes along, / You must whip it / Before the cream sets out too long, / You must whip it.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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Time (or Not) for White Wine Blends

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

By Bill Citara
BT Contributor

I didn't think it would be so easy. Casting about for a theme for this month's *Vino*, we came up with white wine blends. After all, it is June, when the heat and humidity really start to ramp up, and a glass (or several) of chilled white wine is a welcome antidote. Plus, I needed to get off the Chardonnay-Sauvignon Blanc-Pinot Grigio wagon train for a while; a flight of wine with more diverse, even vaguely exotic flavor profiles seemed like a pretty good idea.

I figured it would take some work to find those wines, though, at least given our \$12-and-under price point. Well-known (and quite luscious) wines like Conundrum, Evolution, and Incognito were too expensive, so I expected to make a quick grab for the usual white blend suspects like Ménage à Trois and Big House White, then spend an afternoon scraping the bottom of wine shop shelves for enough bottles to flesh out the tasting.

Uh, no....

As it turned out, the biggest problem wasn't finding enough alternative white wine blends but deciding which of them to include and which to leave behind. I skipped the Ménage à Trois for being nearly as ubiquitous as bad drivers on I-95, but picked up a bottle of Big House White to use as something of a baseline (which turned out to be a real disappointment).

The takeaway from all this?

If you like your wines big and slightly sweet, floral, and very fruity, with lots of honeysuckle and orange blossom aromas, and ripe peach, apricot, and mango flavors, you'll like these wines just fine.

Most are fleshy and non-vintage, and contain varying proportions of such floral, fruit-forward varietals as Riesling, Viognier, Muscat, and Malvasia Bianca, only partially offset by Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc. Frankly, I find all that creamy texture and ripe fruit and residual sugar get tiresome before the bottle is empty — but that's just me. At least I didn't have to spend all day searching for these wines.

I mentioned that the **2012 Big House White** — normally one of my go-to wines — was a big disappointment, despite an intriguing blend of grapes that include Grüner Veltliner, Viognier, and Roussanne. An unappealing blend of overripe tropical fruit hiding behind an overwhelmingly stony, flinty character, it tasted like licking fruit juice off a rock. No thanks.

Probably the best wine of a mediocre lot was the **NV Stark Raving White** from Rosenblum Cellars. It delivered all the requisite tropical-peach-apricot fruit but tempered it a bit with some citrusy acidity and a hint of lemon-lime and minerals on the finish. Pretty tooty-fruity, but well made, it would make a good sangria.

You could say the same thing about the **NV Kitchen Sink Reserve White**, whose chief distinction is how well its

name reflects its composition, a jumble of Viognier, Moscato, Symphony, Sémillon, and Sauvignon Blanc. Its aromas promised more than its flavors delivered, with the former hinting at some balancing citrus acidity from the Sémillon and Sauvignon Blanc, and the latter serving up a jammy mélange of orange blossom, peach, and lychee.

If you really want a kitchen sink wine, though, it's the **NV Seven Daughters Winemaker's Blend**. The "daughters" are all different grapes — no need to list them here — and the result tastes like the winemaker took a bit of this, a bit of that, a little of those, and threw everything in the kitchen sink to see what would happen. It's an okay wine, if you like that sort of thing.

There were a few vintage wines in the tasting. The **2011 Clayhouse Adobe White** was already tasting a little tired but was better balanced than most of its competitors, with pronounced floral aromas and flavors from a large percentage of Viognier, but a hint of lemon-lime acidity from Sauvignon Blanc and Grenache Blanc.

Fetzer's 2011 Quartz Winemaker's Favorite White Blend hit much the same flavor profile, but with a different set of grapes, in this case Chardonnay, Riesling, Gewürztraminer, and Pinot Grigio. The floral, honeysuckle qualities



The North Miami Total Wine & More (14750 Biscayne Blvd., 305-354-3270) has the Big House White for \$8.49, the Stark Raving White for \$8.99, and the Kitchen Sink Reserve for \$11.99. The Fetzer Quartz costs \$9.99 and the Seven Daughters \$11.49 at the Biscayne Commons Publix and Publix at 18 (305-354-2171, 305-358-3433). And the North Miami Beach ABC Fine Wine & Spirits (16355 Biscayne Blvd., 305-944-6525) carries the Apothic White for \$9.99 and the Clayhouse Adobe White for \$10.99.

of the middle two dominated on the nose and palate, though a faint smoky-tarry scent hovered in the background, and a shot of tangy lemony acidity came through on the finish.

The **2012 Apothic White** was more of the same, though its Chardonnay had the sharp, toothpick-y woodiness that suggested flavoring with oak chips, which was really a distinction without much difference. Frankly, I'd rather have a beer.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

Sprouting New Veggies and New Restaurants

Food news we know you can use

By Pamela Robin Brandt
BT Contributor

In 2010, Brussels sprouts became one of the year's top-trending foods nationwide — possibly because so many modern chefs were cooking the previously reviled mini-cabbages with bacon, but still.... It was Veggie of the Moment until 2012.

That's when the food press began trumpeting, "Kale is the new Brussels sprouts!"

Then about midway through 2013, the headline became: "Cauliflower is the new kale!" And that has pretty much remained true.

Until now.

But word's out: There's a new cauliflower! Called BrusselKale, the incumbent Top Trendy Veggie is a cross between Brussels sprouts and red kale that's more versatile than either — milder and sweeter, more vitamin-packed, bite-size, and better looking.

With striking purple stalks and green leaves, BrusselKale sprouts do resemble flowers, just not cauliflowers. In fact they're called "Flower Sprouts" by Tozer Seeds, the British vegetable-breeding company that developed the hybrid and plans to launch it in the USA this fall.

That's where the local news comes in: To Tozer's dismay, the new veggie has *already* been launched in the USA. Miami-based Rock Garden Herbs, a family-run urban farm (2950 NW 74th Ave., 305-477-8833), grows BrusselKale organically

and ships it from a warehouse by MIA.

One other U.S. company, Salad Savoy, has started marketing the new sensation as "Lollipops," but they aren't organically grown. Evidently they're a pain-in-the-bazooka to grow, period, which is why more growers haven't trend-jumped yet.

Locally, Milam's markets stock Brussel-Kale. Additionally, several area restaurants have been playing with the upstart sprout, including Cypress Room (3620 NE 2nd Ave., 305-520-5197) and Blackbrick Chinese (3451 NE 1st Ave. #103, 305-573-8886).

OPENINGS

Basil Park (17608 Collins Ave., 305-705-0004). From chef Tim Andriola and GM Rodrigo Martinez, co-owners of longtime favorite Timo, next door, this more casual eatery (which serves breakfast, lunch, and dinner) focuses on chef-driven healthy, eco-conscious eating. Despite press describing it as an organic restaurant, it's only organic "if possible." But hormone/antibiotic-free meats, sustainable Florida seafood, and a wine list featuring biodynamic bottles aren't possibles. They're guarantees.

Zak the Baker (405 NW 26th St., 786-280-0327). Most people today, raised in an age where a whole loaf of supermarket bread can be squeezed into the size of, roughly, a golf ball, have no idea why bread is called "the staff of life." But Zak Stern's sourdoughs — sturdy/crunchy-crust outside, complexly tangy and chewy inside — will remind you why.



The bakery's café component serves a variety of Zak-bread sandwiches, too.

Beer 360 (18090 Collins Ave., 305-466-4599). At this sports bar/steakhouse, you'll find more than a dozen flat-screen TVs; roughly 350 beers (20 on draft, many craft); and fun food including Brazilian picanha authentically cooked in a brick furnace, served by the slice and priced per ounce for perfect snackability.

Prohibition Restaurant & Speakeasy (3404 N. Miami Ave., 305-438-9191). In the space formerly occupied by George's Kitchen and Loft, a more playful place with Prohibition-era, deliciously decadent ambiance, a food menu that's sort of a Greatest Hipster Hits list of this era, and a cocktail menu that covers both eras, from two-fisted gin martinis to raspberry mojitos.

El'eat (3207 NE 163rd St., 786-440-7104). See this issue's new Dining Guide additions (page 76) for factual details. As for gossipy details, here are three personal fave dishes of executive chef Will Biscoe (previously opening chef at downtown's Biscayne Tavern): Crispy calamari, served everywhere with marinara, here with sweet/spicy/tangy Thai peanut sauce; Frikadeller, Danish meatballs with caramelized onions,

gratinéed with Gruyere ("like French onion soup without the soup"); garlic shrimp with "corn butter" — reduced corn juice. Think of the last as "the creamiest polenta you'll ever eat."

Tunky Tunky (11052 Biscayne Blvd., 786-953-5825). In the former North 110 space, vacant since chef Dewey LoSasso departed for more high-profile pastures in 2009, owner Juan Carlos Collazos and his chef/sister Elvira now serve traditional Peruvian dishes, plus a few with unusual touches (tiraditos marinated al pisco, or à la crema de olive). Most unusual: bargain prices.

CLOSINGS

Michy's (6927 Biscayne Blvd., 305-759-2001). After eight years, the Biscayne Corridor's most acclaimed indie eatery will close on June 28. But no worries. Maybe. According to an annoyingly nonspecific press release, plans are to reopen, "renovated and turned into a new restaurant that will have a whole new look, feel, and food."

Hungry for more food news? See "Biz-Buzz," page 22. 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: 297.

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

15th & Vine Kitchen 485 Brickell Ave., 305-503-0373

In the 15th floor space originally occupied by Eos, the Viceroy's top-end restaurant now focuses its décor on spectacular bay views (particularly from an outdoor garden/pool terrace). And the mostly small-plates menu of accessible internationally influenced New American fare is more Miami-appropriate, too. Especially recommended: Asian-inspired items like spicy ginger meatballs with sweet sambal chili sauce, or lump crab croquettes with sriracha, remoulade, and a frisée/fennel salad. Favorites like flatbreads and sliders plus a classy setting make this a striking business-lunch option. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

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

Hidden within Jade condo, this sleek Japanese fusion restolounge (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. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Atelier Monnier 848 Brickell Ave. #120, 305-456-5015

Sesame Street's Cookie Monster adores all cookies. As a more specialized Macaron Monster, we assure you that this French bakery/café's exquisite macarons (not clunky coconut macaroons, but delicate, crackly crusted/moist inside almond cookies, sandwiching creamy ganache fillings in flavors ranging from vanilla or praline to seasonal fruits) are reason enough to drop in daily, perhaps hourly. That the place also hand-crafts equally authentic French breads, complex pastries, baguette sandwiches, salads, soups, quiches, omelet's, ice creams, and chocolates is a bonus – icing on the gateaux. \$\$

Atrio 1395 Brickell Ave., 305-503-6529

Admittedly, the Conrad Hotel's top-end restaurant has had its ups and downs since its early days as one of the few exciting fine-dining restaurants in the Brickell/downtown area. But Atrio is ready for rediscovery. Despite Brickell's recent restaurant explosion, few venues are as spectacularly suitable for a sophisticated breakfast, lunch, or dinner for grown-ups who'd rather not shout over DJs. Panoramic views of Miami from the 25th floor are now matched by locally oriented dishes, including a mango/lime mayo-dressed lobster sandwich, crisp-skinned snapper with grapefruit salsa and basil aioli, a bracing orange tart, even citrus butter in the bread basket. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

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. \$

Barú Urbano 1001 S. Miami Ave., 305-381-5901

"Hot, hip, Hispanic" is a huge understatement to describe the street-smart urban flair of this tropical restolounge. After about 9:00 p.m., droves of high-energy young partiers make the place seem more Latin singles bar than eatery. Nevertheless, the largely but not exclusively Colombian-inspired, Latin/Caribbean comfort-food cuisine can be inspiring. We're partial to snacks like the arepa Colombiana, heaped with fresh white cheese, and the sinful chivito sandwich (steak, ham, melted mozzarella, and a fried egg). But there are also full entrées like a bandeja paisa (Colombia's belly-busting mixed platter of proteins and carbs). \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Batch Gastropub 30 SW 12th St., 305-808-5555

The name refers to Batch's signature novelty items, which we think of as gourmet fast-food cocktails: high-quality fresh ingredients (some barrel-aged), pre-mixed in batches and served on tap for instant gratification. But a menu designed by E. Michael Reidt (ex-Area 31), means solid foods are serious chef-driven pub grub: the Mac Attack, sophisticated mac 'n' cheese featuring gnocchi and aged Gruyere; sinfully succulent burgers, substituting brisket for leaner beef; nachos upgraded with duck confit; wood-oven pizzas topped with unusual combinations like pumpkin plus shortrib; duck fat popcorn; homemade sodas. \$\$

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

Biscayne Tavern 146 Biscayne Blvd., 305-307-8300

From restaurateur Jeffrey Chodorow, this contemporary tavern seems tailor-made for a newly urbanized neighborhood, inviting residents to hang from breakfast to late-night snack time, over updated comfort food that's globally inspired while adhering to the local/organic mantra. Among expected casual favorites (solid American burgers; Asianesque pork-belly sliders) highlights are items that chef Will Biscoe stamps with his own unique, unpretentiously inventive touches, from small plates (housemade potato chips with blue cheese fondue) to large (a long-bone short rib "chop" with truffle popover; South Florida bouillabaisse). More than 30 craft beers accompany. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

