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May 2018

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Volume 16 Issue 3

Times

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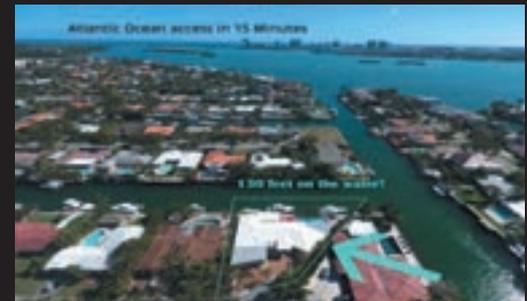
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CONTENTS

- COVER STORY**
22 Bayside Marketplace Looks for New Life
- COMMENTARY**
12 Feedback: Letters to the Editor
16 Jack King: Rick Scott: No There There
- OUR SPONSORS**
18 BizBuzz: May 2018
- COMMUNITY NEWS**
38 That Old Kmart Building Is a Mess
38 Design District Post Office's Mystery Move
39 Little Haiti Residents Resist Gentrification
- NEIGHBORHOOD CORRESPONDENTS**
46 North Miami Growing Pains: Citizens Revolt
48 Miami Shores Needs Its Theater, Its Culture
50 The Case For Aventura Supporting Israel
52 Blast from the Past: Ken Jett on 79th Street
- ART & CULTURE**
54 Anne Tschida on the Haitian Cultural Arts Alliance
56 Melissa Wallen's Galleries + Museums
58 Events Calendar: Check Out the National Arab Orchestra
- POLICE REPORTS**
60 Derek McCann's Biscayne Crime Beat
- PARK PATROL**
62 Janet Goodman: East Greynolds Park Surprises
- COLUMNISTS**
59 Picture Story: Miami's Early Hospitals
64 Pet Talk: Doodle Dogs, Part 2
65 Family Matters: Parents Behaving Badly
66 Your Garden: Gotta Love Dog Poop Mushrooms
67 Going Green: A Fresh Look at Urban Miami
68 Vino: French Chardonnays You Can Afford
69 Dish: Seasonal Menus Blooming Everywhere
- DINING GUIDE**
72 Restaurant Listings: 272 Biscayne Corridor Restaurants



38



56



69

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PUBLISHER & EDITOR

Jim Mullin
jim.mullin@biscaynetimes.com

CONTRIBUTORS

Erik Bojnansky, Senior Writer
erik.bojnanskya@biscaynetimes.com

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

Francisco Alvarado, Geoffrey Anderson,
 Jay Beskin, Jacqueline Coleman,
 John Dorschner, Paul George,
 Janet Goodman, Margaret Griffis, Helen Hill,
 John Ise, Jack King, Derek Michael McCann,
 Dinah McNichols, Eleazar David Meléndez,
 Blanca Mesa, Jenni Person, Silvia Ros,
 Dianne Rubin, Mark Sell, Stuart Sheldon,
 Jeff Shimonski, Melissa Wallen

BUSINESS MANAGER

Kenneth Cooper
kenneth.cooper@biscaynetimes.com

ACCOUNT EXECUTIVES

Nancy Newhart
nancy.newhart@biscaynetimes.com
 954-980-7639

Denny Ricatti
denny.ricatti@biscaynetimes.com
 305-922-3585

ART DIRECTOR

Marcy Mock
marseadesign@mac.com

ADVERTISING DESIGN

DP Designs
production@biscaynetimes.com

CIRCULATION

South Florida Distributors

PRINTING

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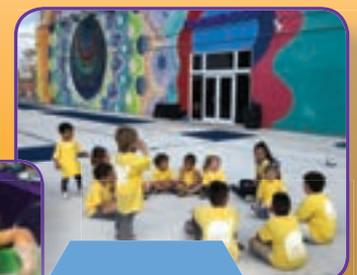
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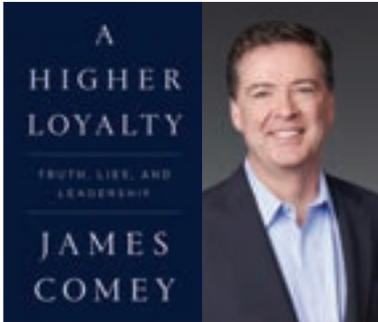
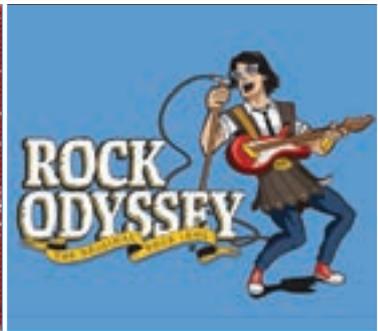
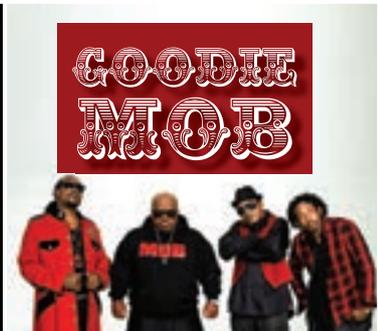
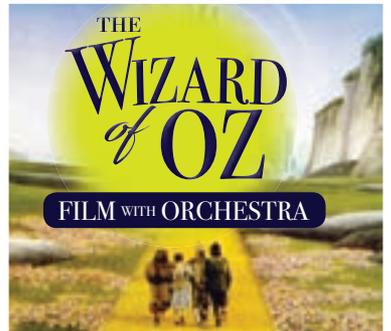
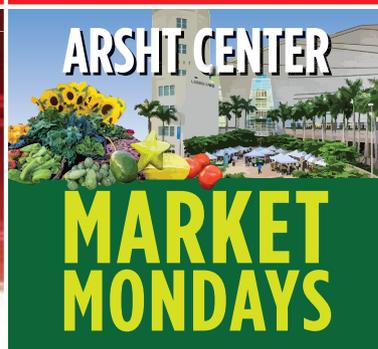
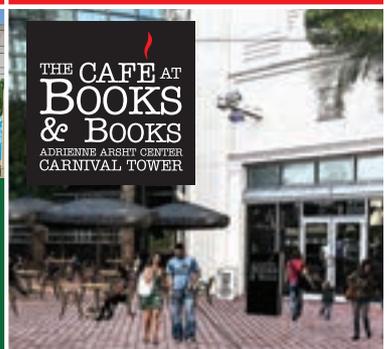
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Commentary: LETTERS

Death a Coincidence?

It was sad to read about the long slow deterioration and death of Jake the orangutan in his Jungle Island pen ("Cagey Business," April 2018). As Francisco Alvarado and Erik Bojnansky reported, the powers that be may have deemed his death something to hush up, but they misjudge the public's affection and sympathy for Jake and other animals held captive for display and profit.

Jake reportedly suffered from a respiratory infection, something to which great apes in captivity are especially prone, according to the expert in the article not affiliated with the park. So question: Did the park take steps to protect the animals from the ongoing construction dust? Look at the timing. Construction began last fall. Jake began to show symptoms last fall. Coincidence?

Also, why didn't the staff call in orangutan specialists as Jake grew sicker by the week? None of the staff, and not even park veterinarian Jason Chatfield's veterinarian sister (if one goes by her online research topics) appears to be orangutan experts. Yet there does exist the Orangutan Conservancy Veterinary Advisory Group with several U.S. locations. No mention of it having been notified and asked for counsel.

Allyson Ware
Tallahassee

HUD for Hippopotamus — Of Course!

Excellent reporting by Francisco Alvarado and Erik Bojnansky in "Cagey Business." Nice to learn something about the early days of Miami's exotic animal displays. Pretty creepy.

These Barnums of the Beasts remind me of the [Karen Russell] novel *Swamplandia* a bit, though without the mysterious Everglades.

And there was even a suspicious deal with Jungle Island that would have made Donald Trump proud: How'd they manage to get a \$25 million loan from the Department of Housing and Urban Development? For housing animals? Get outta here.

Jonathan Talbott
Wynwood

Not So Captivated

Does anyone else notice the paradox of Jungle Island hanging onto most of its animals while rebranding itself as an "adventure" park jammed with mega trampolines, aerial rope courses, a skydiving wind tunnel, camp fireworks, and other jarring visual and noise "adventure byproducts"

that may stress those animals?

Dr. Bernard Levine, who used to run an exotic animal breeding facility, says in the "Cagey Business" article that he understands the argument that wild animals fare better in the wild. Yet he justifies exotic animal enterprises with the argument that seeing the animals up close — unlike on television or film — triggers awareness and empathy for the creatures. He even suggests that if SeaWorld had existed a century ago, it could have ended whaling. Really?

Whaling was never about trophy hunting (except maybe in *Moby Dick*), and the zoo experience hasn't brought an end to whale hunting or any other kind of hunting. In fact, don't some zoos and exotic breeders still sell their "surplus" to domestic "safari hunts" like those hunt lodges in Texas?

It was a pointed film, *Blackfish*, that actually put SeaWorld on notice. And other films' "Bambi effect" have brought awareness to everything from sport hunting to reduced meat consumption. Think *The Fox and the Hound* or *Babe* or *The Cove*.

It's simply nauseating to think about people like Bernard Levine — and others who exploit animals for profit — getting rich off these crude sideshows.

Richard Diaz-Cordoba
Miami

Slow Down and Listen

Brava to Blanca Mesa on encouraging all to participate in Earth Day by first developing some connection to Biscayne Bay and other water or land around us ("Earth Day 2018: Artists Plant the Seeds of Action," April 2018).

I had only been in Miami a few years when Cristo wrapped our islands. I had never been in a helicopter, so I sprang for the aerial view. That was my "Oh my!" moment.

We all need to slow down, really listen, observe, learn, and engage through groups doing the heavy lifting to protect our Earth and attempt to reverse the damage we've already done.

Steve Hagen
Atlanta

No Non-Residents at Our Library, Please

John Ise must not have lived here long enough to remember what a nightmare it was when the Miami Shores library was available to the general public ("Brockway Library and Beyond," April 2018).

Continued on page 14



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Attention boaters - This exquisitely remodeled 1,917 sf 2/2.5 has amazing panoramic views from every room and includes a private dock!!!



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195 NW 91 St. \$474,000

Grand Miami Shores style ranch on a 13K+ sq ft corner lot in Miami Shores. This charming 2,715 sq ft home features a brand new roof, 3BR/2.5BA.



UNDER CONTRACT!

3023 Prairie Ave. \$1,099,000

GLAMOROUS ALFRED PARKER MASTERPIECE!!! This gorgeous MIMO home has 3 bedrooms plus office, 3 full bathrooms, vaulted ceilings and pool.



JUST SOLD!

893 NE 96 St. \$1,090,000

Magnificent! Remodeled Art Deco estate. Main house is a 3BR/2.5BA with 1BR/1BA guest cottage, 2 car garage, pool & huge lot.



UNDER CONTRACT!

8634 NE 10 Ave. \$375,000

Adorable 2BR/1BA Shorecrest cottage. This old Spanish gem has a great room with a large fireplace and tile floors, and updated kitchen.



410 NE 53 St. \$595,000

Adorable Morningside cottage. This cute 2/1 is 1,450 sf living space on a huge 8,250 sf lot. Has rich oak wood floors, vaulted ceilings & remodeled kitchen.



3015 NE Quayside Ln. #8 \$549,000

GORGEOUS POND & FOUNTAIN VIEWS from this spacious 2 story townhouse with a 2 car garage.



1000 NE 72 Ter. \$1,129,000

This 3,146 sf 3BR/3.5BA home designed by architect Robert Fitch Smith is located on a 21K sf triple lot. One of BelleMeade's greats.



1105 NE 116 St. \$529,000

Charming remodeled 3BR/2BA with a pool and 2 car covered carport. This MIMO style home has beautiful polished terrazzo floors, white remodeled kitchen.



JUST LISTED!

1024 Ocean Dr #A207 \$269,000

Attention investors! You will love this chic condo hotel located in the heart of SOBE right on Ocean Drive across from the beach.



JUST LISTED!

780 NE 69 St #1606 \$189,000

BREATHTAKING PANORAMIC VIEWS OF THE BAY AND BEACHES from this 1BR/1.5BA condo in the popular Palm Bay Yacht Club.



UNDER CONTRACT!

8951 Carlyle Ave. \$649,000

Charming spacious 2,200 sf, 3 bedroom, 3 bathroom pool home a few blocks from the beach. Gorgeous eat-in gourmet kitchen



JUST LISTED!

1800 NE 114 St #2001 \$349,000

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Commentary: LETTERS

Letters

Continued from page 12

Dismissal time at Miami Shores Elementary School and St. Rose School resulted in free daycare for non-residents at the library. The number of children without adult supervision was a burden to the staff. The sheer numbers created a loud and unruly situation for residents who use the library in its limited building space.