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, seared hot with toasted pita; shrimp and blue crab dip (yes: crab, not faux "krab"); a seductive puff pastry-wrapped and honey-dripped baked brie. Come at happy hour (4:00-8:00 p.m. daily) for bargain drink/snack specials, and lots of locals. \$\$

NEW THIS MONTH

MIAMI

BRICKELL / DOWNTOWN

Desole Metro Pizza Bar 333 SE 2nd St., 305-381-9505

This family-owned pizza/wine bar serves pies more evocative of those we've had in Italy than anywhere else in town. There are normal round pizzas, but also the rectangular Roman street-food sorts you can buy by the foot (up to about a yard). Order the latter variously topped (perhaps prosciutto/arugula in one section, fresh mozzarella and tomato in another) for perfect party food. Also available: starters, salads, homemade pastas, and a surprisingly expansive wine list. Ambiance evokes Italy, too, with owner conviviality making the place welcoming even for single diners. \$-\$\$\$

MIDTOWN / WYNWOOD / DESIGN DISTRICT

Kush 2003 N. Miami Ave., 305-576-4500

From the folks behind the popular Coral Gables artisanal beer pub LoKal – voted a "Most Green Restaurant in Florida" by the Nature Conservancy – Kush pushes the concept farther: that farm-to-table dishes (some from LoKal, others created new) and craft beers aren't mere craft; they're art. Which you'll find on the walls. On tables you'll find, among other things, the Kush & Hash burger: Florida-raised beef, ground in-house, served with hash (the edible, not smokable kind), bacon, fried egg, and housemade ketchup on a waffle bun, with a side of maple syrup. Edgy enough for ya? \$-\$\$\$

Riviera Focacceria Italiana 3252 NE 1st Ave., 786-220-6251

This kitchen actually serves a full menu of specialties firmly rooted in Liguria, the northern Italian coastal region around Genoa, pesto capital of the universe. Pastas like panisotti

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

From trend-spotting restaurateur Bond Trisani (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 tastebud-tickling snapper carpaccio; an elegant nest of mee krob (sweet, crisp rice noodles); blessedly non-citrus-drenched tuna tataki, 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. \$\$

Brasileiro 801 Brickell Bay Dr., 786-502-3829

Fittingly, the indoor/outdoor bay-view space in the Four Ambassadors, occupied by Miami's first Brazilian rodizio restaurant back in the early 1980s, is now home to a 21st-century upgrade. For insatiable carnivores and fans of Latin America's best dinner show, there's the traditional parade of tableside, sword-wielding garçons carrying all-you-can-eat meats, including must-not-miss medium-rare picanhas, delectably fat-capped sirloin. For more modern and/or light eaters, prepared dishes by Gully Booth, one of Miami's best-kept-secret chefs, include goat cheese croquettes, stuffed dates, and crab cakes Martha Stewart once proclaimed the best she'd eaten. \$\$\$

Brother Jimmy's BBO 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 fat fattiness. There's other 'cue, too, including big (not baby back) ribs, and respectable brisket. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

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

(plump vegetarian triangles containing ricotta plus chard, spinach, and typical herbs/spices) are definitely not generically Italian. Still, the reason to come here: the variously stuffed or topped focaccias, particularly signature focaccia di Recco (a Ligurian hill town). Two ultra-thin layers (almost transparent) of light char-bubbled bread filled with imported stracchino, a mild fresh cheese like mozzarella, but swoon-inducingly oozy-soft. \$-\$\$

NORTH MIAMI

Great Harvest Bread Company 1817 NE 123rd St., 305-899-9998

At its heart this establishment is a bakery, where owner Claude Juneau crafts a regularly rotating selection of whole-grain loaves freshly baked each day (from grains also milled daily to maintain nutritional benefits) that are good for you – and just plain good. Junk-food junkies who may doubt need only try our flavorful faves, cheddar garlic, Mediterranean olive, old-fashioned white. Tip: Breads taste best enclosing combinations like rare roast beef with chimichurri or chicken salad with sweet/spicy pecans, in the bakery's café, which also serves fresh-baked sweets – cookies, muffins, much more. \$\$

NORTH MIAMI BEACH

El'eat Restaurant & Lounge 3207 NE 163rd St., 786-440-7104

In an amusingly 1970s-retro/glam space, festooned with chandeliers, chef Will Biscoe crafts unpretentiously upgraded multicultural comfort foods: tarte flamande, an Alsatian flatbread topped with crème fraîche, onions, and sophisticated speck instead of traditional salt pork-like lardons; avocado "fritters" (panko-breaded wedges flash-fried crispy) with spicy mayo-based Japanese "dynamite" sauce plus, to balance the richness, pickled carrots/daikon (the crunchy condiment everyone adores on Vietnamese banh mi sandwiches). Or have a steak, with New/Old World sauces. For dessert, Biscoe's homemade chocolate chip cookies, upscaled with Valrhona chocolate, are people-pleasers. \$\$\$

"green gourmet" menu does uniformly reflect his dedication to ecological consciousness, it otherwise could only be described as intensely personal. Offerings are an odd but appealing saint/sinner mix, ranging from healthy pasta/grain salads and homemade-from-scratch snacks (beef jerky, granola) to unique cupcakes featuring not-too-sweet adult flavors and irresistible sticky buns. If we had to choose just one category, we'd sin. But luckily, you can have it all. \$\$\$

Burger & Beer Joint 900 S. Miami Ave. #130, 305-523-2244

While not quite Miami's first hip hangout featuring high-quality burgers, the original South Beach B&B certainly goosed the gourmet-burger craze in a major way. This Brickell branch has all the familiar favorites, including the ten-pound Mother Burger – really more good gimmick than good. Otherwise B&B, which still consistently makes "Top 10" lists, features a huge selection of basics in addition to beef (bison, turkey, chicken, veggie, seafoods); nicely balanced topping combos; and enough succulent sides (tempura-battered pickles, fried green beans, mini-corn dogs) to make a meal that's totally burger-free. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Seasalt and Pepper 422 NW N. River Dr., 305-440-4200

Unlike older Miami River market/restaurants like Garcia's, run by fishing families, this stylishly retro/modern-industrial converted warehouse (once Howard Hughes's plane hangar) has an owner who ran South Beach's hottest 1990s nightspots, so expect celebrity sightings with your seafood. What's unexpected: a blessedly untrendy menu, with simply but skillfully prepared wood-oven-cooked fish and clay-pot, shellfish casseroles. Standouts include luxuriant lobster thermidor, as rich as it is pricey; flavorful heads-on jumbo prawns, prepared classic Italian-style (as are many dishes here); even one low-budget boon: impeccably fresh PEI mussels in herb sauce. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Café Bastille 248 SE 1st St., 786-425-3575

Breakfasting on a ham-egg-cheese crepe at this very French-feeling – and tasting – café is a most civilized way to start the day. Formerly breakfast and lunch only, the café is now open for dinner, too. And while the crepes (both savory and sweet) are tempting and varied enough to eat all day, dinner choices like homemade foie gras (with onion jam and Guerande salt), salmon with lentils and fennel salsa, or a very affordable skirt steak au poivre make it possible to resist. \$-\$\$\$

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



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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 choice-grade steaks like the Bludgeon of Beef (a boldly flavorful 40-ounce bone-in ribeye, described as "part meat, part weapon"); king crab legs that dwarf the plate; cocktail shrimp that could swallow the Loch Ness monster whole; two-fisted cocktails that would fell a T-Rex. Not for the frail. \$\$\$\$

Cipriani

465 Brickell Ave., 786-329-4090
Derived, like all Cipriani family restaurants worldwide, from legendary Harry's Bar in Venice (a favorite of Truman Capote, Hemingway, and other famous folks since 1931), this glamorous indoor/outdoor riverfront location in Icon has two absolutely must-not-miss menu items, both invented at Harry's and reproduced here to perfection: beef carpaccio (drizzled artfully with streaks of creamy-rich mustard vinaigrette, not mere olive oil) and the Bellini (a cocktail of prosecco, not champagne, and fresh white peach juice). Venetian-style liver and onions could convert even liver-loathers. Finish with elegant vanilla meringue cake. \$\$\$\$

The Corner

1035 N. Miami Ave., 305-961-7887
With a Zuma alum in the kitchen, a Gigj 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 ambiance than Dolores – including a million-dollar water view. \$\$\$

Cvi.che 105

105 NE 3rd Ave., 305-577-3454
Fusion food – a modern invention? Not in Peru, where native and Euro-Asian influences have mixed for more than a century. But chef Juan Chipocco 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

255 Biscayne Blvd. Way, 305-421-8800
Just two words, "Daniel Boulud," should be enough for foodies craving creative French/American comfort food to run, not walk, to this restaurant. Downtown's db is indeed an absentee celeb chef outpost, but on-site kitchen wizard Matthieu Godard flawlessly executes dishes ranging from the original db Bistro's signature foie gras/short rib/black truffle-stuffed burger to local market-driven dishes. Especially strong are seafood preparations, whether sauced with a refined choron or lustily garnished with Provencal accompaniments like tender sea scallops with chickpea panisse. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

D-Dog House

50 SW 10th St., 305-381-7770
While it has become increasingly common to find servers at upscale restaurants utilizing computerized POS (point of service) systems to take orders, this high-tech hole-in-the-wall trumps them by replacing servers – and in-house entertainment, too – with iPads that accept not just food orders and credit cards but music requests. You can web surf or game, too, while waiting for your choice of the house specialty: supersized hot dogs, most overloaded with internationally inspired toppings. To accompany, hand-cut fries are a must. And have a cocktail. There's a full liquor bar. \$\$-\$

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. \$\$\$

Doraku

900 S. Miami Ave., 305-373-4633
Happy hour comes twice daily (after work and lunch) at this second location of a popular South Beach sushi, pan-Asian, small-plates restorlounge, bringing discounted prices on treats like rock shrimp tempura with spicy aioli. Regular prices are reasonable, too, for sea-food flown in daily, and makis displaying solid creativity rather than gimmickry. Especially enjoyable are items accented by Japanese ingredients rarely found in Americanized sushi bars, like the Geisha Roll's astringent shiso leaf, beautifully balancing spicy tuna, pickled radish, and rich eel sauce. A huge sake menu, too. \$\$-\$\$\$

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. \$\$

Fado Irish Pub

900 S. Miami Ave. #200, 786-924-0972
Unlike most Miami "Irish" pubs, which serve mostly American bar food, rarely foraging 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 boxy, a grated/mashed potato pancake. Try corned beef rolls (boxy wraps, with creamy mustard sauce and cabbage slaw), or smoked salmon on mini-boxy "blini," with capers and horseradish sauce. There's a seasonal menu, too. \$\$

The Filling Station & Garage Bar

95 SE 2nd St., 786-425-1990
This fun, locally oriented dive, opened in 1994, was hip more than a decade before downtown was. And its 2008 relocation to larger quarters, plus two subsequent expansions, signal that it has more than kept up with the explosion of newer neighborhood hotspots, without pretensions or yuppified prices. On the fresh, hefty hamburgers, true Miami weirdness is displayed in toppings like peanut butter or Nutella. Other standouts: tangy-spicy Buffalo wings; home-made tater tots; the oil pan (fried pickles and onion rings with two sauces); and an ever-changing list of craft beers. \$\$-\$

Fratelli Milano

213 SE 1st St., 305-373-2300
Downtown isn't yet a 24/7 urban center, but it's experiencing a mini explosion of eateries open at night. That includes this family-owned ristorante, where even newcomers feel at home. At lunch it's almost impossible to resist panini, served on focaccia or crunchy ciabatta; even the vegetarian version bursts with complex and complementary flavors. During weekday dinners, try complex plates of risotto with shrimp and grilled asparagus; homemade pastas like seafood-packed fettuccine al scoglio; or delicate Vitello alla Milanese on arugula. \$\$-\$\$\$

Garcia's Seafood Grille and Fish Market

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

Havana 1957

1451 S. Miami Ave., 305-381-6651
If you never had the chance to enjoy classic Cuban dishes in glam 1950s Havana (pre-He Who Must Not Be Named), you can now at this nostalgic restorlounge. Eat your way through the day, from hefty four-egg/croqueta breakfasts to late-night mini pan con bistec bar bites, surrounded by old-school memorabilia, music, and mojitos. Admittedly, prices are higher than those at average Miami Cuban eateries. But daily specials, including Wednesday's especially tasty mojo-marinated chicken fricasee in sweet-savory criollo sauce, are a great value. And the time trip is priceless. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Hibachi Grill

45 NE 3rd Ave., 305-374-2223
Imagine a mini-express Benihana. This place specializes in tepanyaki 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 Island Bistro

605 Brickell Key Dr., 305-364-5512
In the space that was formerly Fabien's, this bistro has near-identical lunch and dinner menus of French-inspired food: Basque-style shrimp pil pil, salmon with beurre blanc, steak au poivre. But there's now an espresso-rubbed steak, too, tie-in to an added Panther Coffee Bar serving pastries and other light bites from early morning. That, plus a new lounge with daily happy hours, makes the place feel less formal and more like a casual contemporary hangout. So do daily specials, including Thursday's "Shells & Bubbles," a bargain seafood/champagne feast. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Il Gabbiano