The popular programs, especially for children, are well attended by residents, and we do not have space for non-residents.

Ise is right when he says it was by choice that we not affiliate with the public library system.

*Pamela Michels
Miami Shores*

No, Really, It'll Be Great

Mr. John Ise's Brockway Library article is spot on. I identified with the first paragraph. The article makes me want even more to visit Brockway Library, an excursion I've already planned with my granddaughter, one of Miami Shores's newest residents. She turns five months old this month.

The article touches on reciprocal borrowing, an idea whose time has come for Brockway, from what I gather in the article. As a 30-year employee of the Miami-Dade Public Library System, I can tell you that the benefits of joining the 50-plus branch system outweigh any possible negatives, that honestly I can't see.

The workload for the staff of ten at Brockway would not be unlike that of any of the MDPLS branches or regionals. A slight increase in workload might take place, and again, the benefits outweigh that.

*Mickey Garrote
Miami Shores*

Letters About Letters About Letters

In response to the letter from Fred Jonas ("Letters About Letters," April 2018), I would like to reference the following from the Electronic Frontier Foundation:

"Anonymous communications have an important place in our political and social discourse. The Supreme Court has ruled repeatedly that the right to anonymous free speech is protected by the First Amendment."

It is my belief that agreeing to, as Mr. Jonas put it, "publish a letter without insisting the writer publicly identify himself" follows the principle and intention of the First Amendment.

Yes, many people may agree with the anonymous letter published by *Biscayne*

Times ("In Miami, Cubans Are Exiles, but Other Immigrants Are Refugees," March 2018), and there are probably as many who do not. The letter writer may have requested anonymity due to concern over backlash by some dissenters through social media or worse. Given the environment in which we live, I wholly understand the request to be published anonymously.

Perhaps I am wrong about the motive or intention of the writer's choice, but I respect the fact that he or she is entitled to privacy and free speech.

Keep up the great work, *Biscayne Times*, on covering our community.

*Joan L. Dunn
Miami Shores*

That Would Be One Colossal Yard Sign

John Ise in his article "Tribalism Rears Its Ugly Head" (March 2018) does not quite appear to unearth its roots.

Would he, to serve that purpose, be amenable (other than it being too long) to a sign that reads (or at least conveys the spirit of) the following:

"We are glad you're our neighbor because you stand up for gender equality, including equal rights for LGBT all over the world. You stand up for the right of children to a childhood that does not involve being molested, married off, having their genitals mutilated, or beliefs forced upon them. You stand up for freedom of speech, meaning all speech, especially speech you might not like. You are against the mistreatment of all animals, including human beings. You oppose discrimination on the basis of sex, race, color, national origin, sexual orientation, and religion. You reject and oppose any belief system that condones, promotes, justifies, excuses, or remains silent on, thereby tacitly condoning, such discrimination."

*Irina Martinez
Miami*

Milking the Public Cow

As described by David Villano ("In Trees We Trust," March 2018), Miami's Quatisha Oguntoyinbo-Rashad, chief of the city's Environmental Resources Division, apparently thinks she works for the City of Opa-Locka, not Miami.

Either that or she's just another example of a bureaucratic wonk who believes her job is to follow policy, push paper, and milk the public cow until retirement, when she can cash in on that pension.

*DC Copeland
Miami Shores*



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NORTH SHORE
Medical Center

What You Can Buy With \$75 Million

The governorship of Florida, no experience required

By Jack King
BT Contributor

Our midterm elections here in America are still six months away, and I have no doubt there will be quite a lot of “politics fatigue” before we get to November. Normally, midterm elections are somewhat dry and boring, but I have a feeling that will not be the case this time around.

I had decided to take a break from writing about politics and to write instead about good things and good people in Florida and America, but when we have crooked politicians like Rick Scott and Donald Trump, it's important to keep our eye on the political ball before they steal everything from us and this country. We must be diligent when we have politicians “working for us” like “Don the Con” and “Dumpster Rick.”

I expect to take some heat for not keeping BT readers as well informed as I should lately. Sometimes there is just too much information out there, much of it questionable. And with the news media in such sad shape, it's even more difficult to find trustworthy sources.

It's also not easy to keep you up to date when we publish on a monthly basis, but we're doing the best we can.

I haven't followed Rick Scott that much (avoiding the malignant Tallahassee Syndrome), except to know he's a slime ball. What I didn't know: just how wealthy a slimeball he is. So here are a few financial facts that should make you squirm.

In the late 1980s, Scott and his partners tried to buy the for-profit Hospital Corporation of America. It was a hot time for medical businesses, and they were being bought out left and right. Scott's partners were successful with this venture (now called Columbia HCA), and went on to others, wheeling and dealing in the medical business.

In the 1990s, Scott and his partners bought a controlling interest in and then sold several other health-care companies, always making money.

Then, in late 1997, investigators from the FBI, the Internal Revenue Service, and the Department of Health and Human Services served search warrants on Scott, Columbia HCA, and dozens of doctors with ties to the company.

Amid the controversy, Scott was forced to resign as president. Four months later the board of directors pressured him to resign as chairman of the company. He raked in a \$10 million golden parachute that also left him with ownership of ten million shares of stock worth more than \$350 million. Not bad for an amateur crook.

In 2003, the feds collected from Columbia HCA a record \$1.7 billion in fines and penalties to settle multiple charges of Medicare and Medicaid fraud. Scott was never charged, though much of the criminal activity occurred while he ran the company.

Isn't this a great county? If a poor guy robs a 7-eleven of \$30 and a six-pack, he goes to jail for two years. If your health-care corporation steals a billion dollars in



Rick Scott via Twitter

Birds of a Feather...

taxpayer money, they let you buy a very nice house in Naples, with wealthy neighbors who'll play golf with you.

It got better. Scott just kept investing his money in other large medical companies. One of them was Solantic, which specialized in urgent-care centers. The company became the target of an employment discrimination lawsuit, and Scott refused to release depositions taken in the case, which was settled out of court for an undisclosed sum.

Scott stayed in the medical business, kept making money, and maintained his mansion in super-rich Naples. If you remove the maids and gardeners, Naples just might be the wealthiest town in the world.

Apparently Scott got bored with making millions from home, so he decided to run for governor. It is most unusual to run for governor of a major state as your first foray into politics, and Scott quickly found that no one would give him money — maybe because he knew zero about politics. So he did what any

red-blooded American with \$500 million would do: He wrote himself a check for \$75 million to finance his campaign.

Not worrying about money, he wandered around the state and put up lots of TV and radio ads. Looking back now, it seems obvious he didn't have a platform or even a campaign plan.

Democrats thought he was funny and not much of a challenge. Republicans thought he was just weird, but when they found out that he had *that* much money, they jumped onboard.

And now the Rickster wants to be a U.S. Senator, but I'm not sure he's qualified. First of all, the pay is too low, and secondly, you actually have to know something about governing. If you want to get elected, you need to convince people that you can actually accomplish something.

Oh well, I guess that stealing money in corporate America can be considered a job skill.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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360 CONDOMINIUM PH #1207
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PH condo with 11' ceilings & majestic views of the bay, marina & sunsets. Private marina, gym, valet, 2 pools & free valet!

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BizBuzz

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

By Margaret Griffis
BT Contributor

Mother's Day is just around the corner, and so are the Biscayne Corridor establishments offering to help you celebrate the wonderfulness of Moms.

But first, new advertiser **La Fontana Shops** (10990 Biscayne Blvd., 786-210-8837) kicks off May with a combined Grand Opening and Cinco de Mayo celebration. All the tenants are participating, including Frida Luna Mexican Food, Chez Georges Miami, Dunkin' Donuts, Biscayne Nail and Beauty Bar, KabCo Kitchens, BB&T, Mount Sinai, and Complete Nutrition. Kids will have access to plenty of slime, balloons, and face painting. See the ad in this issue for more details. The ribbon cutting is at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, May 5.

Money is no object when it comes to Mom, ideally. You want to give her the best, of course, but your wallet may have something to say about it, too. So why not take advantage of this great Mother's Day deal from Dr. Valeria Soltanik at **Soltanik Dental** (2999 NE 191st St., 305-466-2334). The doctor is offering 50% off a Philips Zoom professional whitening treatment if you merely mention the *BT*. The \$200 special is

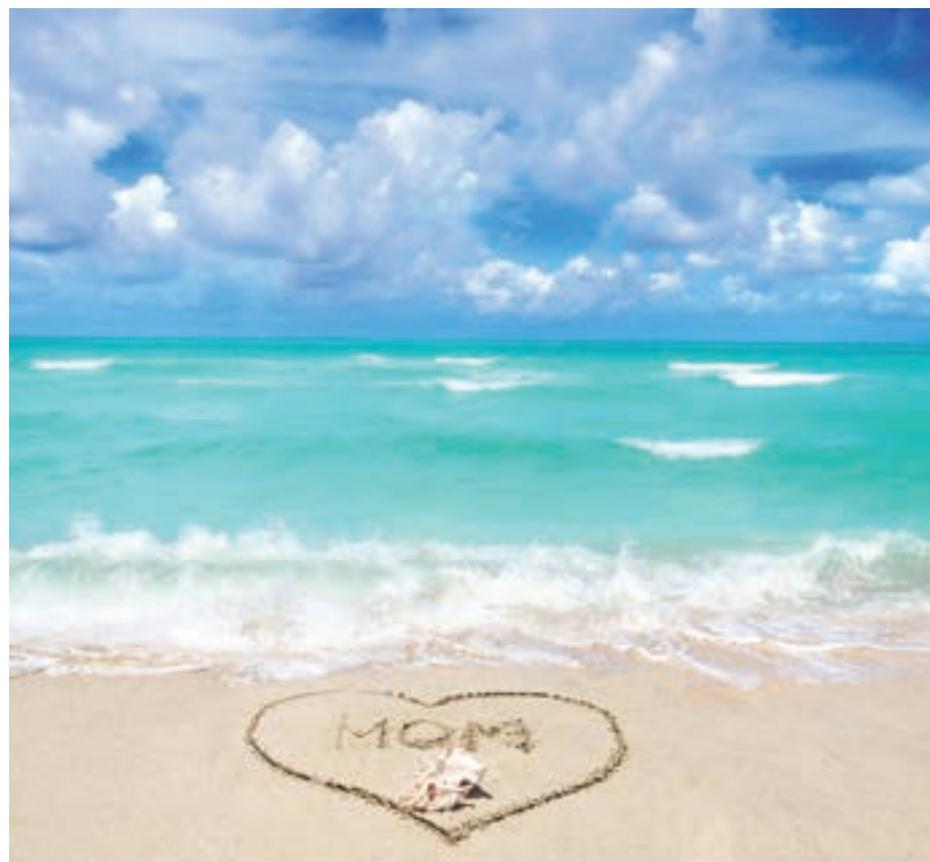
only available to the first 30 readers who make an appointment, so make that call soon. Then take your savings and buy even more gifts for Mom or the other special women in your life.

Consider using that windfall to treat Mom at **Bayside Marketplace** (401 Biscayne Blvd., 305-577-3344), where she can shop to her heart's content; enjoy her choice of drinks, food, and music; and maybe end the day with a sweet sunset cruise.

In the MiMo District, Mother's Day at **Soyka Restaurant** (5556 NE 4th Ct., 305-759-3117) begins at noon with live music and a flower for each mom. Meals for Mother are 10% off, which is great, but also reserve a spot on May 25 and 26 to hear singer Nicola Són interpret French and Brazilian classics from Brel, Nougaro, Gainsbourg, Buarque, Veloso, Gil, Lobo, and more.

Or maybe she'll prefer the contemporary bistro fare at **Côté Gourmet** (9999 NE 2nd Ave., 305-754-9012). The Mother's Day menu includes champagne, appetizers, soup, entrée, dessert, coffee or tea, and biscuit. Seating for this \$50/person meal is limited, so call for reservations. And remember, when you mention the *BT*, you get treated to a complimentary glass of wine, all month long.

For Gallic comestibles deliciously crafted by chef Charles Soussin, plan



on visiting another new advertiser, the highly praised, notably low-priced **C Si Bon French Restaurant** (350 NE 24th St., 786-615-4820), on the ground floor of the City 24 Condo building. Imagine such inventive dishes as roasted chicken breast with mashed pumpkin and chestnut, or sautéed lobster tail in vanilla cream with pilaf rice, asparagus, and mushrooms. It's served in a comfortable yet stylish space designed by Christopher Petitjean. Feel free to make good use of the restaurant's happy hour, Tuesdays through Fridays from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. when a glass of wine or beer served with a chef's selection of snacks is only \$12.