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

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 piquillo peppers, or two of Miami's best rice dishes: seafood paella and arroz negro (with squid and its ink). \$\$\$-\$\$\$

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Largo Bar & Grill

401 Biscayne Blvd., 305-374-9706

Sure, Bayside Marketplace is touristy. But it can be fun to spend a day playing visitor in your own city. If you do, this waterfront place overlooking Miamarina is a superior food choice. Expect nothing cutting edge, just tasty, familiar favorites solidly prepared. You won't go wrong with stone crab claws and Cajun mustard dip; inauthentic but delicious fish tacos in hard blue corn tortillas with two sauces (cilantro and chipotle), generously portioned fish sandwiches (grouper, mahi, snapper, or daily catch), and festive cocktails. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

La Loggia Ristorante and Lounge

68 W. Flagler St., 305-373-4800

This luxuriantly neo-classical yet warm Italian restaurant was unquestionably a pioneer in revitalizing downtown. With alternatives like amaretto-tinged pumpkin agnolotti in sage butter sauce and cilantro-spiced white bean/vegetable salad dressed with truffle oil, proprietors Jennifer Porciello and Horatio Oliveira continue to draw a lunch crowd that returns for dinner, or perhaps just stays on through the afternoon, fueled by the Lawyer's Liquid Lunch, a vodka martini spiked with sweetened espresso. \$\$\$

La Moon

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

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

La Provence

1064 Brickell Ave. 786-425-9003

Great baguettes in the bread basket, many believe, indicate a great meal to come. But when 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 Thou'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. \$\$\$

L'Entrecote de Paris

1053 SE 1st Ave., 305-755-9995

If menu choices makes you nuts, this place, originally a Parisian eatery with locations in Brazil, is the restaurant for you. There's only one prix fixe meal offered: an entrecote steak with a famed creamy sauce of 21 ingredients (here, predominantly curry), accompanied by a walnut-garnished mixed greens/tomato salad and shoestring fries, plus a crunchy-crust baguette. Your only choice is how you like your steak precision-cooked. A la carte desserts are indeed extensive; avoid stress by choosing a macaron flight of mixed flavors. \$\$\$

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. \$

Medialunas Calentitas

919 Brickell Ave., 305-517-3303

At this first U.S. location of a Uruguayan chain, the signature specialty's crescent-like shape says "croissant." But medialunas don't have croissants' puff-pastry flakiness; they're more substantial buttery breakfast rolls. And either simply syrup-glazed or stuffed (with ham and cheese, dulce de leche, more), they make a terrific Latin comfort-food breakfast or snack on the run. The same is true for equally bargain-priced empanadas (three varieties with distinctive fillings from Uruguay, Argentina, or Mexico) and tiny but tasty migas sandwiches like the elaborate Olympic: ham, cheese, lettuce, tomato, peppers, eggs, olives. \$

Miami Art Café

364 SE 1st St., 305-374-5117

For businessfolk on the go, this breakfast/lunch-only French café serves up evocative baguette sandwiches (like camembert) loaded, if you like, with greens, olives, and more. For those with time to sit, we'd recommend the savory crêpes, garnished with perfectly dressed salad, or sweet crêpe like the Bonne Maman (whose sugar/salted butter stuffing brings Brittany to downtown). And quiches are nicely custardy. But there are surprises here, too, including just a few full entrées, with correctly made traditional sauces one wouldn't expect at a luncheonette – except, perhaps, in Paris. \$\$\$

Miami's Finest Caribbean Restaurant

236 NE 1st Ave., 305-381-9254

Originally from Jamaica, proprietor Miss Pat has been serving her traditional homemade island specialties to downtown office workers and college students since the early 1990s. Most popular item here might be the weekend 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 minus: 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. \$\$\$

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 Propriedad Privada specializes in familiar flavors presented with seriously upscale 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 Greenstein 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 fatty roasted jalapeño/lima mayo), but this time with seats! What to eat? Ceviches, natch. 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. \$\$

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

Novectico

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 Parrillada-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. \$\$\$

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/seasoned fries, and more) with some unusual twists, like a scrumptiously 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. \$\$\$

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

Perfecto

1450 Brickell Ave., 305-372-0620

This transplant from Barcelona features décor that mixes rustic and urban, plus modern music and traditional tapas (the Spanish, not global, kind). Must-have: imported 5J jamon Iberico de Bellota from acorn-fed pata negra pigs – lusciously marbled, tender yet toothsome, the ultimate in cured hams. But other tapas like the salmorejo en vaso (a creamy, pumped Andalusian variation on gazpacho), papatas bravas (crisp-fried potatoes with spicy aioli), fuet (Catalan salami, similar to French saucisson sec), and crispy prawns are pretty perfecto, too. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Perricone's

15 E 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 foccchi 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 sweet 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-bistered 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. \$\$\$

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. \$

Porcao Farm to Grill

901 S. Miami Ave. #101, 855-767-2261

Despite its name, this Porcao isn't related to Miami's long-famous/now defunct Brazilian churrascaria. Nor, despite self-billing as a "modern steakhouse," is the fare mainly meat (but don't miss its signature Kao bone-in short loin, dry-aged in-house). Steaks are almost dwarfed by chef Jeff O'Neill's unique and Florida-oriented "pass around" platters (silky Okeechobee molasses-cured salmon; Serrano-wrapped grouper chunks with romesco sauce); entrées like grilled bass with cranberry foie gras dumplings; an extensive budget-priced bar bites menu; and farm-to-table rolling salad carts. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

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 graffe, 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/bean 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 uttappam, thicker pancakes, layered with onions and chilis, both served with sambar and chutney. \$\$

The River Oyster Bar

650 S. Miami Ave., 305-530-1915

This casually cool jewel is a full-service seafood spot, as evidenced by tempting menu selections like soft-shell crabs with grilled vegetables, corn relish, and remoulade. There are even a few dishes to please meat-and-potatoes diners, like short ribs with macaroni and cheese. But oyster fans will find it difficult to resist stuffing themselves silly on the unusually large selection, especially since oysters are served both raw and cooked – fire-roasted with sofrito butter, chorizo, and manchego. There's also a thoughtful wine list and numerous artisan beers on tap. \$\$\$

Rosa Mexicano

900 S. Miami Ave., 786-425-1001

www.rosamexicano.com

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; 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. \$\$\$

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 in 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-smoked 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. \$\$\$

Stanzione 87

87 SW 8th St., 305-606-7370

Though Neopolitan-style pizza isn't the rarity it was here a decade ago, this is Miami's only pizzeria certified authentic by Italy's Associazione Verace Pizza Napoletana. This means following stringent rules regarding oven (wood-fired), baking time (90 seconds maximum, here closer to 50), tomatoes (imported San Marzano), olive oil (extra-virgin), even flour (tipo 00, for bubbly-light crusts). Toppings do exceed the three original choices served in 19th-century Naples, but pies like the Limone (fresh mozzarella, pecorino, lemons, arugula, EV00) prove some rules should be broken. \$

Sumi Yakitori

21 SW 11th St., 786-360-5570

If your definition of yakitori has been formed from typical Americanized sticky-sweet skewers, this late-night place's grilled offerings, flavored with the subtly smoky savor of imported Japanese binchotan charcoal will be a revelation. Décor is more

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Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

stunningly stylish than at chef/owner Jeffrey Chan's adjacent Momi Ramen, but cooking is equally authentic for items like skewered duck (served with scallion sauce), juicy sausage-stuffed chicken wings, bacon-wrapped hard-boiled quail eggs, or grilled hamachi kama (super succulent yellowtail collar). Supplemental dishes, including pork buns and sautéed veggies, also excel. \$\$\$

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 sauce). But the emphasis is on contemporary ceviches/tiraditos (those with velvety aji amarillo chili sauce particularly), plus huge exotic sushi rolls, which get pretty wild. When was the last time you encountered a tempura-battered tuna, avocado, and scallion maki topped with Peru's traditional potato garnish, huancaína cheese sauce? \$\$\$

Temaris

1250 S. Miami Ave., 305-836-2747

In Japan, temaris are ornamented hand balls, used since the Seventh Century for sport and as good luck folk-art objects. At this Japanese/Latin hot spot, temaris are reinterpreted, both playfully and artfully, as beautiful, bite-size sushi balls (each about half the size of normal nigiri): vinegary rice topped with sliced raw fish or beef, plus nipples constructed from several of the eatery's dozen-and-a-half sauces. Fancier mini-balls feature fusion combinations like spicy tuna, almonds, and tobiko, or substitute crispy rice. Normal-size makis, small plates, and desserts are also fun. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

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 chill, 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 junkfood 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. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Toscana Divino

900 S. Miami Ave., 305-571-2767

When an upscale restaurant remains perennially packed during a recession, you figure they're offering something way beyond the usual generic Italian fare. While familiar favorites (Caprese salad, etc.) are available, the changing menu is highlighted by harder-to-find Tuscan specialties, albeit luxe versions: pappa al pomodoro, tomato/bread peasant soup elevated by an organic poached egg and finocchio (a regional fennel salami); an authentic-tasting “fiorentina” porterhouse, with smoked potato purée plus more traditional veggies. A budget-conscious boon: changing three-course lunches and early-bird dinners. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

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 swellegant, not stuffy, and the room's intimacy makes it a romantic spot for special occasions. \$\$\$

Tre Italian Bistro

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

“Bistro” actually sounds too Old World for this cool hangout, from the owners of downtown old-timer La Loggia, but “restolounge” sounds too glitzy. Think of it as a neighborhood “bistrolounge.” The food is mostly modernized Italian, with Latin and Asian accents: a prosciutto-and-pizza fag with Brazilian catupiry cheese; gnocchi served either as finger food (fried, with calamata olive/truffle aioli), or plated with orange-ginger sauce. But there are tomato-sauced meatballs with r'gaw 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 multi-dimensional oyster pan stew, or tartare of tuna and bursting ripe tomato topped with a delicate sous vide egg. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Verde Restaurant & Bar

1103 Biscayne Blvd., 305-375-8282

Located in the Pérez Art Museum Miami, this indoor/outdoor bay-front bistro, a project of restaurateur Stephen Starr, serves elegant, eco-friendly fare to match PAMM's green certification. (Museum admission not required.) Seafood crudos shine: hamachi “sashimi” slices flash-marinated in a subtle citrus/ponzu emulsion and enlivened by jalapeño relish; a sprout-topped, smoothly sauced tuna tartare with lemon and horseradish flavors substituting for clichéd sesame. Light pizzas topped with near paper-thin zucchini slices, goat cheese, roasted garlic EVOO, and squash blossoms virtually define farm-to-table. And doughnuts with Cuban coffee dip are the definitely local dessert. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Wolfgang's Steakhouse

315 S. Biscayne Blvd., 305-487-7130

Proprietor Wolfgang Zweiner worked for decades at Brooklyn's legendary Peter Luger's before opening the first of his own much-praised, old-school steakhouses in 2003, which explains the quality of the USDA prime-grade steaks here — dry-aged on premises for bold, beefy flavor and tender but toothsome texture. Prices are prodigious but so are portions. The 32-ounce porterhouse for two easily feeds three or four folks curious to taste the difference. Plentiful sides include a bacon starter favored by those who love Canadian bacon over pork belly. Personally, just the simple, superb steaks leave us happy as clams. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

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 small 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. \$\$

B Sweet

20 NE 41st St., 305-918-4453

At this homey neighborhood jewel, located in a former apartment building, husband/wife team Tom Worthach 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 Worthach, formerly executive pastry chef at the Mansion at Turtle Creek and similar gourmet palaces. One bite of his decadent yet impressively 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 crust, mood-wood-bun-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 zepolle (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. \$\$\$

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

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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. \$\$

Blackbrick 3451 NE 1st Ave. #103; 305-573-8886

Inspiration for the Chinese food at this hotspot came from authentic flavors Richard Hales (from Sakaya Kitchen) encountered during travels in China, but the chef's considerable imagination figures in mightily. Example: Don't expect General Tso's chicken on the changing menu. The General's Florida Gator, though, is a distinct possibility. Dishes less wild but still thrilling, due to strong spicing: bing (chewy Chinese flatbread) with char sui, garlic, and scallions; two fried tofu/veggie dishes (one hot, one not) savory enough to bring bean curd maligners (and confirmed carnivores) to their knees. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Bocce Bar 3252 NE 1st Ave. #107; 786-245-6211

A bocce court outside plus interior décor imported from Italy, floor to ceiling, serve notice that this eatery's shareable small plates (salumi/cheeses, pastas, and composed antipasti featuring perfect produce) are thoroughly Italian-inspired. But all are elevated by inventive twists from chef Timon Balloo, of adjacent Sugarcane. Vegetarian dishes especially impress: creamy polenta with a poached egg, savory rapini, and shaved truffle; crispy artichoke with mustard-seed aioli; Thumbelina carrots with mascarpone and "pistachio granola," a dish that magically makes the common root veggie a mouthful of wonderfulness; 25 year-aged balsamico ice cream. \$\$\$

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 house-made pâtés, sinfully rich pork rillettes, superb salami, and other charcuterie classics) are irresistible, and a buttery-crust, custardy quiche plus perfectly dressed salad costs little more than a fast-food combo meal. As for Postel's homemade French sweets, if you grab the last Paris-Brest, a praline butter-cream-filled puff pastry, we may have to kill you. \$\$\$

The Butcher Shop Beer Garden & Grill 165 NW 23rd St., 305-846-9120

Unbelievable but true: At the heart of this festive, budget-friendly beer-garden restaurant is an old-school gourmet butcher shop, where sausages from classic (brats, chorizo) to creative (lamb and feta) are house-made, and all beef is certified USDA prime — rarely found at even fancy steakhouses. Take your selections home to cook, or better yet, eat them here, accompanied by intriguing Old/New World sauces, garnishes (like bleu cheese fritters), sides, and starters. Desserts include a bacon sundae. Beer? Try an organic brew, custom-crafted for the eatery. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

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

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

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

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

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

City Hall the Restaurant 2004 Biscayne Blvd. 305-764-3130

After 30+ years spent guiding other owners' restaurants to success, Miami Spice program creator Steve Haas has opened his own expansive, two-floor place, on a stretch of Biscayne Boulevard that's suddenly looking fashionable. The vibe is a mix of power-dining destination and comfy neighborhood hangout, and chef Tom Azar (ex-Emeril's) has designed a varied menu to match. Highlights: an astonishingly thin/crunchy-crust pizza topped with duck confit, wild mushrooms, port wine syrup, and subtly truffled béchamel; crispy calamari (rings and legs) with light, lemony tomato emulsion; and tuna tartar that is refreshingly free of sesame oil. Big portions and a full bar to boot. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Craft Bar & Q 350 NE 24th St. #109, 786-615-6622

From the pitmasters behind the Passion BBQ food truck, this relaxing brick-and-mortar hangout features the same slow-smoked pulled pork, spareribs, and especially succulent brisket. All are available on appropriately garnished platters

or sandwiches, and as inventive twists in quesadillas, nachos, and an elaborate "burnt wedge" salad. The "craft" in the name refers to the perfect accompaniment to perfect "cue: craft beers, draft and bottled. Solid sides range from fairly normal (tropical pineapple coleslaw) to way weird (foie-gras braised collards). Save room for cakes and pies from food truck friend Marlie's Delights. \$\$

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

Not so much a restaurant as an artisanal cheese shop with complementary 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 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. \$\$\$

Daily Melt 3401 N. Miami Ave. #123, 305-573-0101

Masterminded by Chef Allen Susser, the concept is to bring diners the comfort of homemade grilled cheese — like mom's, if mom hadn't usually burned the bread and improperly melted the cheese. The Melt's custom grill press browns/melts sandwiches perfectly every time. Additionally, Susser tested numerous all-American cheeses (no imports or artisanal products) for gooey goodness. Mom probably also didn't create combinations like cheddar with green apples and Virginia ham, or allow a simple signature grilled American cheese to be dressed up with truffle butter. Accompaniments include roasted tomato soup, chopped salads, and sweet melts like s'mores. \$

The Daily Creative Food Co. 2001 Biscayne Blvd., 305-573-4535

While the food formula of this contemporary café is familiar — sandwiches, salads, soups, breakfast food, and pastries, plus coffee and fruit drinks — a creative concept differentiates the place. Signature sandwiches are named after national and local newspapers, including Biscayne Times, giving diners something to chat about. Sandwiches and salads can also be do-it-yourself projects, with an unusually wide choice of main ingredients, garnishes, breads, and condiments for the creatively minded. \$

The District 190 NE 46th St., 305-573-4199

At the house whose original restaurant tenant was One Ninety, décor has been renovated dramatically from shabby to chic, and the pan-American gastropub cuisine also matches a more mature Miami. Horacio Rivadero's dishes reflect both Latin and American influences with considerable creative flair and fun. Favorites: lobster tacos with pickled cabbage, ají Amarillo escabeche, and crisped shallots; luscious lamb tartare, featuring toasted pignolias and mustard oil; and the Black Magic mousse, with vanilla/sweet potato drizzles, house-made marshmallows, and a pistachio cookie. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

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 pastetes, similar to Cuban tamals 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. \$\$\$

Enriqueta's Sandwich Shop 186 NE 29th St., 305-573-4681

This Cuban breakfast/lunch old-timer actually serves more than sandwiches (including mammoth daily specials) — and since reopening after a fire, does so in a cleanly renovated interior. But many hardcore fans never get past the parking lot's ordering window, and outdoors really is the best place to manage Enriqueta's mojo-marinated messy masterpiece: pan con bistec, dripping with sautéed onions, melted cheese, and potato sticks; tomatoes make the fats and calories negligible. Accompany with fresh orange juice or café con leche, and you'll never want anything else, except maybe a bib. \$

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,

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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 twizzles of silky jumbo 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. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

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

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

Harry's Pizzeria 3918 N. Miami Ave., 786-275-4963

In this humble space (formerly Pizza Volante) are many key components from Michael's Genuine Food & Drink two blocks east – local/sustainable produce and artisan products; wood-oven cooking; homemade everything (including the ketchup accompanying crisp-outside, custardy-inside polenta fries, a circa 1995 Michael Schwartz signature snack from Nemo). Beautifully blistered, ultra-thin-crust pizzas range from classic Margheritas to pies with house-smoked bacon, trugole (a subtly flavorful – fruity, not funky – Alpine cheese), and other unique toppings. Rounding things out: simple but ingenious salads, ultimate zepoles, 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 pears. 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? \$\$\$

iSushi Café 3301 NE 1st Ave. #107, 305-548-8751

Ever get tempted by supermarket sushi rolls, just because they're there? Don't be. This quick-casual café has a menu similar to that at sushi/Japanese small-plates, fast-food take-out joints (individual nigiri, makis, and party platters, plus small plates like edamame, seaweed, etc.) and comparable preparation speed, too, but with ingredient quality and freshness that's more upscale. Prices are actually considerably cheaper than those of market makis that might have been sitting around for days. Additionally, ambiance, though casual, is stylish enough for a date or dinner with friends. \$\$\$

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

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

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

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

Kouzina Greek Bistro 3535 NE 2nd Ave., 305-392-1825

Across the tracks from Midtown Miami, this hidden-by-hedges spot features a patio with authentically festive ambiance and food by Alexia Apostolidi, also authentically Greek but known to locals for her critically acclaimed fare at defunct Ariston. The menu includes many mezze, both traditional (like tzatziki and eggplant spreads) and unusual (bacalao croquettes with garlic purée and roasted beet coulis; sesame-sprinkled manouri cheese envelopes), plus limited entrées highlighted by cheese/herb-crust lamb at dinner and lunchtime's lamb pita wrap. Don't miss the semolina purée side – heavenly Greek cheese grits. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

La Provence 2200 Biscayne Blvd., 305-576-8002 (See Brickell / Downtown listing.)

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. \$\$\$

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

The menu here reads like your standard sandwiches/salads/starters primer. What it doesn't convey is the freshness of the ingredients and the care that goes into their use. Entrée-size salads

range from an elegant spinach (goat cheese, pears, walnuts, raisins) to chunky homemade chicken salad on a bed of mixed greens. Sandwiches (cold baguette subs, hot pressed paninis, or wraps, all accompanied by side salads) include a respectable Cuban and a veggie wrap with a deceptively rich-tasting light salad cream. \$\$\$

Lime Fresh Mexican Grill Shops at Midtown Miami Buena Vista Avenue, 305-576-5463

Like its South Beach predecessor, this Lime was an instant hit, as much for being a hip new Midtown hangout as for its carefully crafted Tex-Mex food. The concept is "fast casual" rather than fast food – meaning nice enough for a night out. It also means ingredients are always fresh. Seafood tacos are about as exotic as the menu gets, but the mahi mahi for fish tacos comes from a local supplier, and salsas are housemade daily. Niceties include low-carb tortillas and many Mexican beers. \$

Limón y Sabor 3045 Biscayne Blvd., 786-431-5739

In this dramatically renovated space, the room is now light and open, and the food is authentic Peruvian, with seafood a specialty. Portions are huge, prices low, quality high. Especially good are their versions of pescado a lo macho (fish fillet topped with mixed seafood in a creamy, zesty sauce); jalea (breaded and deep-fried fish, mixed seafood, and yuca, topped with onion/pepper/lime salsa), and yuca in hot yet fruity rocoto chili cream sauce. \$\$\$

Lost & Found Saloon 185 NW 36th St., 305-576-1008

There's an artsy/alternative feel to this casual and friendly Wynwood eatery, which, since opening as a weekday-only breakfast and lunch joint in 2005, has grown with its neighborhood. It's now open for dinner six nights a week, serving Southwestern-style fare at rock-bottom prices. Dishes like piñon and pepita-crust salmon, chipotle-drizzled endive stuffed with lump crab, or customizable tacos average \$5-\$8. Also available: big breakfasts and salads, hearty soups, housemade pastries like lemon-crust wild berry pie, and a hip beer and wine list. \$

Mandolin Aegean Bistro 4312 NE 2nd Ave., 305-576-6066

Inside this converted 1940s home's blue-and-white dining room – or even more atmospherically, its tree-sheltered garden – diners feast on authentic rustic fare from both Greece and Turkey. Make a meal of multinational mezze: a Greek sampler of creamy tzatziki yogurt dip, smoky eggplant purée, and airy tarama caviar spread; and a Turkish sampler of hummus, fava purée, and rich tomato-walnut dip. The meze of mussels in lemon 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. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Mercato 4141 NE 2nd Ave., 786-332-3772

Adjacent to Dena Marino's hot hangout MC Kitchen, the contemporary Italian chef's artisanal market and breakfast/lunch café is for diners wanting a quicker (but not fast-food) sit-down meal, or inventive take-out. Pressed for time? Try a pressed sandwich like Marino's Italian Cubano (porchetta, prosciutto cotto, Swiss, pickles, and Dijon mustard dressing, on ciabatta). Along with hot or cold sandwiches, there's a wide variety of homemade breakfast pastries, breads, cookies, and fresh-baked quiches, plus salads and a daily-changing soup. Market items include exotic jams, craft beers, and Marino's private label EVOO. \$\$\$

Michael's Genuine Food and Drink 130 NE 40th St., 305-573-5550

An instant smash hit, this truly neighborhood-oriented restaurant from chef Michael Schwartz offers down-to-earth fun food in a comfortable, casually stylish indoor/outdoor setting. Fresh, organic ingredients are emphasized, but dishes range from cutting-edge (crispy beef cheeks with whipped celeriac, celery salad, and chocolate reduction) to simple comfort food: deviled eggs, homemade potato chips with pan-fried onion dip, or a whole wood-roasted chicken. There's also a broad range of prices and portion sizes to encourage frequent visits. Michael's Genuine also features an eclectic, affordable wine list and a full bar. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Mike's at Venetia 555 NE 15th St., 9th floor, 305-374-5731

This family-owned Irish pub, on the pool deck of the Venetia condo, for more than 15 years has been a popular lunch and dinner hangout for local journalists and others who appreciate honest 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. \$\$\$

Mmmm 2519 NW 2nd Ave., 786-703-3409

On the same strip as Wynwood Kitchen & Bar and Joey's, this more casual alt-culture café is a sandwich/soup/salad spot with a difference – chef Alan McLennan, whose mentors include Michelin 3-star chefs Michel Guerard and Fredy Giradet. The elite French training is reflected in Mmmm's signature items: tartines, open-face sandwiches on crusty toasted sourdough indistinguishable from Paris's famed Poilane bread, except made in Miami. Among the perfectly balanced toppings are an especially tasty tuna and artichoke with olive mayo, or daily specials like crab/avocado. Wine, too, and locally made tropical ice creams from Azucar. \$\$\$

Moloko 3201 N. Miami Ave. #104, 305-572-9336

Though self-subtitled "The Art of Crêpe and Coffee," this cool café, in the Shops at Midtown Miami, offers much more. Also on the



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free-wheeling menu are unusual items like a reinvented Hawaiian loco moco rice plate (typically topped with a hamburger patty, fried egg, and brown gravy, here featuring protein of choice, eggs any style, and spinach cream sauce). The coffee, local Panther, and plumply stuffed sweet or savory crêpes are indeed art forms, but you'll find changing exhibits by local artists, too. Special happenings include live music and kids-eat-free evenings. \$-\$

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 (crispy panko-crusted and apricot/soy-glazed); even a "voluptuous grilled cheese sandwich" – definitely a "don't ask, don't tell your cardiologist" item. \$-\$-\$

NoVe Kitchen & Bar 1750 N. Bayshore Dr., 305-503-1000

At NoVe, the restolounge at the Opera Tower condo in NoVe (new nickname for the bayfront neighborhood north of the Venetian Causeway), the food is East-West. Meaning you can get burgers, pasta, and so on, or try the inventive Asian small plates and sushi specialties Hiro Terada originated at his past posts, Doraku and Moshi Moshi: the Atlantis roll (tempura conch with asparagus, avocado, scallions, and curry sauce); spicy, crunchy fried tofu atop kimchi salad; much more. Open 6:00 a.m. for breakfast to 3:00 a.m., it is kid-friendly and dog-friendly, too. \$-\$-\$

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/restaurant 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 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. \$