The **Mondrian South Beach** (1100 West Ave., Miami Beach, 305-514-1940)

is dedicating its May 13 brunch to mothers with a special buffet that includes unlimited mimosas and a champagne bar for \$65 per person. Happy hour, 5:00 to 7:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, is a bit more economical. All items are only \$9 and include signature cocktails and small plates, such as lobster taquitos and chicken lollipops. The beautiful sunsets are free.

Mom was always there for you, and now it's time to be there for her. But you have a couple of kids in school and a job you can't leave. How does the "sandwich generation" handle it? They learn to ask for help. **Always Classic Care** (1380 NE

Continued on page 20



MYSTIC POINTE, AVENTURA Fantastic fully furnished 2/2 located in fabulous Mystic Pointe. Guard gated with 24 hour security, full amenities, outstanding gym, tennis courts, pool overlooking the bay, Jacuzzi, marina, valet and concierge. \$2,050/mo.



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A: You may think it best to start receiving Social Security benefits as soon as you reach full retirement age. However, many Americans underestimate their longevity, so it's crucial to examine several other variables to increase your overall lifetime benefits.

If you do not immediately need the income to make ends meet, or are in poor health when it may not make sense to delay, the most obvious strategy is to wait to reach age 70 to receive Social Security income. Your monthly payments may increase by 32% or more.

There are other factors to consider. If you are a widow or widower, there are survivor benefit options to explore. Will taking benefits early allow your other investments to grow undisturbed? Will taking early benefits allow you to minimize taxes by reducing distributions from retirement accounts?

To learn what may be best for you, join David Treece at a free educational seminar, **"Savvy Social Security Planning: What Baby Boomers Need to Know to Maximize Retirement Income"** on Tuesday, May 8th, 6:30-8 p.m. at Miami Shores Brockway Memorial Library. Find more resources and RSVP for our seminar at treecefinancialgroup.com/savvysocialsecurity



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"If I apply for early Social Security, I get this. If I wait until I only have one life left, I get this."

"In today's world, the security of every one of us is linked to that of everyone else."

Kofi Atta Annan

Senior Personal Ad: Male, 1932, high mileage, good condition, some hair, many new parts including hip, knee, cornea, valves. Not in running condition but walks well.

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Our Sponsors: MAY 2018

BizBuzz

Continued from page 18

Miami Gardens Dr., Suite 235, 305-403-2622) offers medication management, transportation services, shopping, meal preparation, continence care, Alzheimer's planning, and hurricane preparation, among other routine and special services. Call today for free assessment.

Mount Sinai Medical Center is celebrating Mother's Day by offering free or reduced-rate mammograms. The insured can get a standard 2D digital mammogram at any time of the year. However, the hospital is also offering self-pay patients reduced rates. The 2D screening mammogram is only \$50, while the 3D version is \$110. Diagnostic mammograms, which are more thorough, are offered at \$100 for a 2D version and \$160 for the 3D diagnostic mammogram. Breast ultrasounds cost only \$100. Schedule an appointment at the Miami Beach (4300 Alton Rd.) or the Aventura (2845 NE 199th St.) location by calling 305-535-3434.

May is dedicated to mothers, but mothers are dedicated to their children. Which is why May is always an emotional month at **Allison Academy** (1881 NE 164th St., 305-940-3922) — it reminds mothers of the passage of time. This year the high school graduation ceremony falls on Thursday, May 24, while the middle school promotion program arrives a week later, on May 31. Congratulations to all. It's also the perfect time to enroll your kids in the summer semester, which begins June 18. Call and ask about the school's new entrepreneurial program for your budding Rockefeller or Carnegie.

The excitement is equally palpable at **Monsignor Edward Pace High School** (15600 NW 32nd Ave., 305-623-PACE, x212). The school's dance academy is holding its year-end showcase May 2-4 at 7:00 each evening. Tickets are \$15 at the door. The art academy, meanwhile, is holding its Gallery Night exhibition on Wednesday, May 23. Congratulations to all graduates.

Summer break is the perfect time to schedule your children's yearly physicals, whether it's for school applications, camp admission, or your own peace of mind. Call Dr. Margaret Okonkwo at **Kidstown Pediatrics** (211 NE 89th St., 305-576-5437) to make an appointment at her new office.

As thrilling as it is for children to be out of school for a "few short weeks," the daunting task of finding something for

them to do can, instead, make summer seem endless for their frazzled parents. New advertiser **Fun Dimensions** (2129 NW 1st Ct., 786-360-1766) offers an array of solutions for families. More than just a game arcade, Fun Dimensions also offers laser tag, 7D theater, Spin Zone bumper cars, an indoor playground, and a bungee dome, as well as various enrichment programs and party packages. Summer camp begins on June 8. Kids get to enjoy the game rooms *and* engage in art projects, yoga, and dance classes, the Bath Bomb Party, and various STEM activities. See the *BT* ad for discounts.

The "Just For Me Morning" program at the **Phillip and Patricia Frost Museum of Science** (1101 Biscayne Blvd. 305-434-9600) provides a sensory-friendly atmosphere for special-needs individuals and their families. Guests have their choice of exhibits and planetarium shows without the concern of high-impact crowds. Lighting and amplified sounds are modified to ensure a comfortable and welcoming hands-on environment for guests of all abilities. The next "Morning" takes place May 20 at 8:00 a.m. Best of all, it is free; but an RSVP is required.

Also on May 20, **Saint Martha's Yamaha Concert Series** (305-458-0111) features the annual "StarBurst" concert showcasing two of South Florida's brightest young stars. Violinist Matthew Hakkarainen will perform sonatas by Mozart and Franck, while flutist Sara Denlinger will play Poulenc and Griffes. But take notice! This performance is at the gorgeous Chapel of La Merced (3220 NW 7th Ave.). General admission is \$15; Blue Circle is \$25. Music starts at 4:00 p.m., and parking is free.

Set aside time to see the Diamond Stingily exhibit, which opens May 17 at the **Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami** (61 NE 41st St., 305-901-5272). Stingily, an emerging artist based in NYC, created a new installation using the forms of the ready-made and the monument to explore personal and shared memories of suburban life, black girlhood, and racial violence. Admission is free, but reserving a ticket is recommended.

May is also Asthma Awareness Month. While this lung and airway disease is often associated with children, cases of sudden onset have surprised many adults...and nearly killed some. Symptoms include coughing (especially at night), wheezing, tight chest, frequent

bronchitis, and long-lasting colds. Even if not bothersome at first, symptoms may worsen over time. The **Florida Center for Allergy & Asthma Care** has been helping sufferers gain relief since 1974. Call 1-877-4-ALLERGY to make an appointment at the closest office so you can be properly diagnosed and treated.

Congratulations go out to **North Shore Medical Center** (1100 NW 95th St., 844-319-6838), which recently met Florida state standards for its new designation as a Comprehensive Stroke Center. For patients, that means you can now expect the latest technology and highest-quality care available — without needing to be transported far from home. Every minute saved means 1.9 million neurons spared — in other words, a much better outcome.

Inner Balance (12579 Biscayne Blvd., 786-383-3088, innerbalancemindbody.com) let BizBuzz know that the studio has launched an online retail boutique (innerbalanceboutique.com, @innerbalanceboutique) where you can find an exclusive collection of high-quality women's active wear that flatters the body and feels fresh and modern. *BT* readers are invited to get 20% off their first order by using promo code "BT20." Flat-rate shipping or free studio pickup is available.

If you've been faithful to your workout and diet regimens, then now is exactly the right time to treat yourself to a new swimsuit that will show off that hard work.

Designer and new advertiser Maty Machado hails from Colombia, where she studied at the illustrious Arturo Tejada Cado School of Design and Fashion Marketing. After working in South America, she came to the U.S. to follow her dream of creating beautiful swimwear for women and men under her own brand. She launched **Maty Machado Swimwear** (matymachadoswimwear.com) here in Miami in 2011. But enough about her past. Check out the ad in this issue, and visit the website to see how chic and flirty the 2018 collection is.

Wear that new swimwear while adding **Wike-up! Aquabikes** to your workout schedule (1776 Sans Souci Blvd., North Miami, 786-288-0722). Aquabiking is a relatively new concept. It's basically a stationary bike — but in the water, where the resistance provides a more efficient workout. Visit the showroom or wike-up.com to see available models and prices.

While you're out basking in the Florida sunshine, don't forget to drink plenty

of cool fluids and pamper your skin with sunscreen. But if you overdo it, count on **Medi-Station Urgent Care Center** (9600 NE 2nd Ave., 305-603-7650) to help you recover faster from severe sunburns, dehydration, heat exhaustion, or common summertime accidents.

If your tootsies are the source of your problems, call **Adler Podiatry Associates** (1380 Miami Gardens Dr., Suite 235, 305-935-3999) to schedule an appointment. Dr. Charlton Adler can treat your tendonitis, fractures, malformations, fasciitis, torn ligaments, fungus, and more. Remember, your feet get a lot of use over the summer, and you should treat them well.

A glitch at the IRS website in April gave last-minute filers a one-day extension this year, but you can't count on these Hail Marys happening often (or ever again). So plan ahead with the help of the **Treece Financial Group** (9999 NE 2nd Ave., Suite 203, 305-751-8855). David Treece is offering an educational workshop on IRA planning for baby boomers, including advice on how to coordinate your IRA planning with your overall financial plans. It's at the Brockway Memorial Library (10021 NE 2nd Ave., Miami Shores) at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, May 10. Free! Please RSVP at treecefinancialgroup.com/events.

Retirement may be years away, but hurricane season begins next month! Call new advertiser **Ocean Impact Windows and Doors** (675 NW 116th St., 305-640-5288) if you need a licensed expert to replace your windows and doors before the next big blow. You can count on Ocean Impact, with its 45 years of hands-on experience, to not only protect your investment but also add value and lower your insurance bill. Think of Hurricane Irma as only a practice run.

Attorney **Steve Polisar** (407 Lincoln Rd., Suite 2A, Miami Beach; 305-672-7772, x206) returns to our pages to remind entrepreneurs that he can assist them in opening their businesses and acquiring liquor licenses much faster than they can on their own. As a veteran of the South Beach renaissance, he knows all the ins and outs of operating in Miami-Dade. Experience like that more than pays for itself.

Please enjoy all May has to offer safely, and remember to let our advertisers know you saw them in *Biscayne Times*.

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Not Just for Tourists Anymore



**Bayside Marketplace has 88,500 new residential neighbors.
If only a fraction of them would visit...**

**BY ERIK BOJNANSKY
PHOTOS BY ANDRIANA MEREUTA**



The majority of Bayside's visitors are tourists, mainly people ferried from cruise ships.

On a bright morning at Bayside Marketplace in downtown Miami, Pamela Weller is wearing a broad smile. She's not soaking up the sun like other visitors to the sprawling waterfront shopping center. It's the first day of her workweek, and as Bayside's general manager, she's happy to play tour guide around her workplace.

"You're a Miami person and you haven't eaten at Bubba Gump?" she exclaims, referring to the seafood chain restaurant located at Bayside's front entrance at 401 Biscayne Boulevard. "It's super cute! It revolves around the *Forrest Gump* movie, and when you sit down, they ask you trivia about the movie, like what three sports Forrest Gump played, and all that stuff."

A native of Columbus, Ohio, Weller still roots for Buckeyes football yet is

passionate about Miami. "I think if you don't love Miami, you should leave," she declares, still smiling. "I love the culture here. Whenever I go somewhere else and it's not as culturally enthusiastic, I can't wait to get home."

During Weller's tenure as GM, which started in 2003, her employers have changed three times. She was hired under the Rouse Company, which built the shopping center, with the city's assistance, back in 1987.

She started working for GGP (General Growth Properties) when it took over Bayside following the company's acquisition of Rouse in 2004 for \$12.4 billion.

By January 2016, her new boss was Ashkenazy Acquisition Corp., a private real estate investment firm in New York City that paid \$196 million for a 49 percent stake in Bayside. As part of the deal,

Ashkenazy now calls the shots at Bayside.

Yet through it all, Weller has remained at the helm, regularly surveying a property that encompasses around 140 restaurants, bars, and stores, 1300 parking spaces, and a pavilion with a stage where local musicians play live music and visitors often dance, sometimes while holding a cocktail.

Bayside's territory also includes an octagon-shaped building dating from sometime in the 1960s that, since September 1993, has served as home for a Hard Rock Café. Bayside also surrounds a 130-slip marina, Miamarina, operated by the City of Miami.

"I walk around every day," says Weller.

She doesn't walk it alone. As many as 23 million people visit Bayside every year, she says. The majority of Bayside's visitors are tourists, mainly people ferried

from cruise ships docking nearby at Port-Miami. Bayside also gets plenty of crowds from events taking place at Bayfront Park or the American Airlines Arena, especially when the Miami Heat win.

And, Weller says, there's a regular downtown contingent. During a walkabout, she mentions the growing number of people wandering the waterfront an hour before lunch. She beams: "Not too many shopping centers where you can come at this hour and see this amount of people."

But this tour isn't about the crowds. Weller wants to show off the completed portions of an ongoing \$27 million renovation of the 31-year-old shopping center, where more than 2000 people earn paychecks.

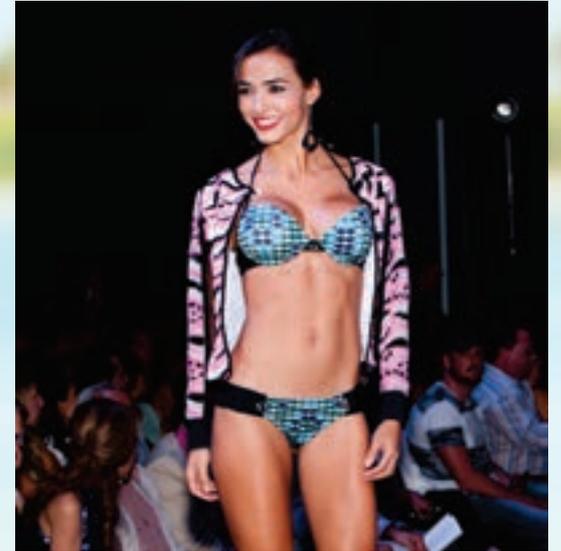
She points out the new paint jobs, hurricane-resistant polyurethane roofs

Continued on page 26

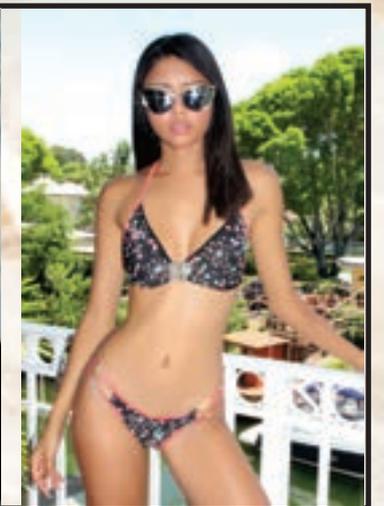
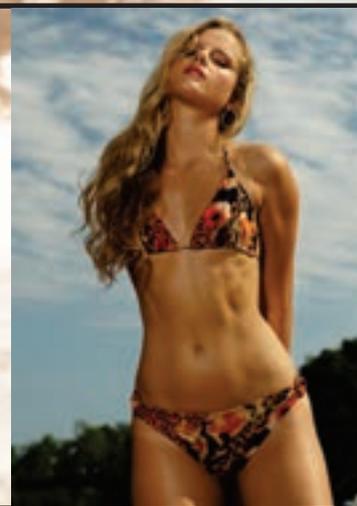


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The 130-slip marina, Miamarina, is owned and operated by the City of Miami.

Bayside Marketplace

Continued from page 24

with LED lighting, towering flags from dozens of countries, computerized kiosk displays, the standardized signs, and brand-new booths — also known as retail merchandising units — for small merchants.

Most of these changes have been made at Bayside's north building, adjacent to the center's parking garage, and give the structure a more modern look than the circa-1980s style that still dominates Bayside's south building.

Within the Mercado area, where a large circular "Pier 5" sign looms overhead, Weller draws attention to...open space. Three retail stalls were removed from here, allowing a clear view of the outside world.

"We opened it up to downtown Miami and Biscayne Boulevard," she says. "It's pretty exciting."

That's just the beginning. By the end of this year, she adds, work will begin on the south building, particularly within its somewhat desolate food court on the second floor, which now contains a handful of eateries and some small shops.

The design of these interior improvements is still being worked out by architect Bernard Zyscovich, Weller says, although they're exploring a simpler food court concept.

And plans are in the works to expand the center's parking garage, with an additional 448 parking spaces as well as linear retail along Biscayne Boulevard.

Still, the expansion at Bayside Marketplace pales in comparison to what real estate developer Jeff Berkowitz has proposed adjacent to the shopping center on a 1.9-acre surface parking lot for Miamarina.

Berkowitz, who built the Miami Children's Museum and charter school on Watson Island, has

claimed he'll construct a \$430 million, 1040-foot-tall tower designed by Arquitectonica's Bernardo Fort-Brescia that will include a bungee jumping platform, a Sky Drop in which passengers plunge 65 floors, moving Sky Orbs that provide 360 degree views of the Miami and Miami Beach skylines, and bars, restaurants, and meeting spaces.

Berkowitz has described it as a "vertical amusement park." Most people, though, compare it to a hairpin. "I call it the inverted toe-nail clipper," laughs Miami-Dade County Commissioner Xavier Suarez, a former mayor of the City of Miami and father of current Mayor Francis Suarez.

The property that Bayside and Miamarina now occupy, and that Skyrise may stand on in the future, is owned by the City of Miami. In August 2014, 71 percent of Miami's voters who bothered to cast ballots in a special referendum supported the construction of Skyrise.

That same referendum also amended the Bayside Marketplace lease — for the fourth time since 1985. Among other things, it extended the lease to November 30, 2060, with options for renewal all the way up to November 30, 2113, a time when many scientists believe that most of coastal Florida will be submerged during high tides.

The amended lease requires that a series of improvements be made at Bayside Marketplace that would range between \$27 and \$35 million, to be paid for by the leasehold owners. Bayside Marketplace's operators (at the time it was just GGP) also gave \$10 million to the city following the referendum's passage, as well as a \$350,000 check that was transferred to the Liberty City Trust, a quasi-independent group affiliated with the City of Miami that seeks to create economic development in Liberty City.

Continued on page 28

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2072 NE 121ST ROAD - Open and airy pool home w/soaring ceilings in guard-gated Sans Souci Estates on 75 ft of glistening waterfront two lots off of Biscayne Bay. Protected deep water for your boat. Open floorplan w/great room full of natural light. Fantastic views of the water as well as of stunning multimillion-dollar new construction. Well-maintained home w/many upgrades combining charming original features w/comfortable floor plan to enjoy Florida waterfront living at its best. Newer pool deck, dock and seawall. 10 minutes to the ocean. **\$1,599,000**



420 NE 95TH STREET - Light, bright and airy 3,546-sf 4/2/2 modern pool home on a large lot in central Miami Shores. Simply sublime. Beautifully and tastefully remodeled w/no expense spared. Vaulted ceilings, wood and tile floors, impact windows, gourmet eat-in kitchen, opulent and expansive master suite w/designer baths and walk-in closets, maid's quarters. Lushly landscaped with tropical verdure for privacy. Exquisite pool patio and back yard perfect for entertaining or just staying home. Florida living as it is meant to be. **\$1,185,000**



1041 NE 83RD STREET - Tropical urban oasis, 3- bedroom pool home in excellent condition on a large waterfront lot in the center of the Shorecrest neighborhood in Miami's super-hot Upper Eastside/MiMo District. Open and airy floorplan, all impact windows, lots of natural light, granite/wood/stainless steel eat-in kitchen. French doors lead you through the covered patio and fountain to luxurious pool area and lush backyard. 76 feet of protected water w/no fixed bridges and only seconds from Biscayne Bay is a boater's dream. **\$6,500/MONTH**



1233 NE 81ST TERRACE - Open and airy recently-remodeled one-story 4/2 Florida home on canal. Two lots off of Biscayne Bay in hot Upper Eastside MiMo District. Strong house with over 11 ft elevation. Marble floors, impact windows, newer a/c and electric, wood/granite kitchen, designer baths, no expense spared on interior details. Deep-water dockage for large boat in this urban oasis. Close to new shops and restaurants. **\$1,350,000**



971 79TH TERRACE - Duplex with two 2-bedroom 1-bathroom units. Each unit with extra bonus room that can be den or third bedroom. Walking distance to the beach in excellent North Beach area. Quiet residential neighborhood near luxury waterfront homes but close to shopping and restaurants. Wood floors, lots of windows. Driveway parking in front of property. **\$549,000**



1399 NE 104TH STREET - Boater's dream! Elegant, open and spacious 4-bed 3.5-bath 2-story completely-remodeled waterfront home in serene Miami Shores location. 75-foot-deep waterfront on canal seconds from Biscayne Bay w/no bridges. Top-notch remodel. Sleek Carrara marble flooring, top-of-the-line granite/wood gourmet European kitchen w/Sub-Zero/Bosch appliances. Spacious floorplan w/lots of windows. Lavish master suite w/luxurious bath, fully-fitted closets. 4th bedroom is maid's room w/full bath. Lush tropical landscaping for privacy.



5009 NE LONDON WALK TERRACE - Impressive 4-bedroom 5-bath modern bay front townhouse in gated Quayside community. Like a private home but w/all of the amenities/security of a world-class resort. Lots of windows & doors unite the interior w/patio overlooking pool and bay. Volume ceilings, marble floors, state-of-the-art kitchen, sleek modern baths, huge master suite w/sitting area & balcony. 2-car garage. Bayfront resort-like pool, full-service spa, state-of-the-art gym, tennis center, racquetball, playground, restaurant, & sports bar.



1071 NE 83RD STREET - Sprawling mid-century chic 4-bed 3-bath waterfront pool home on large lot in super-hot Upper Eastside neighborhood. Private patio leads to front door and the wide-open floor plan that is perfect for entertaining in style. Many upgrades throughout, wood floors, gourmet kitchen and lots of windows and doors to connect the stunning open-plan interior with the expansive waterside tropical yard and pool. Deep water dockage for a large boat on recently-dredged canal seconds from the bay. Close to the chic bistros and boutiques of the MiMo Historic District.



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Bayside Marketplace

Continued from page 26

Bayside's minimum base rent to the City of Miami also increased from \$1 million to \$1.5 million per year. Of that rent, 7.4 percent flows to the Miami River/Biscayne Bay Land Acquisition Trust Fund managed by the State of Florida for the purpose of buying waterfront land along the bay or river. It was that fund which provided most of the money needed for the city to purchase the 1.2 acres of riverfront land in the Upper Eastside now called Manatee Bend. (See "Linked Parks for Little River," February 2017.)

And the lease also stipulated that Bayside's operators give \$350,000 to the Miami Bayside Foundation, a non-profit that provides low-interest loans to small businesses owned by women and minorities in the City of Miami, as well as scholarships for minority business students, in the year following the referendum. Thereafter, the \$350,000 amount increases by two percent each year.

There are stipulations for the Skyrise tower, too.

Berkowitz is to build infrastructure improvements for Miamarina, construct a new dockmaster facility for the marina, and pay the city \$700,000 once construction on the tower starts — in order to compensate the city for the loss of revenue during the construction process. And once the tower is built, Skyrise is to give the city \$1.05 million per year in rent plus an additional \$200,000 annually to be allocated to the Liberty City Trust.

A large chunk of the Skyrise construction budget, around \$270 million, is expected to come from foreigners interested in immigrating to the United States. Known as EB-5, this federal visa program grants wealthy individuals and their families green cards if they invest at least \$500,000 in a venture that provides at least ten long-term jobs.

Back in February 2015, Jeffrey Berkowitz told *The Real Deal* that he was recruiting 540 investors through the EB-5 program. The website www.skyrisemiamieb5.com touts the project's EB-5 credentials. And according to an April 8 article in the Qatar-based *Gulf Times*, Skyrise representatives presented "Miami's Eiffel tower" to a delegation of the Qatari Businessmen Association during their visit to Miami last month.

The EB-5 program could be terminated on September 30, however, unless it's extended by Congress, and it isn't



Pamela Weller, general manager of Bayside Marketplace since 2003, has worked for three different ownership groups.



GM Pamela Weller: "I think Skyrise a game-changer, not just for the shopping center but for the Central Business District."

clear how much money Berkowitz has raised to date.

The demolition of Miamarina's existing dockmaster station, meanwhile, is at least three months behind schedule. Berkowitz also has yet to begin construction of a superstructure strong enough to support the

observation tower's immense weight.

Neither Berkowitz, nor any representatives at his company returned calls from the *BT*. Nor did anyone at Legends, an entertainment company that owns the New York Yankees and the Dallas Cowboys, and that will reportedly help Berkowitz build and run the project.

Sheila Black, executive director of the Liberty City Trust, says she's also been calling Berkowitz's company to find out when construction for Skyrise will begin. So far, there's no date.

"They were hoping to break ground in March," she tells the *BT*, later adding: "The Skyrise project is important because it allows us to have dollars to invest in small businesses in Liberty City." Those investments will come in the form of low-interest loans for business owners to perform renovations on their retail spaces, she explains.