Palatino 3004 NW 2nd Ave., 786-360-5200

When longtime favorite Jamaican joint Clive's fell victim to gentrification, few expected to find similarly skilled old-school Caribbean-American soul food in Wynwood again, especially not at old-school

prices. But that's what this small, super-friendly mom-and-pop spot serves up: breakfasts like akee and salt fish, fried dumpling and callaloo, or an egg/maple sausage/cheese grits combo; plates (with sides) of oxtails, curry goat, jerk chicken; richly crusted piquant chicken or meat patties that contend with Miami's best. Surprises include homemade pastries, and \$1 ice cream cones in tropical flavors like soursop. \$-\$

Pasha's 3801 Biscayne Blvd., 305-573-0201 (See Brickell/Downtown listing)

Pizza Pazza 275 NE 18th St. #109, 786-762-2238

Close your eyes while eating Naples-born Sal Matuozzo's wood-oven pies and you'll be in Naples. Crusts: Thin rather than Roman super-thin; there's just enough chewy thickness to emphasize you're eating honest bread, not a cracker. Toppings: High-quality (fresh fior di latte, not commercial mozzarella); intensely flavorful sauce featuring imported San Marzano tomatoes; garnishes including fresh black truffles) and applied judiciously enough that each bite tastes slightly different – neither ungenerously Spartan nor crassly overloaded. Prices: higher than typical neighborhood pizzerias, lower than a plane ticket to Italy. \$

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. \$

R House 2727 NW 2nd Ave., 305-576-0240

A strikingly stylish restaurant that's part art gallery could be pretentious, in a still largely ungentrified area of cutting-edge artsy yet still working-class Wynwood. But modular movable walls to accommodate changing installations, and its own name make it clear the art component is a serious working gallery. Hardworking chef/owner Rocco Carulli demonstrates a locals orientation with a menu highlighted by skillfully crafted, hearty entrées (Brazilian seafood moqueta stew, coffee/chili-rubbed short ribs, sweet pea falafel) available in affordable half-portion: small plates of big food for starving artists. \$-\$-\$

Sakaya Kitchen Shops at Midtown Miami, Buena Vista Avenue 305-576-8096

This chef-driven, fast-casual Asian eatery is more an izakaya (in Japan, a pub with food) than a sakaya (sake shop). But why quibble about words with so many more intriguing things to wrap your mouth around? The concept takes on street-food favorites from all over Asia, housemade daily from quality fresh ingredients. French Culinary Institute-trained Richard Hales does change his menu, so we'd advise immediately grabbing some crispy Korean chicken wings and Chinese-inspired, open-faced roast pork buns with sweet chili sauce and homemade pickles. \$

Sake Room 275 NE 18th St., 305-755-0122

Sake takes a back seat to sushi – and sophisticated décor – at this small but sleek restolounge. Among the seafood offerings, you won't find exotica or local catches, but all the usual sushi/sashimi favorites, though in more interesting form, thanks to sauces that go beyond standard soy – spicy sriracha, garlic/ponzu oil, and many more. Especially recommended: the yuzu hamachi roll, the lobster tempura maki, and panko-coated spicy shrimp with hot-and-sour Mayo and a salad. \$-\$-\$

Salad Creations 2001 Biscayne Blvd., 305-576-5333

At this fast-casual restaurant, diners can enjoy a wide variety of chef-created salads and wraps, or go the DIY route, choosing from one of four greens options; four dozen add-ons (fresh, dried, or pickled veggies and fruits, plus cheeses and slightly sinful pleasures like candied pecans or wonton strips); a protein (seafood or poultry); and two dozen dressings, ranging from classic (Thousand Island, bleu cheese) to creative contemporary (spicy Asian peanut, cucumber wasabi, blueberry pomegranate). Additionally, the place creates lovely catering platters, plus individual lunchboxes – perfect picnic or plane food. \$

Salumeria 104 3451 NE 1st Ave. #104, 305-424-9588

In Italy, salumerias started, like American delicatessens, as shops selling salumi (cured meats), but evolved into the equivalent of eat-in deli/restaurants that also serve cold and hot prepared foods. At this modern Midtown salumeria, the soups-to-salads-to-sweets range of fare is the same. Custom-sliced imported cold cuts are a main focus, especially for those who enjoy taste-testing a plate pairing Italy's two most famous prosciuttos: Parma and San Daniele. But homemade pastas are also impressive, as are hard-to-find regional entrées like *fegato alla Veneziana*, which will turn liver-haters into lovers. \$-\$-\$

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; home-made 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 house-made 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. \$-\$-\$

Soi Chinese Kitchen 645 NW 20th St., 786-482-0238

No chop suey. No kung pao anything, either. In fact, anything on Soi's menu that sounds like something from a normal Chinese eatery won't be: char sui ribs come with delicate corn pancakes, wonton soup is kafir lime broth with a mushroom/truffle-butter-stuffed ravioli, lo mein is housemade noodles with pork belly and sous vide 63-degree egg. Basically it's contemporary Chinese fine dining fare similar in creativity and quality ingredients to ultra-upscale Hakkasan's, but served by a tiny take-out joint (with a few patio tables and counter stools) at neighborhood prices. \$

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. \$-\$-\$

SuViche 2751 N. Miami Ave., 305-960-7097

As its fusion name suggests, this artsy indoor/outdoor eatery doesn't merely serve a mix of Japanese sushi and Latin ceviches but a true fusion of both, largely owing to signature sauces (many based on Peru's citrusy/creamy *acevichado* emulsion with Japanese spicing) that are applied to sushi rolls and ceviche bowls alike. Additionally there are some popular Peruvian-fusion cooked dishes like *Chifa* (Peruvian-Chinese) *lomo saltado*, served traditionally, as an entrée, or creatively in springs rolls). To add to the fun, accompany your meal with a cocktail from Miami's only pisco bar. \$-\$-\$

Big Fish
Italian
RESTAURANT
WELCOME CUSTOMERS BY BOAT

La Dolce Vita
EVERY SATURDAY
LIVE DJ
10PM TO CLOSE

From our menu

Tartare di tonno	18
<i>Blue fin tuna tartar with avocado and lemon sauce</i>	
Insalata di mare	19
<i>Mixed seafood served in lemon sauce</i>	
Carpaccio di polpo	17
<i>Thinly sliced octopus with arugula and cherry tomatoes</i>	
Polpo alla griglia	16
<i>Grilled octopus with hummus and sun-dried tomatoes</i>	
Calamari fritti	17
<i>Fried calamari served with spicy marinara sauce</i>	
Zuppa allo scoglio con crostoni di pane	18
<i>Seafood soup with bruschetta bread</i>	
Insalata di Salmone	18
<i>Grilled salmon filet served with spinach and pears in lemon sauce</i>	
Linguine all'aragosta	26
<i>Linguine with maine lobster meat and fresh cherry tomato sauce</i>	
Spaghetti alle vongole veraci	22
<i>Spaghetti with clams, garlic, chili flakes, white wine and extra virgin olive oil</i>	
Branzino al cartoccio	28
<i>Mediterranean sea bass filet baked in the oven with cherry tomatoes black olives and capers</i>	
Cernia	26
<i>Parsley breaded grouper fillet sautéed in white wine and capers</i>	
Scaloppine al limone	20
<i>Seared beef scaloppine, sautéed in lemon sauce</i>	

Check our website for the full lunch and dinner menu

OPEN EVERY DAY
LUNCH/DINNER 11AM - LATE NIGHT
620 NE 78th Street, 33138 Miami - FL - Ph 305 373 1770
www.thebigfishrestaurant.com

Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

Thea 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 restoloungue Joey's, which explains both the stylishness and the menu, highlighted by imaginative wood-oven designed pizzas, plus artisan charcuterie/cheese platters, creative salads, and housemade caramel gelato. Not your typical hospital food. Call ahead regarding dinner. At this writing, it's being served Fridays only. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Tony Chan's Water Club

1717 N. Bayshore Dr., 305-374-8888
The décor at this upscale place, located in the Grand, looks too glitzy to serve anything but politely Americanized Chinese food. But the American dumbing-down is minimal. Many dishes are far more authentic and skillfully prepared than those found elsewhere in Miami, like delicate but flavorful yu pan quail. Moist sea bass fillet has a beautifully balanced topping of scallion, ginger, cilantro, and subtly sweet/salty sauce. And Peking duck is served as three traditional courses: crêpe-wrapped crispy skin, meat sautéed with crisp veggies, savory soup to finish. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

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 grow-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 Café

450 NW 27th St., 305-576-1105
Located inside the Wynwood Warehouse Project, an art gallery/workshop/consulting space, this alt-culture eatery is sort of a starvation-budget, working-artists' version of the Pérez Art Museum Miami's high-end café, Verde: light-bite focused, but with unbelievably low prices. Specialty is "The \$3 Sandwich," choice of quality coldcut (pastrami, salami, turkey, or ham) plus provolone, spinach, tomato, and Dijon mustard sauce. A \$5 "Monster" features three meats. Also notably tasty and cheap are coffees, desserts, and fresh-fruit smoothies (including a take on NYC's classic Orange Julius). \$

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, Eric S. White, 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. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

BarMeli

725 NE 79th St., 305-754-5558
Just east of Liza Meli's defunct Ouzo's Taverna, her similarly rustic-festive tapas and wine bar/market has an extensive, mostly small-plates menu including all of Ouzo's Greatest Greek Hits (refreshingly light and lemony taromosalata carp roe spread, amazingly succulent grilled fresh sardines, her mom's lemon cake, more), plus more broadly Mediterranean creations like an Italian-inspired grana padano fish, uniquely topped crostini and flatbreads, cheese/charcuterie boards. The boutique wine selection focuses on unusual (sometimes virtually unknown, and unavailable elsewhere in town) Mediterranean varietals from family-owned vineyards. \$\$

Big Fish

620 NE 78th St., 305-373-1770
Longtime locals who remember the uniquely Miamian ambiance of the first Big Fish, a beloved Miami River hole-in-the-wall restoloungue, will want to visit this rebirth featuring an equally cool waterside setting on the Little River, plus an original owner and similar traditional Italian dishes. Our personal fave is spaghetti alla vongole veraci (with tiny true Venetian clams, hard to find today even in Venice), but you'll know what you like on the familiar menu. Best seating: the expansive extensively (and expensively) rebuilt riverfront deck. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Biscayne Diner

8601 Biscayne Blvd., 305-756-9910
At this architecturally mixed-era diner (signage: 1960s Jetsons; building: 1930s urban-gritty), the menu is equally eclectic. Example: The entrée section includes meatloaf, but the other half-dozen dishes are Italian. Hefty burgers are always terrific. Otherwise, the chef seems most excited by experimentation, so the blackboard's Daily Specials are the interesting way to go, whether the item is an ambitious quail or a fresh-baked old-fashioned pie. If we could stop stuffing ourselves silly on the big, fat, breaded onion rings, we could tell you more. But that's not gonna happen.

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. \$\$

B & M Market

219 NE 79th St., 305-757-2889
Don't let the rustic look of this mom-and-pop Caribbean market/eatery, or its ungentrified location, scare you. Walk to the kitchen in the back of the market, order, and then either eat-in (at two tables) or take-out some of Miami's tastiest, and cheapest, West Indian food. Celeb chef Michelle Bernstein is a longtime fan of the jerk chicken, ackee and saltfish, and pigeon peas and rice cooked in coconut milk. Rotis rule here; the flatbreads come plain or, better yet, in curry chicken, goat, or remarkably full-flavored vegetarian versions. \$

Choices Vegan Café

646 NE 79th St., 786-803-8352
Vegan fare (not just vegetarian, but dairy-free) can be a hard sell. But not Choices' 100% plant-based breakfast/lunch/dinner dishes, even though, being also 95% organic, they're relatively pricey. Especially recommended: hefty wraps (enclosed in varied grain tortillas or, more uniquely, in collard leaves), featuring a variety of flavorful mock-meat patties plus fresh veggies, enhanced with globally inspired sauces and add-ons like savory soy chorizo. Desserts like raw chocolate mousse cake taste satisfyingly sinful. To drink: smoothies, or go wild with organic beers and wines. \$\$\$

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. \$

Florito

5555 NE 2nd Ave., 305-754-2899
While owners Max and Cristian Alvarez's description of their eatery as "a little Argentinean shack" is as charming as the brothers themselves, it conveys neither the place's cool warmth nor the food's exciting elegance. Dishes are authentically Argentine, but far from standard steakhouse stuff. Chef Cristian's background at popular pop-up The Dining Room becomes instantly understandable in dishes like orange and herb-scented lechon confit (with pumpkin mash, pickled cabbage salad, and Dijon mojo) or sopa de calabaza, derived from Argentina's peasant stew locro, but here a refined, creamy soup. Many more surprises – even steaks. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Flavorish Market

7283 Biscayne Blvd., 305-754-8787
As Zabar's reflects Manhattan's Upper Westside neighborhood, this smaller specialty foods shop is geared toward Miami's Upper Eastside lifestyle. The carefully curated stock ranges widely: upscale packaged foods; boutique wines/beers; artisanal cheeses and cured meats; cookbooks, kitchen utensils, more. But highlights are locally produced fare: Mimi's famed raviolis; Roc Kat's tropical ice creams; chef/restaurateur Ken Lyon's prepared foods, including daily-changing dinners for two; Zak the Baker's crusty sourdough breads, plus sandwiches on same. Best-kept secret: While there's no official café component, comfy counter seats enable on-premises breakfasting, lunching, and coffee/pastry breaks. \$\$\$