Pamela Weller is sure Skyrise is going to happen, noting that Berkowitz has already fixed up parts of Miamarina.

"I think [Skyrise] is a game-changer, not just for the shopping center but for the CBD, the Central Business District," she says, referring to the downtown area where Bayside is situated.

Bayside Marketplace was intended to be a game-changer, too. Its construction on public parkland was championed by Miami's mayor at the time, Maurice Ferré, who was sure the project would help revive a part of Miami that had been in a slump since the late 1960s.

Ferré thinks the gambit worked. Bayside, along with publicly supported downtown projects like the Adrienne Arsht Center, the AA Arena, and Museum Park helped spark private development within greater downtown Miami. In the process, Bayside helped reverse the trend of people heading to the suburbs, he argues.

"What's a downtown for, except for high-density projects, which is exactly what we were looking for," Ferré says today. "It's either that or we have urban sprawl. The history of Miami-Dade County is urban sprawl. The counter to that is density."

During its existence, Bayside has had its ups and downs. Although the shopping center drew 12 million customers its first year, the Rouse Company reportedly *lost* \$1.3 million during that inaugural year, and didn't turn a profit until 1993. And when GGP was on the verge of bankruptcy in 2009, just four years after it acquired Rouse, the company considered selling its entire interest in the mall. As for the Miami Bayside Foundation, there was a period when it wasn't handing out loans or scholarships at all.

Continued on page 30



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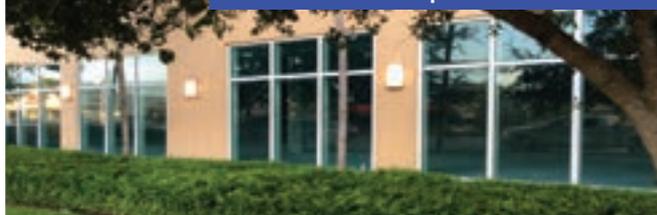
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315 W 28 St. \$2,595,000

12,375 SF Waterfront Lot - FOR SALE



1125 Belle Meade Island Dr. \$1,349,000

See More Of Our Listings On Page 13



Photo courtesy of HistoryMiami, 1983-026-13

Pier 5 circa 1950 as photographed by Bob East: "It was an incredibly active place."

Bayside Marketplace

Continued from page 28

Still, the density that Ferré desired is here. Greater downtown Miami is home to an astonishing 88,540 people, according to an April 2017 Downtown Development Authority (DDA) report. It's a place where the average household income is \$97,671 a year. And with 36 active residential projects now under construction, it continues to grow.

The question will be whether Bayside Marketplace taps into this new energy. Or will it always be dependent on tourists?

A century ago the area where Bayside Marketplace now stands was underwater. "The water came up to where is now the eastern

lane of Biscayne Boulevard," says Paul George, a historian affiliated with the HistoryMiami museum and a *BT* contributor. Today's Museum Park and the site of the AA Arena were the first Port of Miami, then run by Henry Flagler's Florida East Coast Railroad.

By 1920 the city's population boomed to 30,000 people and its elected leaders decided to expand the bayfront. After a couple of years of eminent domain litigation with the FEC Railroad, the city bought 65 acres of mostly *submerged* land from the company for \$1.2 million in 1922. Then they turned on the pumps, dredged up bay bottom fill, and built seawalls. Finally, in 1925, the city dedicated Bayfront Park. But it wasn't all greenery. A chunk of the north end of Bayfront Park was a public port called Pier 5.

"[Pier 5] was designed to be a pier where you could moor a lot of charter fishing boats," George says. "Keep in mind, one of the most important things in that era was taking advantage of an exotic location."

Aside from the subtropical weather, Pier 5 took advantage of a popular pastime: sport fishing. George says there were regular fishing tournaments held at Pier 5. But even for tourists who didn't fish, there was plenty to see and buy. "People went there to buy fresh fish," he adds. "They'd go there to look at the fish on hooks or behind a glass case, like giant sailfish and marlin. It was an incredibly active place."

Tour boats also operated out of Pier 5. Many of those tours would "connect with so-called Indian villages," George says. At these "villages," tourists would

watch Indian men wrestle alligators and watch as Indian women wove colorful clothing. The villagers were usually Miccosukee employed by the tour services. "For someone who lived in New Jersey back in the Twenties or Thirties," George says, "seeing a 'live Indian' was a big deal."

Mike Simpson's family began operating the Island Queen tours from Pier 5 in the late 1940s. "We were doing sightseeing tours with some of the neighboring islands and Biscayne Bay," says Simpson, age 43, who continues to run the Island Queen tours from the Miamarina.

By the late 1960s, Pier 5's popularity had waned so badly the city closed it, and hired local architect Alfred Brown-Parker to develop a new concept.

Continued on page 32

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5901 NE 6 CT | MORNINGSIDE MIMO
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Palm Springs Meets Miami | 3BD/3BA + 2car garage | huge screened courtyard w/ outdoor kitchen | tree-lined wide street just steps to the bay in gated morningside.



770 NE 69 ST 8E | PALM BAY CONDO
Offered at \$199,000
Junior 1BD studio | high ceilings, raw concrete | amazing direct water views | perfect pied a terre in resort-like bayfront setting!



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JUST SOLD

648 NE 71 ST | BOHO in BAYSIDE
Sold for \$495,000
Charming Circa 1925 Craftsman home | 2BD/1.5 BA + office | romantic front porch | heated pool.



IN CONTRACT

740 NE 76 ST | BELLE MEADE
PENDING SALE
Stylish, light and airy 2BD/1BA + garage | tropical yard w/ pool



IN CONTRACT

7650 NE 5 AVE | PALM GROVE
PENDING SALE
Midcentury 3BD/2BA + garage | corner lot across the street from Manatee Bay

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Tourists and locals alike enjoy and dance to the music of live bands daily, for free.

Bayside Marketplace

Continued from page 30

(Besides being renowned for constructing modernist-style homes, Parker designed the Coconut Grove Playhouse.) In 1971, Pier 5 reopened as Miamarina, but it was a failure. “It never took off as a popular destination,” George says.

The reason, he explains, was not necessarily Miamarina’s design, although the historian admits he hates the name Parker bestowed on it. Instead, it was because many of Miami’s middle-class residents, especially those living along the Biscayne Corridor, were migrating to the suburbs. Stores, restaurants, and other businesses followed them — usually toward enclosed, air-conditioned malls. “Downtown had so much competition,” George says. “Not just from the suburbs, but shopping centers.”

Simpson remembers his childhood days at Miamarina during the late 1970s

and early 1980s. Back then, Hard Rock’s future home housed two restaurants, Reflections on the Bay and Dockside Terrace, both of them popular with locals and boaters. “It was all just one big park, Bayfront Park,” he recalls. And in spite of the downtown area’s reputation, Miamarina was a fairly safe place, at least until sunset. Says Simpson: “There was a saying when I was a kid: *Get out of Dodge after five.*”

After visiting Boston in 1976, Maurice Ferré says he realized what Miami needed for a downtown revival: a waterfront shopping center.

“I went up to Boston at the invitation of my friend Mayor [Kevin] White, who was the mayor there for 17 years,” says Ferré, who was Miami’s mayor from 1973 to 1985. “He was about to inaugurate this Rouse project at Faneuil Hall.” Faneuil Hall, a brick market building built in 1741 and owned by Boston’s

redevelopment agency, was renovated and reopened by the Rouse Company. “I was impressed,” he says.

Founded by James Rouse in 1933, the Rouse Company built affordable housing and shopping malls throughout the United States. Rouse was renowned for its “festival marketplaces” like Faneuil Hall, Harborplace in Baltimore, and South Street Seaport in New York City that encouraged social gathering and a mix of small and large businesses.

“I thought it was the kind of project that would seed development in the future,” Ferré recalls, “which, of course, it did.”

But not without debate. Some years later, in 1984, the city worked out a deal with the Rouse Company and its local business partners (including developer Armando Codina, banker Raul Masvidal, and *Miami Times* publisher Garth Reeves) to build a \$93 million retail complex that was then called the Bayside Specialty

Center. The city kicked in \$16 million to build the parking garage and \$4 million “preparing the site,” as a *Herald* article put it. Those preparations included demolishing the 1942 Municipal Auditorium to make room for the garage and dredging up additional bay bottom for the shopping center’s foundation.

Because the land Bayside occupied was deeded as parkland, state officials demanded that part of the rent the city collected from Bayside flow into a special fund managed by the governor and his cabinet that would be used to obtain additional waterfront parkland. (It wouldn’t be used until April 2011, when the city spent nearly all of the money in the fund, \$473,000, to buy Manatee Bend for \$590,000.)

The Rouse Company, in turn, agreed to pay a minimum base rent of \$325,000 in the first year, or a 35 percent share of

Continued on page 34



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Bayside Marketplace

Continued from page 32

Bayside's net income. By the seventh year, the minimum rent would reach \$1 million. Rouse also contributed \$1 million toward architect Isamu Noguchi's redesign of what remained of Bayfront Park.

But most of all, Rouse agreed to recruit minority business owners as tenants, use minority-owned companies and employees as contractors, and create the Miami Bayside Foundation to provide low-interest loans for small businesses. When it opened in 1987, 49 percent of the small businesses were owned by women and minorities, many of them black or Hispanic.

Donna Garvey has worked in various businesses at Bayside Marketplace since its launch. When it first opened, she remembers, the place was extremely busy.

"It was like going to a club," remembers Garvey, who now works at Comics!, a former comicbook store that now operates as a souvenir shop. "There were so many people here. At lunchtime, it used to be so crowded."

Xavier Suarez, who was mayor of Miami when Bayside was being built and opened, says the shopping center was "built on time and within budget." Nevertheless, there were hiccups. Opening day was nearly canceled when Miami officials discovered that their own city didn't have the proper insurance coverage for the thousands of people watching an aquatic parade from Miamarina, Suarez remembers. The city also spent thousands of dollars evicting Reflections on the Bay and Dockside Terrace for non-payment of rent.

Then there was Miamarina. While Bayside was being built by Rouse, the city invested another \$1.5 million giving the marina a facelift, only to discover that the fire lines didn't work, the pilings were unstable, and the decks were either uneven or fragile. The city had to spend another \$5 million fixing the design flaws, made worse by Hurricane Andrew. Work finally came to an end in the fall of 1997.

The Miami Bayside Foundation didn't work as planned, either, in spite of a 15-member board that included five



The second-floor food court was once bustling, but today it is a forlorn space in need of reinvention.



Bayside's north building has undergone renovations to give it a more modern look.

appointees from Bayside, five appointed from each of Miami's city commissioners, and five appointed by the other ten members. Except for a \$300,000 check to Miami-Dade College for the creation of scholarships, there's no evidence that the group gave away any other money

prior to the year 2010.

"I had to disassemble the whole thing and put the whole thing back together," declares Bob Powers, an Upper Eastside activist who chaired the Miami Bayside Foundation from 2009 to 2012.

Powers and a new board fired executive director Dwayne Wynn. Because Wynn refused to cooperate with the new board, Powers and other board members had to visit several Miami banks with a lawyer's letter from Bayside. During their scavenger hunt, board members discovered that \$1 million in cash was spread out among several non-interest-earning bank accounts, each holding less than \$100,000.

Nathan Kurland, who was appointed to the foundation's board in 2010, says that the Miami Bayside Foundation's office address at the time was at a boarded-up garage in Overtown. "You can't make this stuff up," he jokes.

Kurland, now the foundation's chairman, says it's still not known exactly how much money the non-profit collected or spent in its first 13 years of existence. However, once the \$1 million was recovered, the board set about immediately handing out loans of \$50,000 each to small businesses owned by women and minorities.

Continued on page 36

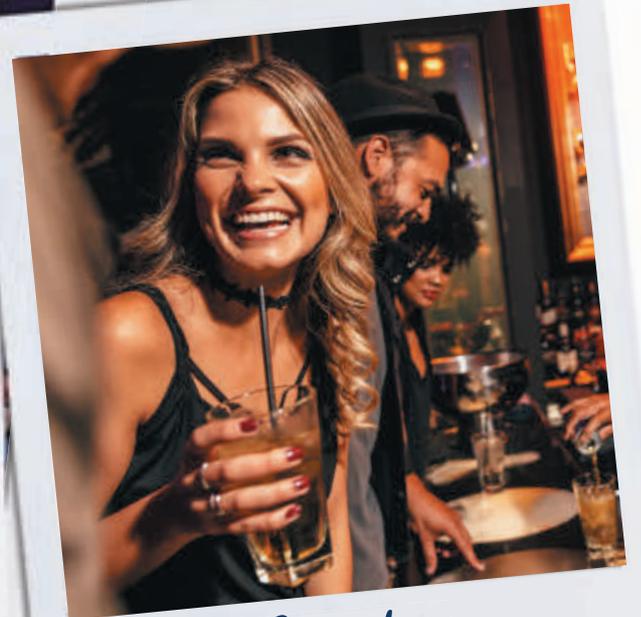
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Bayside Marketplace

Continued from page 34

In the seven years since Wynn was replaced by Kathleen Murphy as executive director, 68 loans to small businesses in the City of Miami totaling more than \$2.8 million have been made, and 747 scholarships worth \$5.8 million were awarded. Instead of relying on money from Bayside, the foundation now holds fundraisers. It also holds small-business workshops.

Bayside Marketplace's Pamela Weller points out that the foundation has received awards, and indeed, the U.S. Small Business Administration recognized the foundation as Florida's Community Partner of the Year, according to a March 30 *Florida Trend* report. "It's probably one of the best boards in the city," Weller proclaims.

But what about the board's performance prior to 2010? "It definitely didn't fulfill the obligations that the landlord thought were being fulfilled," she acknowledges. "So, you know, from every valley comes a mountain. We prefer not to look backward but to move forward."

Prince Logan is looking forward, too. For the past year, Logan has been general manager of Bayside's Hard Rock Café. And for the past two years, he says, the Hard Rock Café international chain of restaurants, hotels, and casinos — owned by Florida's Seminole Tribe since 2006 — has gone through a leadership overhaul.

For Bayside's Hard Rock Café, this means capital improvements ranging from modernizing the kitchen to replacing the 65-foot-tall electric guitar that was knocked down by Hurricane Wilma 12 years ago. "We hope to have it back up this summer," he says.

Logan is also determined to bring more locals to the café by promoting live music acts, bringing in more local craft beers, and televising live Miami Heat games. While happy to receive the thousands of tourists and Heat game attendees that Bayside helps attract, Logan says he's studied the books and knows that the restaurant can't depend solely on them.



Dating back to the 1960s this futuristic building houses Hard Rock Café, which is hoping for a renaissance.



Waterfront dining, a confounding rarity in Miami, should be and could be a draw for local residents.

"In 2012, when the Heat was at its height with LeBron James, the whole area really benefited, and the Hard Rock did well with sales," he says. "But it kind of went down after that."

The situation wasn't helped by inspectors shutting down the restaurant in November 2016 after noting health code violations, which were quickly corrected. However, Logan is hardly alone in describing Bayside as primarily a tourist destination — much as Pier 5 was a magnet for tourists nearly five decades ago.

"Bayside is targeted for tourists," says Jeremy Larkin, president of NAI Miami Commercial Real Estate, adding: "There's a lot of touristy products, a lot of touristy services and restaurants."

Weller recognizes that 65 percent of Bayside's crowds are tourists. "We're the number-one tourist destination in the city," she says. Still, she insists, Bayside gets its fair share of people from the new residential towers, as well as from the 212,000 locals who work or visit the downtown area on weekdays. To ensure that flow,

Weller says, Bayside has built partnerships with the Adrienne Arsht Center in Omni and the Gusman Center on Flagler Street.

But this isn't the late 1980s or even the 1990s. Bayside Marketplace has plenty of competition. According to the Miami DDA's April 2017 retail report, there is already 7.3 million square feet of retail within greater downtown Miami. At least another 725,000 square feet of retail is projected to come online with ongoing mega projects like Miami Worldcenter and MiamiCentral Station.

Jeremy Larkin of NAI Miami Commercial Real Estate says downtown area residents are more likely to visit retail closer to their condo units than hoof it over to Bayside, which is separated from most of the downtown area by eight lanes of Biscayne Boulevard traffic.

Indeed, Bayside Marketplace's separation from the downtown area may be more than eight lanes wide. Alisha Marks Tischler, spokeswoman for the Miami DDA, declined to speak to the *BT* about Bayside Marketplace, noting that the agency's board hasn't taken any position on the ongoing renovation or the proposed Skyrise tower. "We aren't really involved with Bayside," she states via e-mail.

And Tony Alonso, a DDA board member and Flagler Street property owner, told the *Miami Herald* six years ago that, thanks to Biscayne Boulevard, the crowds visiting Bayside and those visiting Flagler Street typically don't mix. In other words, the Bayside synergy touted by Maurice Ferré doesn't really exist. "Bayside lives on its own," Alonso said, "and so do we."

But Hard Rock's Logan is hopeful that Skyrise, which is slated to be built practically next door to his restaurant, will entice people in downtown Miami to cross Biscayne Boulevard. In fact, he's sure that such an attraction will draw locals from all over South Florida.

And even though Skyrise has yet to break ground, Logan is optimistic that the ongoing renovations will bridge the gap between Miami's downtown and Bayside Marketplace. "Making this place more attractive will attract more people," he says. "And that will help us."

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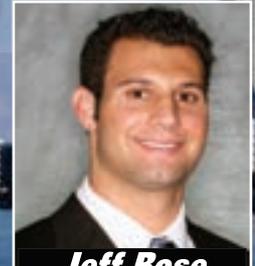


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Discount Cure for Chronic Eyesore

Leases are announced for vacant Kmart site, but neighbors are itching for results

By **Mark Sell**
BT Contributor

Imagine this in the old Kmart at 108th Street and Biscayne Boulevard, now ten months vacant:

- Burlington Coat Factory as the big anchor, rising 30 feet on the north end, taking up roughly 42,000 square feet (the size of a respectable Publix), with a partial teardown-buildout.
- PetSmart, at 18,014 square feet.
- Ross Dress for Less, at 27,736 square feet.
- Michael's Crafts, at 22,736 square feet.

At least, for now, that's the idea: four successful off-price stores to replace

the shuttered one. This is retail, circa 2018, when anything can happen and announcements are subject to change.

Neighbors across the six-foot peach-colored wall in Miami Shores (the Kmart property itself is in unincorporated Miami-Dade County) cannot wait. They consider the vacant property a mounting blight, with trash piled in the back and Hurricane Irma damage still evident.

On April 13, the county posted a notice of violation, and crews were soon out picking up bulk trash thrown in the back and repairing a supporting column in the front.

Seritage Growth Properties, the landlord of the 9.8-acre site, disclosed the PetSmart, Michael's, and Ross



BT photos by Mark Sell

Herb Schauer, Miami Shores neighbor to the old Kmart, is annoyed both at the site's deterioration and the clobbering he took on his stock shares.

leases in a third-quarter statement in November 2017, and slated them for development in the second quarter of this year. The Burlington lease was signed in December, according to county records.

Repeated BT queries to Seritage went unanswered. Prominent Miami retail brokers, who declined to speak on the record, said they'd heard nothing about Seritage timelines for the property.

Seritage was formed by Sears Holdings chairman and hedge fund manager Edward "Eddie" Lampert in 2015, to spin off Sears and Kmart properties into profitable real estate holdings. Lampert, who built his fortune with AutoZone and AutoNation, bought Kmart and Sears in 2005, an acquisition that has since resulted in nothing but trouble.

Continued on page 40

No Forwarding Address

Buena Vista Post Office move remains a mystery

By **Francisco Alvarado**
BT Contributor

On the façade of the Buena Vista Post Office, right above the glass doors and large windows, a sign proclaims in block letters "retail space available" next to an image of a new modern building.

The banner is the only indicator that the longtime mail pickup and drop-off center won't be around much longer. But the exact date when the post office at 66 NE 39th St. will close forever, as well as a possible nearby relocation site, remains a mystery.

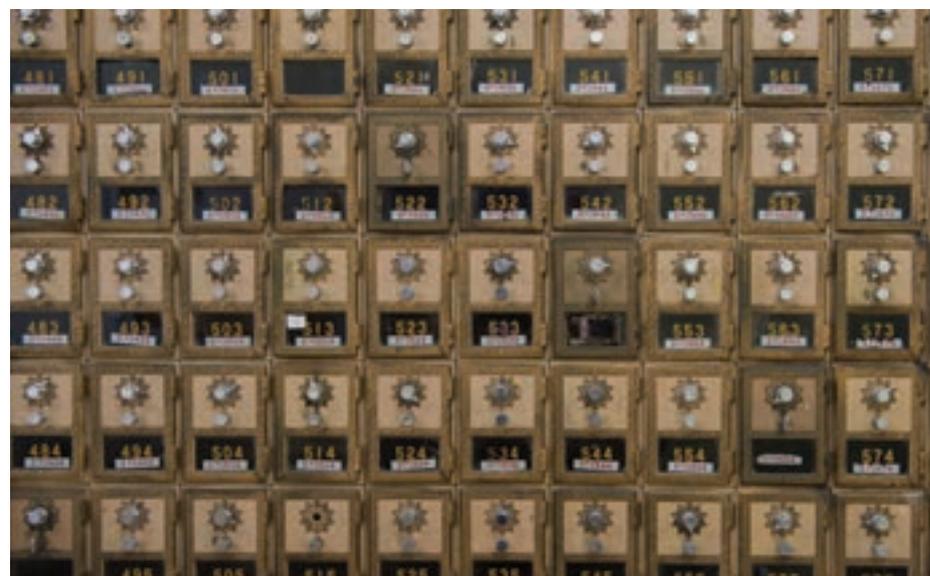
The uncertainty has left many residents and workers in Buena Vista, Midtown Miami, Morningside, and Edgewater who use the post office wondering if the U.S. Postal Service will

soon force them to trek to postal locations in downtown Miami, Allapattah, or the Little River neighborhood.

"I hope they put one that is really close," says Danielle Lee, chairwoman of Buena Vista Stakeholders homeowners group. "NW 2nd Avenue could use a good investment like a new post office. That's what I wish would happen. I definitely don't want to drive far, and for a long time, while they figure it out."

On a recent Thursday outside the post office shortly after noon, eight out of ten customers who went inside told the BT that they didn't know it was closing.

Raphaelle Kernisant says she's been going to the post office to pick up packages she orders online from sites like Amazon since she began working a year ago as an account associate for Diamond Public Relations at 4770 Biscayne Blvd.



BT photos by Benjamin Thacker

In 1963, an old plumbing warehouse was converted into the Buena Vista Post Office, which accommodated 1043 post office boxes.

"I'm always using this post office," says 23-year-old Kernisant. "It's more convenient for me to come here because I spend most of my time at work. Now the convenience is gone."

Updates from the U.S. Postal Service have been few and far between. In July 2016, about a year and a half after the

Continued on page 43

Under Siege, Little Haiti Responds

Developers swoop in for the residential pickings

By Erik Bojnansky
BT Senior Writer

While developers plan to submit a proposal that will allow them to build towers as tall as 28 stories in Miami's Little Haiti, activists and clergy are planning a series of meetings and protests demanding jobs, affordable housing, and an end to gentrification.

Ric Katz, a publicist and lobbyist, confirms that his clients are aiming to bring their Eastside Ridge project proposal to the City of Miami's Planning Zoning and Adjustments Board in June. The Podolsky family in New York City has presented plans to build at least 2600 residential units, around 390,000 square feet of retail, about 400 hotel rooms, and a passenger train station on the 22-acre site at NE 54th Street and NE 2nd Avenue. This is where the two-story, 400-unit Design Place apartment complex now stands.

Most of Eastside Ridge's buildings are currently planned to be between 5 and 28 stories tall. Under the city's Miami 21 zoning plan, a building with 5 floors can be up to 81 feet tall, while a 28-floor building can be 403 feet tall.

Katz says these plans may change in the future. Katz also says that he and other members of the Eastside Ridge team are talking to various members of the surrounding community.

"There are ongoing dialogues as we explain what we want to accomplish," he says, later adding, "Many of the people who are shouting at us are also talking to us."

Eastside Ridge isn't the only large project being proposed in that part of Little Haiti. Last year the city approved plans to add another one million square feet of new development just west of

Design Place at the Miami Jewish Health complex, a nursing home and hospital for the elderly. The additional development includes a 140-room hotel, a five-story conference center, and a 140,000-square-foot memory care center.

Meanwhile, the shuttered Archbishop



BT photo by Andriana Mereuta

Evan Philius (left) and Pastor Erick Jules outside Design Place guard gate: They are taking a stand against gentrification in Little Haiti.



View of proposed Eastside Ridge development at NE 54th Street and FEC railroad tracks.

Curley-Notre Dame High School, located directly south of Design Place, is also for sale. A developer could build 2300 residential units in buildings up to 28-stories tall there if they can obtain the sort of zoning that Eastside Ridge's team is after, according to a September 2017 story posted to *The Real Deal* news website.

The 16-acre school property, owned by the Archdiocese of Miami, is now reportedly under contract to a developer, according to sources who didn't wish to be identified. Michael Fay, a principal of the real estate brokerage Avison Young and one of the agents listing the property, declined to comment.