The Federal Food, Drink & Provisions

1532 Biscayne Blvd., 305-758-9559
At the Fed, expect what locals know to expect from sommelier/chef team Aniece Meinhold and Cesar Zapata, whose previous restaurant concepts have included Blue Piano (gourmet stoner snacks) and Vietnamese pop-up Phuc Yea. That is, expect the unexpected. The Fed is an updated tavern featuring creative, from-scratch takes on traditional American regional dishes: flaky Southern biscuits with sausage gravy (and crisp-coated sweetbreads, if desired); Northeastern-inspired "pig wings" (pork drumettes with homemade Buffalo sauce, blue cheese mousse, and pickled veggies). Desserts, from third partner Alejandro Ortiz, include sinful sticky buns. \$\$\$

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. \$

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 Tour Eiffel

7281 Biscayne Blvd., 305-754-0014
This cute restaurant/crêperie serves three meals, from traditional French breakfasts of croissants/baguettes and jam, or heftier ones including pain perdu (fried French toast), to dinners featuring a chef's special \$28.90 two-course meal of classics: country pâté, Provençal fish soup, bold boeuf bourgignon, creamy-rich poulet à la Normande, a moules/frites that even comes with a glass of muscadet, and many more starter/entrée choices. But definitely don't miss the crêpes, served all day in both sweet and savory varieties – the latter made correctly, for a change, with heftier buckwheat flour. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

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 restoloungue, 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: bordel-lored 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. \$\$\$

Michy's

6927 Biscayne Blvd., 305-759-2001
Don't even ask why Michele Bernstein, with a top-chef résumé, not to mention regular Food Network appearances, opened a homey restaurant in an emerging but far from fully gentrified neighborhood. Just be glad she did, as you dine on white almond gazpacho or impossibly creamy ham and blue cheese croquettes. Though most full entrées also come in half-size portions (at almost halved prices), the tab can add up fast. The star herself is usually in the kitchen. Parking in the rear off 69th Street. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Mina's Mediterraneo

749 NE 79th St., 786-391-0300
Unlike most restaurants labeled "Mediterranean," this one, decorated with restrained modern elegance, really does have dishes from countries surrounding all sides of the sea (though not necessarily from the countries' seaside regions, as boeuf Bourguignon attests). Our favorites, like owner Yasmine Kotb, whose heritage is Egyptian-via-Texas, and her mom, the chef, are those featuring exotic Eastern/North African tastes – with twists. Especially fun: Egypt's besara, a light fava-based hummus; falafel "sliders" in warm pita with Israeli salad, slaw, and tahini; and an unusual side of grilled kale with yogurt dressing and hazelnuts. \$\$

Mi Vida Café

7244 Biscayne Blvd., 305-759-6020
At this indoor/outdoor vegetarian and raw-food vegan café, culinary-school-trained chef/owner Daniela Lagamma produces purist produce-oriented dishes that are easy to understand, like sparkling-fresh salads and smoothies, plus more technique-intensive mock meat or cheese items, based on soy proteins, that satisfy even confirmed carnivores. Particularly impressive on the regular menu: a superior Sloppy Joe made with mushroom confit, braised homemade seitan, spinach, and rich almond romesco sauce; and cannelloni de verdura, homemade crepes stuffed with spinach and cashew "ricotta." Do check the daily specials, too. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Moonchine

7100 Biscayne Blvd., 305-759-3999
Like its Brickell-area sibling Indochine, this friendly Asian bistro serves fare from three nations: Japan, Thailand, and Vietnam. Menus are also similar, split between traditional dishes like pad Thai and East/West fusion creations like the Vampire sushi roll (shrimp tempura, tomato, cilantro, roasted garlic). But it also carves out its own identity with original creations, including yellow curry-spiced fried rice. Nearly everything is low in sodium, fat, and calories. A large rear patio is inviting for dining and entertainment. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Moshi Moshi

7232 Biscayne Blvd., 786-220-9404
This offspring of South Beach old-timer Moshi Moshi is a cross between a sushi bar and an izakaya (Japanese tapas bar). Even more striking than the hip décor is the food's unusually upscale quality. Sushi ranges from pristine individual nigiri to over-the-top maki rolls. Tapas are intriguing, like arabiki sausage, a sweet-savory pork fingerling frank; rarely found in restaurants even in Japan, they're popular Japanese home-cooking items. And rice-based plates like Japanese curry (richer/sweeter than Indian types) satisfy even the biggest appetites. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Monday \$10.95

1/2 Deli Sandwich and cup of Soup served with Cole Slaw or Potato Salad.

Tuesday \$10.50

Tuna Fish Appetizer or Sandwich served with Cole Slaw or Potato Salad. Choice of Bagel or Toast.

Wednesday \$11.95

Open-face Turkey Platter served with Mashed Potatoes and House Vegetables.

Thursday \$11.95

Choice of Corned Beef or Pastrami Sandwich served with Cole Slaw or Potato Salad.

Friday \$13.95

Nova Appetizer served with Lettuce, Tomato, Onion, Cream Cheese and garnish. Choice of Bagel or Bialy.

No Substitutions • No Sharing • Dine-In ONLY

Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

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 pile at a time. The fare includes housemade sausages (mild veal bratwurst, hearty mixed beef/pork bauerwurst, 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 rest of the neighborhood, always a neighborhood focal point, now more food-focused. The contemporary comfort food menu ranges from fun small plates (deviled eggs with smoked salmon and dill, crisp-fried foccchi pockets with gorgonzola sauce, oysters Rockefeller) to heartier items like burgers and steak au poivre. And don't miss the sticky date/toffee pudding. \$\$-\$\$\$

Sushi Siam

5582 NE 4th Ct., 305-751-7818

On the menu of sushi-bar specialties plus a small selection of Thai and Japanese cooked dishes, there are a few surprises, such as a unique lobster maki that's admittedly huge in price (\$25.95), but also in size: six ounces of crisp-fried lobster chunks, plus asparagus, avocado, lettuce, tobiko (flying fish), masago (smelt) roes, and special sauces. Thai dishes come with a choice of more than a dozen sauces, ranging from traditional red or green curries to the inventive, such as an unconventional honey sauce. \$\$\$

Sweet Saloon

7100 Biscayne Blvd., 305-759-3999

At this dessert/snack/cocktail bar, from the owner of Moonshine, 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 rangoons, 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 Stoli and lemongrass). \$\$

Taperia Raca

7010 Biscayne Blvd., 786-751-8756

From the chef/GM team behind Giorgio Rapicavoli's rebelliously eclectic fare at Coral Gables' Eating House, Taperia has a very different concept: traditional Spanish tapas with subtle creative twists... that make a big difference. Transformations come from both Rapicavoli and chef de cuisine Ryan Harrison (mastermind behind the defunct Preservation, where the focus was house-curing/pickling/smoking): classic <1>patatas bravas</1>, spicy fried potatoes made more complex by smoked tomato sauce; original *patatas contentas*, calmed by Eating House's truffle-enriched carbonara sauce. And homemade preserves accent many dishes, including seductive chicken-liver mousse. \$\$\$

Via Verdi Cucina Rustica

6900 Biscayne Blvd., 786-615-2870

After years of critical acclaim cooking the cuisine of their native Piedmont at ultra-upscale Quattro, on Lincoln Road, twin brother chefs Nicola and Fabrizio Carro decided to work for themselves, hands-on renovating the former space of MiMo District pioneer Uva 69. Cuisine here is similarly authentic, with creative twists. But there are important differences: emphasis on local, rather than mostly imported, ingredients; inspiration from all Italian regions; and best, astonishing affordability. Housemade spinach/ricotta gnudi baked in an ocean of burrata is a delight, but it's hard to go wrong here. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

NORTH BAY VILLAGE

Oggi's 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 luxurious crab ravioli with creamy lobster sauce, with occasional forays into creative exotica such as seaweed spaghetti, with sea scallops, shittakes, and fresh tomatoes. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Paprika

1624 NE 79th St., 305-397-8777

This exotically decorated restaurant, serving Mediterranean cuisine from North Africa and the Middle East, has several unusual features, including Friday-night belly dancing and a hookah lounge. Food menus also feature appealing, unusual choices (za'atar-spiced seared lamb loin carpaccio with chickpea purée; stuffed boureka puff pastries; mussels in creamy saffron sauce) along with familiar hummus, kabobs, more. Lunchtime sandwich standouts: merguez (intensely spiced lamb sausage) with tzatziki, hummus, salad, and fiery harissa sauce, on fresh pita. \$\$-\$\$\$

Sushi Siam

1524 NE 79th St. Causeway, 305-864-7638

(See Miami / Upper Eastside listing)

NORTH BEACH

Café Prima Pasta

414 71st St., 305-867-0106

Who says old dogs can't learn new tricks? Opened in 1993 (with 28 seats), the Cea family's now-sprawling trattoria has added inventive chef Carlos Belon and modern menu items, including foccchi rapera (pear/cheese-filled pasta purses with truffled prosciutto cream sauce), an unlikely (soy sauce and parmesan cheese?) but luscious Italian/Japanese fusion tuna carpaccio, and fresh-fruit sorbets. But traditionalists needn't worry. All the old favorites, from the café's famed beef carpaccio to eggplant parm and pastas sauced with Argentine-Italian indulgence, are still here and still satisfying. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Lou's Beer Garden

7337 Harding Ave., 305-704-7879

"Beer garden" conjures up an image of Bavarian bratwurst, lederhosen, and oompah bands — none of which you'll find here. It's actually a hip hideaway in the New Hotel's pool-patio area, a locals' hangout with interesting eclectic fare and a perennial party atmosphere. Especially recommended: delicately pan-fried mini-crab cakes served with several housemade sauces; hefty bleu cheese burgers with Belgian-style double-cooked fries; blackened "angry shrimp" with sweet/sour sauce; fried fresh sardines. And of course much beer, a changing list of craft brews. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Tamarin 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 Longsomborn (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 Tamarin's very affordable prices, you might as well let the man's impeccably trained kitchen staff do the work for you. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

MIAMI SHORES

Côte Gourmet

9999 NE 2nd Ave., #112, 305-754-9012

If only every Miami neighborhood could have a neighborhood restaurant like this low-priced little French jewel. The menu is mostly simple stuff: breakfast croissants, crêpe, soups, sandwiches, salads, sweets, and a few more substantial specials like a Tunisian-style brik (buttery phyllo pastry stuffed with tuna, onions, potatoes, and tomatoes) with a mesclun side salad. But everything is homemade, including all breads, and prepared with impeccable ingredients, classic French technique, and meticulous attention to detail, down to the stylish plaid ribbons that hold together the café's baguette sandwiches. \$\$-\$\$

Miami Shores Country Club

10000 Biscayne Blvd., 305-795-2363

Formerly members-only, the restaurant/lounge facilities of this classy 1939 club are now open to the public — always, lunch and dinner. Not surprisingly, ambiance is retro and relaxed, with golf course views from both bar and indoor/outdoor dining room. The surprise is the food — some classic (steaks, club sandwiches) but other dishes quite contemporary: an Asian ahi tuna tower; a lavish candied-walnut, poached-pear, grilled chicken salad; and fresh pasta specials. Prices are phenomenal, with dinner entrées \$9 to \$17; drinks average \$3 to \$4. \$\$

PizzaFiore

9540 NE 2nd Ave., 305-754-1924

Owned by Arcoub Abderrahim, who opened South Beach's original PizzaFiore way back in 1996, this café serves the kind of nostalgic, medium-thin crust, oozing-with-goopy-cheese pizzas reminiscent of our childhood pies in northern NJ Sopranos' territory, except now there are options for today's toppings — sundried tomatoes, buffalo mozzarella, etc. But there's also a full menu of Italian-American classics, including antipasto salads, subs, and particularly popular, pastas. Garlic rolls are a must, but we didn't have to tell you that. \$\$\$

NORTH MIAMI

Alaska Coffee Roasting Co.