It's the Eastside Ridge project that has generated the most controversy so far. In September 2017, at least 200 people from Little Haiti, Buena Vista, and the Upper Eastside stated their outright opposition to the project during a community meeting held at the Little Haiti

Continued on page 41

Kmart

Continued from page 38

Seritage is placing its main public focus nearly six miles north, where it is replacing the demolished Sears store in Aventura Mall with Esplanade at Aventura, 215,000 square feet of retail and restaurants spread over 12.3 acres at the corner of the William Lehman Causeway and Biscayne Boulevard. Completion of the first phase is scheduled for late 2019, with 100,000 additional square feet to follow.

At the Kmart site, Seritage has one operating tenant in a separate building: discount grocer Aldi, a no-frills, popular German-based corporate cousin to Trader Joe's.

Lampert made news April 23 when he proposed that his hedge fund, ESL Investments, purchase the Kenmore appliance brand — the most valuable asset of Sears — and other Sears units in an effort to save his embattled and dwindling retail empire.

As of February 3, ESL Investments had 1002 Sears and Kmart stores, down from 1430 a year earlier. According to the website Business Insider, Sears is closing 57 stores in 2018, and Kmart 109.

Kmart operated 2171 stores at its peak in 2000, and just 432 at the end of 2017. More than 200,000 Sears and Kmart employees have been thrown out of work, and there are grave doubts Sears and Kmart will even exist as retailers by this time next year.

The reclusive Lampert, age 55 and a father of three, has a home in Indian Creek Village, and residences in Aspen, Colorado, and Greenwich, Connecticut. He's a devotee of Ayn Rand, putters about on his 288-foot motor yacht *The Fountainhead*, and is active in Chabad.

He worked his way through high school after family reversals and graduated Phi Beta Kappa in economics from Yale, where he was a member of Skull and Bones and roommate of U.S. Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin.

The market agrees that Sears properties are more valuable as a real estate play than as a retailer. Sears stock peaked at \$131.21 in April 2007, and closed at \$3.16 on April 27, 2018. No wonder. In March 2017, Sears Holdings, having lost \$10 billion in six years, warned investors that "substantial doubt exists related to the company's ability to continue as a going concern."



Chantal Merle awaits a cleanup of the adjacent Kmart property as she tries to sell her house.

Seritage, separately traded, has fared better, peaking at \$56.47 on April 2016 and closing at \$35.64 on April 27.

The Miami Shores neighbors have plenty to say.

Herb Schauer, 80 years old, who keeps a proudly tended fruit and vegetable garden behind his house with statues of lions, has his opinions.

"After the hurricane, they did nothing," says Schauer of Lampert. "They

let it rot. People are throwing food over. They're making love and throwing their rubbers over. I had stock in Kmart and lost every penny I had invested. He wants to kill Sears — and he'll do it."

Up a few doors, Chantal Merle curates her home, its pool, and meticulous garden with great care. She's trying to sell her property and isn't pleased by what she sees on the other side of the wall.

"I look over the fence and truckers are dumping the food, tires, and garbage. Sex, condoms, whatever you want," Merle says. "It was good to see crews picking up, but the rotting food is still there. And people keep dumping things."

The decline of Sears and Kmart has caused suffering across the board, from the top down.

Continued on page 42



Aerial view of Design Place (shaded) and the Archbishop Curley-Notre Dame High School property south of it, which reportedly is now under contract.

Little Haiti

Continued from page 39

Cultural Complex. They maintained that if the developers insist on replacing the 400 units at Design Place with a new project, they should build in accordance to *current* zoning guidelines, which allow only 1691 residential units and around 380,000 square feet of commercial space in buildings no taller than five stories.

Concerns raised at the time included traffic congestion and a dramatic change to Little Haiti's character, which is predominately single-family homes and low-rise apartments. (See "Little Haiti's Big No," October 2017.)

Frustrations over the project were expressed again this past April 9 during

Continued on page 45



Haitian Women of Miami executive director Marleine Bastien: "You can't sell your house. If you sell your house, we are going to lose Little Haiti!"

Kmart

Continued from page 40

Lampert himself has not been spared. As of April, *Forbes* lists his net worth at \$1.55 billion. That net worth has declined as he has plowed money back into his holdings to grab valuable assets to prevent or delay the final closure of Sears and Kmart stores. Back in 2006, *Forbes* pegged his worth at \$3.8 billion.

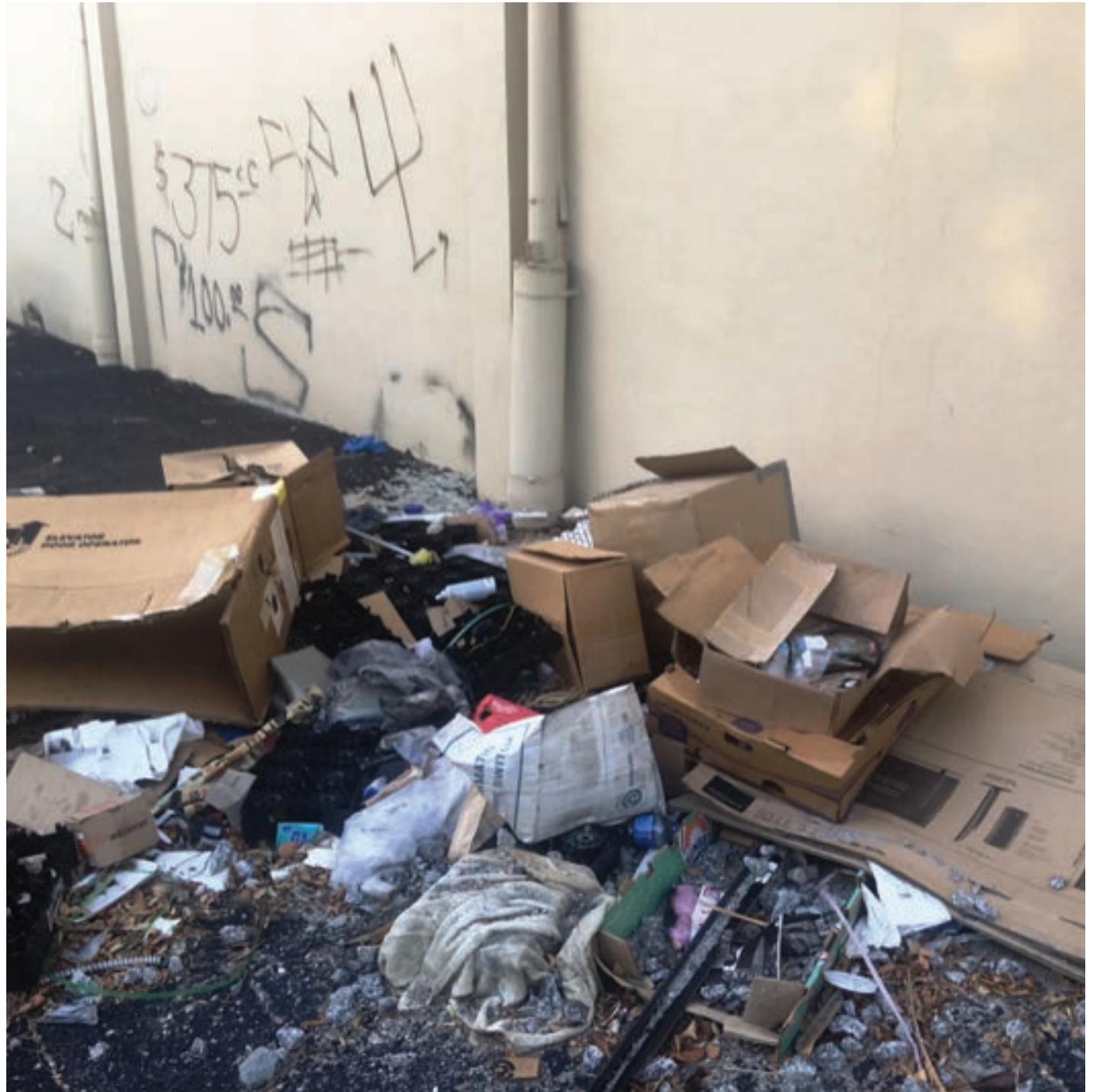
Suffering, of course, is relative. Consider Shane Rasche, age 61. According to a Rise News video posted in April, Rasche worked at the Kmart for more than a decade until it closed, and says he has yet to find another job. So he's trying to stave off eviction before receiving his first (presumably modest) Social Security check.

Retail brokers contacted by the *BT* say the location makes sense for off-price retailers on well-traveled Biscayne Boulevard almost directly between downtown/midtown and Aventura. Burlington, Ross, Michaels, and PetSmart have so far proved that brick-and-mortar stores can work, with increases in both year-to-year and store-by-store earnings.

Retail brokers also give Seritage high marks for savvy in structuring leasing and development deals under Benjamin Schall, its president and CEO.

"This is an excellent development site, and this is hopefully not the final iteration of what will be there," says independent real estate consultant Michael Maxwell. "This is well-suited for mixed-used development rather than solely retail. One would hope that Seritage will not only maximize the value to its bottom line, but that of the community."

For now, Schauer, Merle, and other Kmart neighbors can find limited



Trash piles up behind the old Kmart property at 10700 Biscayne Blvd.

Continued on page 44

<p>29 NE 109 St.</p>  <p>\$499,500</p>	<p>10675 NE 11 Ct.</p>  <p>\$499,500</p>	<p>9655 Biscayne Blvd.</p>  <p>\$799,500</p>	<p>885 NE 113 St.</p>  <p>\$479,500</p>	 <p>DUFFY REALTY www.duffyrealty.com</p> <hr/> <p>Patrick L. Duffy 305-904-4803</p>
<p>Large 3/2 with big Family room and garage. Updated kitchen. New impact windows/doors. Wood floors. 2 fireplaces. Whole house generator.</p>	<p>Tropical oasis. 3/2 on huge lot with Tiki Bar & salt water pool. Impact windows. High beam ceilings. Quiet low traffic street. Central A/C. Fireplace.</p>	<p>Stately 2 story custom built in 2000. 4 bed/3.5 bath. 2 car gar. Formal dining rm. Eat-in kit. Over 3,000 total SF. Close to the bay.</p>	<p>Well maintained 3/2 + garage in beautiful Biscayne Park. Newer tile roof. Central a/c. Updated electric. Walk to community park.</p>	

Post Office

Continued from page 38

National Association of Letter Carriers sold the post office property to Thor Equities for \$43.2 million, the Postal Service held a public meeting to address community concerns about the relocation of retail and delivery operations, says USPS spokeswoman Debra Fetterly.

Thor had given the postal service a deadline of January 31, 2017, to vacate the premises, but the company granted an extension because the Postal Service has not had any luck finding a new home — ideally, a 13,750-square-foot space on a site that's at least two acres and can accommodate 123 parking spaces — in or near the Design District.

Fetterly says she doesn't know how far the lease has been extended because she hasn't been able to reach USPS real estate specialist Sandra A. Rybicki, who's in charge of the search for a new Buena Vista location. Thor representatives did not return phone messages seeking comment.

Tony Arellano, a principal with Dwtwn Realty Advisors, says the



No date yet for closing the Buena Vista Post Office, and no new location, either.

problem is that sites in and near the Design District that can accommodate both retail and delivery operations are too expensive for the Postal Service. "I submitted 20 sites to them," Arellano says. "It's difficult to get a huge swath of land that can park 50 employee vehicles and be able to take 18 wheelers, plus

have a retail presence with parking for customers at a reasonable rent the Postal Service will consider market rate."

Arellano notes that the average rent per square foot in the Design District is now hovering between \$130 and \$150. "There are plenty of sites that would satisfy one or both uses, but [USPS] is

looking for something at a price that may not exist," he says. "The general area that they're looking at is premium real estate. If they'd go north on NW 2nd Avenue, I'm sure there are opportunities. But they haven't been willing to do that, from what I understand."

On April 10, the USPS held another community meeting at the post office itself to inform customers that the Postal Service had expanded its preferred boundaries for a suitable relocation site and would take suggestions on available commercial spaces from area residents, Fetterly says. However, she couldn't provide details about what occurred at the meeting because she didn't attend.

Some Buena Vista residents say they and others didn't even know about the meeting. Jerome Schiller, president of the Buena Vista East Historic Neighborhood Association, says he didn't receive a notice, despite having a P.O. Box at the 39th Street mail center. "I'm assuming they'll close the customer service part before the P.O. Box side," he says. "But I don't know any exact dates. Once it closes, it will cause a lot of disruption. It's going to be a hassle for a lot of



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Do allergies cause asthma?