13130 Biscayne Blvd., 786-332-4254

When people speak of the West Coast as the USA's quality coffeehouse pioneer territory, they're thinking Seattle — and then south through coastal California. North to Alaska? Not so much. But owner Michael Gesser did indeed open this hip place's parent in Fairbanks back in 1993, after years of traveling through every coffee-growing country in the world. Brews like signature smooth yet exotic Ethiopian Yirgacheffe don't even need cream or sugar, much



less frappe frou-frou. All beans are house-roasted. There's solid food, too: brick-oven pizzas, salads, sandwiches, and pastries. \$\$\$

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 mild-tasting 'cue ranging from the expected pulled pork, ribs, brisket, and chicken to more unusual items like hot-smoked salmon. As for burgers, many feature unique ingredients such as mayo flavored like red-eye gravy, with strong coffee, or the bun of the infamous Luther: a sweet-glazed mock (holeless) Krispy Kreme donut. Costs are comparatively high, but such is the price of fame. \$\$\$

Cane á Sucre
899 NE 125th St., 305-891-0123

From the Vega brothers (who pioneered the Design and MiMo districts with, respectively, the original Cane A Sucre and UVA 69), this charming artisanal sandwich bar is the perfect breakfast/lunch stop before or after ingesting visual arts at nearby MOMA. Actually, creations like El Fig (fig confit, gorgonzola cheese, walnuts, and honey on an authentically French crisp-crustured 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. \$\$\$

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 achote, 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. \$\$\$

Fish Fish
15400 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 brioches buns include a scrumptious patty with Gruyere, mushrooms, and onion marmalade. The Fireman is a jalapeño/chipotle scorcher. There are even turkey and veggie variations. Other draws are hand-cut fries, beer-battered onion rings, a top-drawer beer list, budget-priced combo specials, conversation-friendly acoustics, and a South Beach rarity: free parking. \$\$\$

Giraffas
1821 NE 123rd St., 786-866-9007

Festooned with eye-poppingly colored panels and giraffes – subtler but everywhere – this first North American branch of a wildly popular, 30-year-old Brazilian fast/casual chain is the flagship of a planned 4000 U.S. Giraffas. Given that the steaks, especially the tender, flavorful picanha, rival those at the most upscale rodizio joints – and beat the sword-wielding grandstanders for custom cooking (because staff asks your preference) – we'd bet on giraffe domination. Overstuffed grilled sandwiches, salads, even tasty veggie options are all here, too. The cheese bread is a must. \$\$\$

Happy Sushi & Thai
2224 NE 123rd St., 305-895-0165

Grab a booth at this cozy eatery, which serves all the expected Thai and sushi bar standards, including weekday lunch specials. But there are also delightful surprises, like grilled kawahagi (triggerfish) with seasoned Japanese mayonnaise. This intensely savory/sweet "Japanese home cooking" treat satisfies the same yen as beef jerky, except without pulling out your teeth. Accompanied by a bowl of rice, it's a superb lunch. For raw-fish fans, spicy, creamy salmon tartare (accompanied by hiyashi wakame seaweed) is a winner. \$\$\$

Here Comes the Sun
2188 NE 123rd St., 305-893-5711

At this friendly natural foods establishment, one of Miami's first, there's a full stock of vitamins and nutritional supplements. But the place's hearty soups, large variety of entrées (including fresh fish and chicken as well as vegetarian selections), lighter bites like miso burgers with secret "sun sauce" (which would probably make old sneakers taste good), and daily specials are a tastier way to get healthy. An under-the-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 celeb chef was a kid. The "piccolo" space has since expanded, but the place is still child-friendly, and portions are still prodigious. Most dishes evoke nostalgia, including our favorite white wine/lemon sauce-drenched veal piccata with capers and artichokes. There are surprises not found at old school red-sauce joints, too, like lunchtime's surprisingly tasty Cuban sandwich. \$\$\$

KC Healthy Cooking
11900 Biscayne Blvd. #103, 786-502-4193

Hidden inside an office building across from Home Depot, this family-friendly spot has no fancy features – such as a sign outside. But walk through the corporate lobby and you'll find truly heartfelt, health-conscious, homemade dishes, some surprisingly sophisticated. There's no red meat on the globally influenced menu, but there are poultry and fish, along with many vegetarian or vegan choices: organic pumpkin soup, zingy Thai curried veggie soup, an elegantly layered, molded tuna/avocado/quinoa "cupcake," a real Bundt cake – vegan (no dairy) but remarkably tasty. \$\$\$

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. \$\$\$

Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

King's Chef
476 NE 125th St., 305-895-7878

While authentic Chinese fine dining fare is best eaten fresh from the wok, Chinese take-out is almost a separate genre with its own standards – prime being how its tantalizing scent fills the inside of your car. Even basic bargain-priced Szechuan beef combination platters from this humble establishment do that so well, you'll find yourself taking the long way home. There are surprises one wouldn't expect, too, including a wide variety of tasty tofu dishes – spicy ma po, General Tso-style, honey garlic, many more – and other savory vegetarian treats. \$\$\$

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 roomhouse ambiance, notably the red leatherette booths, add to Mama's charm. \$\$\$

Pastry Is Art
12509 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. \$\$\$

Piccolo Pizzeria
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. \$\$\$

Rice House of Kabob
14480 Biscayne Blvd., 305-944-4899

Since 2006, South Beach's original Rice House has been serving up mountainous platters of basmati rice and Greek salad topped with Persian-style marinated/char-grilled meat, poultry, seafood, or veggie kabobs – for very little money. This branch of what is now a growing chain has the same menu (which also features wraps, for lighter eaters) and the same policy of custom-cooking kabobs, so expect fresh, not fast, food. Sides of must-o-keyar and must-o-mooseer (thick yogurt dips with herbed cukes or shallots) are must-haves. \$\$\$

Steve's Pizza
12101 Biscayne Blvd., 305-891-0202

At the end of a debauched night of excess, some paper-thin designer pizza with wisps of smoked salmon (or similar fluff) doesn't do the trick. Open till 3:00 or 4:00 a.m., Steve's has, since 1974, been serving the kind of comforting, retro pizzas people crave at that hour. As in Brooklyn, tomato sauce is sweet, with strong oregano flavor. Mozzarella is applied with abandon. Toppings are stuff that give strength: pepperoni, sausage, meatballs, onions, and peppers. \$

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. \$

NORTH MIAMI BEACH

Blue Marlin Fish House
2500 NE 163rd St., 305-957-8822

Located inside Oleta River State Park, this casual outdoor eatery is a rare surprise for nature lovers. The featured item is still the house-smoked fish this historic venue began producing in 1938, available in three varieties: salmon, mahi mahi, and the signature blue marlin. But the smokehouse now also turns out ribs and delectable brisket. Other new additions include weekend fish fries. Entry is directly from 163rd Street, not through the main park entrance. No admission fee. \$

Chef Rolf's Tuna's Seafood Restaurant
17850 W. Dixie Hwy., 305-942-0630

Known for decades as simply Tuna's, this indoor/outdoor eatery, combining a casual vibe with some surprisingly sophisticated food, now has a name recognizing the culinary refinements introduced by Rolf Fellhauer, for 28 years executive chef at Continental fine-dining spot La Paloma. Additions to the predominantly seafood menu include chateaubriand or rack of lamb for two, both carved, with old-school spectacle, tableside. Owner Michael Choido has also renovated the interior dining room, and added the Yellowfin Lounge, which features an extensive selection of artisan beers. \$\$\$

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 caudal, whipped potato rings stuffed with avocado-garlic crab salad – altogether lighter and lovelier than the tasty but oily mashed spud constructions more oft encountered in town. \$\$\$

Christine's Roti Shop
16721 NE 6th Ave., 305-770-0434

Wraps are for wimps. At this small shop run by Christine Gouvela, originally from British Guyana, the wrapper is a far more substantial and tasty roti, a Caribbean mega-crepe made from chickpea flour. Most popular filling for the flatbread is probably jerk chicken, bone-in pieces in a spiced stew of potatoes, cabbage, carrots, onions, and more chickpeas. But there are about a dozen other curries from which to choose. Take-out packages of plain roti are also available; they transform myriad leftovers into tasty, portable lunches. \$

Duffy's Sports Grill
Intracoastal Mall
3969 NE 163rd St., 305-760-2124

Located in a sprawling indoor/outdoor space at the Intracoastal Mall, Duffy's, part of a popular chain that identifies as the official sports grill of every major Miami team, features roughly a zillion TV's and an equally mega-size menu of accessibly Americanized, globally inspired dishes designed to please crowds: stuffed potato skins, crab Rangoon, coconut-crust fish fingers with orange-ginger sauce, jumbo wings of many flavors. Imagine a sports-oriented Cheesecake Factory. What makes this particular Duffy's different and better? Location, location, location – fronting the Intracoastal Waterway. There's even a swimming pool with its own bar. \$\$\$

Empire Szechuan Gourmet of NY
3427 NE 163rd St., 305-949-3318

In the 1980s, Empire became the Chinese chain that swallowed Manhattan – and transformed public perceptions of Chinese food in the NY metropolitan area. Before: bland faux-Cantonese dishes. After: lighter, more fiery fare from Szechuan and other provinces. This Miami outpost does serve chop suey and other Americanized items, but don't worry. Stick with Szechuan crispy prawns, Empire's Special Duck, cold sesame noodles, or similar pleasantly spicy specialties, and you'll be a happy camper, especially if you're an ex-New Yorker. \$\$\$

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). \$\$\$

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Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

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 beef 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, Bangladeshi'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 exotic like satkara, flavored with a Bangladeshi citrus reminiscent of sour orange. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

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 vindaloos are satisfactorily searing, but the kitchen will adjust seasonings upon request. They aim to please. Food arrives unusually fast for an Indian eatery, too. \$\$

Kings County Pizza

18228 W. Dixie Hwy., 305-792-9455
If your feelings about Brooklyn-style pizza have been formed by Domino's flopsy-crusteds, ketchup, cheese-floppy 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 Totonno'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. \$

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 fagiole, 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. \$\$\$

Lime Fresh Mexican Grill

14831 Biscayne Blvd., 305-949-8800
www.limefreshmexicangrill.com
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. \$

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. \$\$\$

Oishi Thai

14841 Biscayne Blvd., 305-947-4338
At this stylish Thai/sushi spot, try the menu of specials, many of which clearly reflect the young chef's fanatical devotion to fresh fish, as well as the time he spent in the kitchen of Knob: broiled miso-marinated black cod; rock shrimp tempura with creamy sauce; even Nobu Matsuhisa's "new style sashimi" (slightly surface-seared by drizzles of hot olive and sesame oil). The specials menu includes some Thai-inspired creations, too, such as veal massaman curry, Chilean sea bass curry, and sizzling filet mignon with basil sauce. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Panya Thai

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

Paquito's

16265 Biscayne Blvd., 305-947-5027
From the outside, this strip-mall Mexican eatery couldn't be easier to overlook. Inside, however, its festivity is impossible to resist. Every inch of wall space seems to be covered with South of the Border knickknacks. And if the kitschy décor alone doesn't cheer you, the quickly arriving basket of fresh (not packaged) taco chips, or the mariachi band, or the knockout margaritas will. Food ranges from Tex-Mex burritos and a party-size fajita platter to authentic Mexican moles and harder-to-find traditional preparations like albóndigas – spicy, ultra-savory meatballs. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Rizio's Peruvian Cuisine

15975 Biscayne Blvd., 305-945-5111
Peruvian eateries featuring ceviches and classic cooked dishes are plentiful in Miami; those adding "NovoAndean" fine-dining fare to the mix? Not so much. Since 2000, evolutionary chefs in Peru have been using sophisticated European techniques to revive humble native Andean ingredients like quinoa. Since late 2012, this secret spot has been, too, thanks to former Lima restaurateur Cesar Valverde, a traditionalist, and his chef son Mauricio, a Miami Culinary Institute-trained innovator. Even traditional tiraditos have

delightful elegance. But don't neglect Novo inventions like "trigotos," risottos substituting trigo (wheat) for rice. \$\$\$

Sang's Chinese Restaurant

1925 NE 163rd St., 305-947-7076
Sang's has three menus. The pink menu is Americanized Chinese food, from chop suey to honey garlic chicken. The white menu permits the chef to show off his authentic Chinese fare: salt and pepper prawns, rich beef/turnip casserole, tender salt-baked chicken, even estrofero 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. \$\$\$

Soprano Café

3933 NE 163rd St., 855-434-9035
Sicilian native Rocco Soprano, original proprietor of South Beach's Soprano's, has transformed this Intracoastal Waterway space, formerly the enoteca Rack's, into an elegant but family-friendly restaurant featuring classic Italian dishes plus steakhouse fare, all in prodigious portions. For an ultimate Miami/Italian fusion experience, arrive by boat at Soprano's dock, grab a table on the water-view deck, and enjoy a coal-oven pizza – perhaps the famous truffled white pizza, or our personal fave seochi: sopressata salami, zesty tomato sauce, provolone, goat cheese, and fresh fior di latte mozzarella. \$\$\$

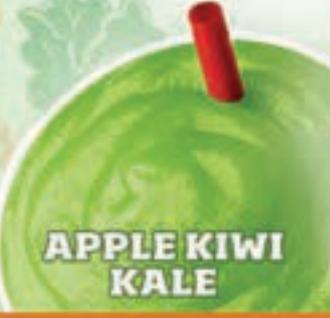
Sushi House

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

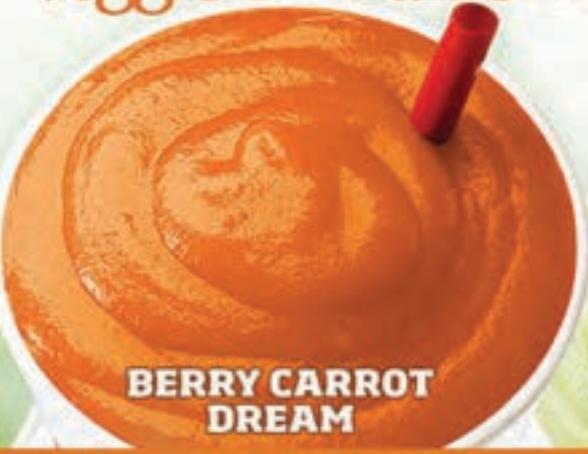


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Sushi Sake

13551 Biscayne Blvd., 305-947-4242

Chic Asian-accented décor, video screens, 99-cent drink deals, and late-night hours make this hip hangout not just a sushi bar but sort of a neighborhood bar, too. That said, the sushi is impressive, mainly because seafood is delivered daily and all except the shrimp is fresh, not frozen (as is customary at most Miami sushi places). Also notable: All sauces are housemade. Cooked makis like a crunch-topped Miami Heat are most popular, but it's as sashimi that the fish's freshness truly shines. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Tania's Table

18685 W. Dixie Hwy., 305-932-9425

A location at the tail end of a tiny, tired-looking strip mall makes this weekday lunch-only kosher eatery easy to miss. But the cute bistro, an extension of chef Tania Sigal's catering company, is well worth seeking for its unusually varied daily-changing menus – not just familiar Eastern European-derived dishes (chicken matzoh ball soup, blintzes, etc.) but numerous Latin American specialties (zesty ropa vieja), Asian-influenced items (Thai chicken/noodle salad), lightened universal Ladies-Who-Lunch classics (custardy quiches, grilled trout with mustard sauce), and homemade baked goods. \$\$

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. \$\$\$

Bay Harbor Bistro

1023 Kane Concourse, 305-866-0404

Though small, this ambitious European/American fusion bistro covers all the bases, from smoked salmon eggs Florentine at breakfast and elaborate lunch salads to steak frites at dinner, plus tapas. As well as familiar fare, you'll find atypical creations: caramelized onion and goat cheese-garnished leg of lamb sandwiches; a layered crab/avocado tortino; pistachio-crustated salmon. A welcome surprise: The bistro is also a bakery, so don't overlook the mouthwateringly buttery croissants, plumply stuffed empanadas, or elegant berry tarts and other homemade French pastries. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

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 warmed 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, fatch (a chickpea casserole "iced" with thick yogurt), and buttery cheese/herb-filled sambusak pastries. Finish exotically with a hookah. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Open Kitchen

1074 95th St., 305-865-0900

If we were on Death Row, choosing a last meal, this very chef-centered lunchroom/market's PBLT (a BLT sandwich with melt-in-your-mouth pork belly substituting for regular bacon) would be a strong contender. Co-owners Sandra Stefani (ex-Casa Toscana chef/owner) and Ines Chattas (ex-Icebox Café GM) have combined their backgrounds to create a global gourmet oasis with a menu ranging from light quiches and imaginative salads to hefty balsamic/tomato-glazed shortribs or daily pasta specials (like wild boar-stuffed ravioli). Also featured: artisan grocery products, and Stefani's famous interactive cooking class/wine dinners. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

The Palm

9650 E. Bay Harbor Dr., 305-868-7256

It was 1930s journalists, legend has it, who transformed NYC's original Palm from Italian restaurant to bastion of beef. Owners would run out to the butcher for huge steaks to satisfy the hardboiled scribes. So our perennial pick here is nostalgic: steak à la stone – juicy, butter-doused slices on toast, topped with sautéed onions and pimientos. This classic (whose carb components make it satisfying without à la carte sides, and hence a relative bargain) isn't on the menu anymore, but cooks will prepare it on request. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

AVENTURA / HALLANDALE

Anthony's Coal Fired Pizza

17901 Biscayne Blvd., 305-830-2625

When people rave about New York pizzas' superiority, they don't just mean thin crusts. They mean the kind of airy, abundantly burn-bubbled, uniquely flavorful crust 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. Here 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. \$\$

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, steak-house 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. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Buffalo Wild Wings

18721 Biscayne Blvd., 305-962-9995

Like all locations of this renowned national sports bar/grill chain – originated in 1982, when two fans of Buffalo-style chicken wings couldn't find any in Ohio – Aventura's "B-Dubs" features an astonishing array of HD TVs (64), beers, and, naturally, wings: almost two dozen sauce and dry-rub choices, from a chili-spiked buttery original flavor to Asian, Caribbean, Italian, and beyond. Additionally, there's a full menu of burgers, salads, flatbreads, and other All-American classics. An outdoor patio and WiFi tablets loaded with games contribute considerably to kid-friendliness. \$\$

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 relaxingly 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

Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

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. \$

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

Kampai

3575 NE 207th St., 305-931-6410

At this longtime neighborhood favorite Japanese/Thai restaurant, many come just for the slightly pricy but very generous sushi specialties. Most makis are cooked, but for raw-fish fans the tempura-flake-topped crunchy tuna/avocado roll with spicy mayo, and tuna both inside and out, is a people-pleaser. Don't neglect Thai specialties, though, especially red and green curries customizable as to heat (mild, medium, hot, and authentic "Thai hot"). And for a bargain light lunch, try tonjiru, miso soup jazzed up with veggies and pork. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

La Montanara

18855 NE 29th Ave., 305-974-0167

A lushly vine-covered walkway leading to the door and back patio of this secluded but expansive restaurant serves notice that diners are in for an exclusive Italian experience. Ilario Giunchi, co-founder of Caracas's famed original La Montanara, has brought much of the menu to this second location, including housemade pastas and creative carpaccios like a delicate crudo version of vitello tonnato. Whatever you order, don't miss the signature mascarpone/prosciutto focaccias from the beautifully tiled stone pizza oven. Budgeting diners: Explore weekday lunch specials, which include sides. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Mo's Bagels & Deli

2780 NE 187th St., 305-936-8555

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

Mr. Chef's Fine Chinese Cuisine & Bar

18800 NE 29th Ave. #10, 786-787-9030

Considering our county's dearth of authentic Chinese food, this stylish eatery is heaven-sent for Aventura residents. Owners Jin Xiang Chen and Shu Ming (a.k.a. Mr. Chef) come from China's southern seacoast province of Guangdong (Canton). But you'll find no gloppily sauced, Americanized-Cantonese chop sueys here. Cooking is properly light-handed, and seafood specialties shine (try the spicy/crispy salt and pepper shrimp). For adventurers, there's a cold jellyfish starter. Even timid taste buds can't resist tender fried shrimp balls described this way: "With crispy adorable fringy outfit." \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Pilar

20475 Biscayne Blvd. 305-937-2777

Named after Ernest Hemingway's fishing boat, this eatery, helmed for its first decade by chef Scott Fredel, is now under new ownership. The menu is a mix of classic dishes (grilled skirt steak with chimichurri and fries; chicken parm), today's trendy favorites (sliders, tuna tartare), and pastas including linguine with shrimp, tomato, basil, and garlic in Alfredo sauce. But executive chef Frank Ferreira's focus remains fresh seafood, like pan-seared colossal scallops with sautéed spinach, fried onions, roasted corn, and champagne butter sauce. \$\$\$

Sicilian Oven

20475 Biscayne Blvd., 305-682-1890

Don't think that square-shaped doughy pizza is the specialty here. "Oven" is really the operative word, referring to the open kitchen's impressive-looking, open-flame wood-burner, and for our money the place's thin-crust pies are the way to go. Toppings, applied amply, range from traditional Italian-American (like made-in-Wisconsin Grande mozzarella) to popular (fresh mozz, even balsamic glaze); crust options include whole grain and gluten-free. Other must-haves: arancini (deep-fried rice balls stuffed with mozz and ground beef) and cervellata sausage with broccoli rabe. \$\$

Soho Asian Bar & Grill

19004 NE 29th St., 305-466-5656

Do bring your pocket flashlight to this kosher restaurant. Considering the menu's expansiveness, you'll be doing lots of reading despite dim, lounge-lizard lighting. The stars here are small plates and over-the-top Asian fusion sushi rolls, like the Korean: short ribs atop a kimchee-garnished maki of puréed avocado, cuke, scallion, and sweet potato. But the menu of tapas and entrées ranges from Japanese-inspired items to pad Thai, Middle Eastern kabobs, Chinese-American pepper steak, even all-American grilled steaks. Highlights: signature fried cauliflower with chili sauce, and an appealing house nut bread with three spreads. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

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 Francaise is available, why settle for chicken?) Almond-sage butter-sauced butternut 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. \$\$\$

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, chickpeas, and yogurt) served with two chutneys; anything featuring paneer cheese, from classic spinach/cheese palak paneer to creative khazzas-e-lazzat (sundried tomato-stuffed paneer/potato dumplings in smooth cream sauce). \$\$\$

Epicure Gourmet Market & Café

17190 Collins Ave., 305-947-4581

Who even knew that the late Rascal House had an ocean view? Diners may have to eat standing up to glimpse water over the dunes from the panoramic café windows of the gourmet market that replaced the Rascal, but you know you're on a tropical beach, not Brighton Beach. The big, bright café's menu, more global diner than Jewish deli, includes daily specials ranging from spa-grilled chicken to homemade Italian sausage and peppers. But it's worth seeking out items that made South Beach's original Epicure famous: sandwiches featuring housemade rare roast beef; shrimp or chunky smoked whitefish salads; fresh baked goods. \$\$\$

The H Restaurant

17608 Collins Ave., 305-931-9106

This friendly, family-owned bistro is the sort of homeaway-from-home found every few blocks in France – here Gerard and Karin Herrison, plus chef son Julien, formerly had a restaurant – but they're rarely found in South Florida. Burgers, et al., are available, but with garlicky escargots, a savory/sweet-dressed salad of duck confit atop frisée, pan-seared foie gras with port/raspberry sauce, fish with an impeccable lemon beurre blanc, and a satisfying steak/frites (with peppery cognac cream sauce). We'd leave the American stuff to the kids. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Il Mulino New York

17875 Collins Ave., 305-466-9191

If too much is not enough for you, this 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. \$\$\$-\$\$\$-\$\$\$

Mozart Café

18110 Collins Ave., 305-974-010

This eatery (which serves breakfast as well as lunch and dinner) is a kosher dairy restaurant, but not the familiar Old World type that used to proliferate all over New York's Lower Eastside Jewish community. Décor isn't deli but modern-artsy, and the food is not blintzes, noodle kugel, etc., but a wide range of non-meat items from pizzas to sushi. Our favorite dishes, though, are Middle Eastern-influenced, specifically Yemenite malawach (paratha-type flatbread sandwiches, savory or sweet), and shaksuka (nicknamed "eggs in purgatory"; the spicy eggplant version will explain all). \$\$\$-\$\$\$

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. \$\$\$

Sumo Sushi Bar & Grill

17630 Collins Ave., 305-682-1243

Sushi may well have been served in Sunny Isles before this longtime neighborhood favorite opened, but Sumo was the neighborhood's first sushi bar to double as a popular lounge/hangout as well as restaurant. Ladies' nights are legend. While Thai and Chinese dishes are available, as well as purist nigiri, few can resist the truly sumo-wrestler-size maki rolls, the more over-the-top, the better. Our bet for biggest crowd pleaser: the spicy Pink Lady (shrimp tempura, avocado, masago, cilantro, and spicy mayo, topped with rich scallop-studded "dynamite" sauce. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Timo

17624 Collins Ave., 305-936-1008

Since opening in 2003, the inventive yet clean and unfussy Italian/Mediterranean-inspired seasonal food at this hot spot, created by chef/owner Tim Andriola (at the time best known for his stints at Chef Allen's and Mark's South Beach), has been garnering local and national raves. Don't bother reading them. Andriola's dishes speak for themselves: a salad of crisp oysters atop frisée, cannelloni bean, and pancetta; foie gras crostini with a subtle caramelized orange sauce; a blue crab ravioli with toasted pignoli 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 straw-berries Romanoff. \$\$\$



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ALFREDO RIASCOS | 305 571 9991
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BUENA VISTA : 4700 NE MIAMI CT
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Beautiful Historic Design District Home. 3/2, newly renovated kitchen, original wood flooring, 1 car garage and a private yard.

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MARCY KAPLAN & LORI BRANDT | 786 543 5755
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LITTLE RIVER: 335-337-339 NE 61 ST
FOR SALE | \$1,565,000 - \$1,625,000

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LITTLE RIVER : 6701 NE 4 AVE
FOR LEASE | \$12 PSF

Improved Industrial Building in the Little River Business District. Dock-Height warehouse spaces available for lease. Plenty of on-site gated parking and easy access to I-95 and Biscayne Boulevard. 6,250 SF Bays available with potential to combine spaces.

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MIAMI SHORES : 515 NE 93 ST
FOR SALE | \$899,000

4 bedrooms, 3 new baths, white washed wood floors, new kitchen with stainless steel appliances, 2 refrigerators & a recently installed roof. This home features a beautifully landscaped yard, heated salt pool and outdoor barbecue. Plenty of room for an office. There are roll down shutters and 2 hurricane impact doors & new septic, well and sprinklers.

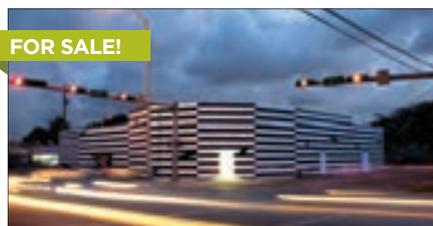
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WEST OF WYNWOOD: 761 NW 23 ST
FOR SALE | \$900,000

Great opportunity to acquire a multi-bay industrial building in the up and coming "WOW" District of town. This six bay warehouse building provides excellent ceiling heights, open floor plans, and additional out door area for a great investment opportunity. Building Size: 9,678 SF

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UPPER EAST SIDE : 442 NE 77 ST
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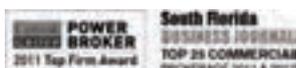
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