Allergies don't cause asthma, but the two are related. Allergies often run in the family and they can affect the lungs, the nose or the skin, causing respectively asthma, allergic rhinitis or eczema. Children with allergies may develop asthma. Not everyone with allergies develops asthma. Children whose families have history with allergies and asthma are likely to suffer from allergies and/or asthma. In other words, the variables are numerous and nothing is set in stone.

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Community News: BISCAYNE CORRIDOR



An apparent vehicle collision damaged a Kmart column, but repairs are now under way.

Kmart

Continued from page 42

comfort with the work crews and with the closure and condemnation of the adjoining Miami Shores Motel, just within the village limits and south of the Busy Bee Car Wash. The boarded-up motel, considered an eyesore and source of police calls, is separated from residents by a locked gate. Development plans at

the motel site remain uncertain.

While Miami Shores and Biscayne Park have sometimes cast acquisitive eyes at the Kmart property, neither municipality has acted.

For Schauer, Merle, and their neighbors, the option for now is to keep the pressure on the county to maintain the property as they await further work from Seritage.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

Post Office

Continued from page 43

people — that I can tell you.”

Fetterly says the USPS followed guidelines, per its national process, which only required notices to be posted on the doors and windows of the Buena Vista Post Office and copies mailed to the office of Miami Mayor Francis Suarez. “This information was posted three weeks prior to the April 10 public meeting,” Fetterly says. “Also, I sent two news releases and several Twitter messages to media.”

Fetterly says the USPS has decided to move Buena Vista delivery operations to a new building under construction at the site of the Flagler Station at 500 NW 2nd Avenue in downtown Miami. The estimated completion date is at the end of this year.

“USPS will continue to provide retail services — purchasing stamps, mailing packages, and picking up accountable items like registered mail — at the current location,” Fetterly says, “until a new location is identified.

Customers also will continue to pick up their post office box mail at the current Buena Vista Station.”

Outside the post office, Leyla Cole has just finished mailing a box of antiques she shipped off to a customer. Cole says she's been going to the Design District mail center since she moved to Buena Vista three years ago. “I saw a sign on the window two months ago that said it was moving to another location,” she says. “One of the postal workers inside told me about a meeting where they were going to pick a new location. But I didn't attend.”

Cole says she'd heard that the Postal Service identified a new location at 55th Street and Biscayne Boulevard, but was disappointed to learn from a *BT* reporter that no decision has been made regarding its relocation.

“I run my own business and send out packages frequently,” she says. “I need to live near a post office. This was a good location for me.”

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

Little Haiti

Continued from page 41

a meeting at the One God in Three Persons Baptist Church, located on the bottom floor of an old apartment building at 473 NW 77th St. Attended by several dozen people, most of them Haitian, the gathering was organized by Pastor Erick Jules, the service workers union UNITE HERE Local 355, and Fanm Ayisyen Nan Miyami (also known as Haitian Women of Miami).

Discussion at the meeting included stories of the Podolsky family's past controversial actions in New York, which involved felony convictions. Two Podolsky brothers, along with their father Zenek Podolsky (who died in 2015), pleaded guilty to 37 felonies in 1984 in connection with a scheme to hire "professional vacators" to intimidate rent-control tenants from three buildings they owned in New York City.

"We're gearing up," says FANM's executive director, Marleine Bastien.

But the fight isn't just about Eastside Ridge. There were also stories of how developers and real estate investors are swooping into the Little Haiti area and forcing out small businesses and churches. In addition, speakers talked about real estate agents continuously contacting Haitian homeowners in the area, encouraging them to sell their homes. Bastien called it a plot to remove Haitian people from Little Haiti.

"You can't sell your house. If you sell your house, we are going to lose Little Haiti!" Bastien shouted as the audience applauded. "You need to keep your house!"

Actually, the plot has more to do with making money than simply forcing out Haitians. In July 2016, RealtyTrac rang the dinner bell for house flippers when the real estate news service rated the 33150 ZIP code (which includes Little Haiti) 14th in its national listing of the "35 Best Down-and-Out Neighborhoods to Buy a Home." According to RealtyTrac, 32.1 percent of homes in that area were financially underwater, while investors stand to make an estimated 111 percent profit after buying, renovating, and selling the homes to someone else.

Pastor Jules says he, too, is a victim of gentrification. Jules notes that his One God in Three Persons Church used to occupy a warehouse space in the Little River area. But then the building was purchased by a new landowner who wanted to more than

quadruple the monthly rent.

Jules says he left, even though he had spent some \$70,000 renovating the space. Now developers are making offers to buy the apartment building where his church relocated.

"We're not okay with the way investors and developers, the way they work, the way they fight with us," Jules says.

Evan Philius, One God in Three Person's youth director, says they're also organizing with other churches in the area. But Philius says they don't necessarily want to stop the project outright. They want concessions that will benefit working-class people, particularly Haitians, who live in the surrounding area.

"Right now, there's nothing to help the community, and the things that will help the community are better housing and better jobs," says Philius, who is also affiliated with UNITE HERE. "Small businesses are being displaced, and there's nothing to help them."

To obtain their desired zoning, Eastside Ridge's developers are going through a process to evaluate a special area plan, or SAP. As part of that process, developers must demonstrate community benefits. Three activists at the April 9 meeting told the *BT* that they'd like an arrangement similar to the one that Miami Worldcenter's developers had to follow in Park West three years ago. In exchange for receiving up to \$108 million in tax rebates, the developers agreed to hire at least 30 percent of its workforce from within the Southeast Overtown Park West Community Re-development Area at salaries starting at \$11.58 an hour for unskilled labor.

The arrangement was negotiated largely by City of Miami Commission Chairman Keon Hardemon, whose district includes Park West, Overtown, and Little Haiti. Hardemon's office didn't return phone calls for comment.

Katz referred questions on Eastside Ridge's lobbying of city officials to Genaro "Chip" Iglesias, a former deputy mayor of Miami-Dade County who is now managing partner of the Ballard Partners Inc., a government relations firm. Iglesias didn't return a phone call for comment.

Katz says they're striving to build a project that is acceptable for the community. As for jobs, he's certain that the area's Haitian residents will be hired as employees, especially at its future hotels.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com



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Ten Years Too Late?

Unintended consequences from planning documents wreak havoc

By Mark Sell
BT Contributor

When people don't get the word, expect to pay a price — maybe a big one.

On the morning of April 26, Marc Yvanes of 875 NE 130th St. was ready to extract the biggest price possible from the City of North Miami. Two days earlier, the North Miami City Council voted 3-2 to allow a six-story condo building on the 1.1-acre, oak-shaded lot at 840 NE 130th St.

"After the meeting, I was disappointed in myself for allowing this level of corruption," said Yvanes, age 43, a special-events producer who bought his house in 2006. "I should have been out of this city years ago rather than put up with these thieves dressed in suits. This was a total free-for-all for everything the developer wants and nothing the citizens want."

Yvanes has plenty of company. All but one household reached by canvassers in a five-square-block area opposed the project. Only one, two blocks away, indicated support.

The area, zoned residential and just a block west of W. Dixie Highway, calls for 67 units and 92 parking spaces, developed by OZ and BF LLC, which bought the property in July 2017 and invested \$900,000 in the expectation of building.

Mayor Smith Joseph and Councilmen Philippe Bien-Aime and Alix Desulme voted for it, and Councilman Scott Galvin and Vice Mayor Carol Keys, who represents the district, voted against.

But this story goes beyond that vote, as it has many sides.

It reveals a saga of miscommunication, of a developer's right to build, of unintended consequences when urban planning theory meets practice and hits people where they live, and of angry neighbors galvanizing into a movement that could affect the shape



BT photo by Mark Sell

John Lasseter and Marc Yvanes with opposition sign across from planned condo development.

of next year's municipal election.

Four of five council seats, including the termed-out mayor's, are up for grabs, and three candidates have already filed. Only Keys's seat is immune.

It is also a story about the effectiveness of knocking on doors in an online world;

of the power of lobbies, money, and a city's fear of lawsuits. And, if the April 24 city council meeting is any indication, it is a story of arrogance from the dais.

This shaded neighborhood of tidy houses built largely in the late 1940s is much like many others in the great

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residential sweep from El Portal through Miami Shores, Biscayne Park, and North Miami to the Enchanted Forest neighborhood north of 135th Street. Some people have lived there 50 years or more. It is also dotted with angry signs: “Vote NO to proposed 860 development! #NOT IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD.” Or: “Vote NO to 70 apartments plus 100 parking spaces. Keep us residential!”

Yet the council narrowly approved the project, under some pressure from the city manager and city attorney, who asserted that the developer was acting within bounds of the city’s zoning plan. This came after two long, heated meetings of the city planning commission in December, and on March 14, a three-hour-plus marathon that inspired the council to put an effective moratorium on new development to give staff time to review zoning regulations, only to rescind it April 10 (it was not on the agenda). Then, on April 24, the project popped right up again.

Yvanes and others who consider the process suspect vow to fight with numbers. “It’s time for us to band together,” he says, “and see what the hell these guys are talking about and let them

know there’ll be hell to pay if they don’t respect the neighborhood.”

One immediate source of trouble is a section buried in the city’s 667-page Comprehensive Plan, approved by the city council in 2007 and revised last year, known as a Neighborhood Redevelopment Overlay (NRO).

It covers a jagged, roughly triangular area, perhaps a little better than a square mile, surrounding downtown North Miami, extending from roughly 123rd Street to 135th Street. The idea is to permit higher density in single-family areas near the city’s center to promote more vital neighborhoods. The plan allocates as many as 2500 units for the NRO zone, which went largely undeveloped in the Great Recession and its aftermath. Now projects are springing back.

At the April 24 meeting, two prominent lawyers squared off. For the developer: state Rep. Joe Geller, a litigator and development lawyer. Geller presented a petition with more than 250 names supporting the project, and asked supporters to stand. Councilwoman Carol Keys read Geller’s petition on the dais and found almost none of the people live near the project neighborhood.

Representing residents: activist and neighborhood zoning lawyer Tucker Gibbs,

who presented about 75 names, nearly all residents in the immediate neighborhood. Mayor Smith Joseph gave Gibbs two minutes, cut him off, and foreclosed public comment, riling the residents.

“The council members said their hands are tied,” Gibbs related after the meeting. “Their hands aren’t tied. That’s just a convenient excuse. They can make the change.” Gibbs and the affected neighbors say the development violates at least three of the ten principles in the city’s Land Development Regulations: to avoid adverse impact on adjacent properties; to enhance the community character; and to ensure compatibility with adjacent uses.

Planning Commissioner Bob Pechon was moved to side with the residents. “I missed this,” Pechon admits. “I was completely caught off guard. This shows a disrespect for the residential neighborhood. They were caught off guard. The NRO has three problems: it’s too big, one size does not fit all, and there is no respect paid to the people of the underlying zoning districts. In residential areas, people said: ‘I’ve been here 50 years. What about me?’ Whether intended or not, the effect of this is to drive out

single-family residents.”

North Miami native John Lasseter operates his business, Lasseter Plumbing, founded 1932, from a 1947-vintage Lasseter family home right next door to Yvanes, and lives in nearby unincorporated Biscayne Gardens.

Lasseter, age 56, talks of leaving South Florida, exasperated by density. “I used to walk through that field to school,” Lasseter says. “You know what a blivet is? It’s ten pounds of crap in a five-pound bag. It doesn’t fit.”

Next up, at NE 9th Avenue and 124th Street, also in the NRO: 175 apartments, a 70-unit assisted living facility, ground-floor retail, and a 149-car parking garage. There, too, neighbors are organizing, knocking on doors.

“This is an interesting moment for the city,” Pechon says. “If we continue down this road, it’s going to cost the city money. I’m not anti-development, but we need a system that respects residents. We need to get this right, or this is going to happen every time one of these developments comes up.”

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com



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The Secret of Success

MTC and downtown need each other to survive

By John Ise
BT Contributor

Recall these lines from Shakespeare's *As You Like It*: "All the world's a stage, / And all the men and women merely players; / They have their exits and their entrances, / And one man in his time plays many parts..." What's often forgotten is the remainder of the monologue, which chronicles the seven stages of life, from birth to death.

I'm reminded of this because the prominent Miami Theater Center (MTC) on NE 2nd Avenue — arguably the cultural epicenter of Miami Shores and an anchor institution key to the revitalization of downtown — has undergone almost all seven of those life stages, multiple times.

Built in 1946 and serving primarily as the Village cinema destination for the ensuing three decades, MTC had a series of near-death experiences in the 1980s.

In his excellent *Boulevard of Dreams: A Pictorial History of Biscayne Park, Miami Shores, and North Miami*, Shores author Seth Bramson recounts how MTC, then called the Shores Theater, was led by "a local well-meaning but misguided group of pseudo-theater enthusiasts whose tinkering nearly ruined it."

The group lacked business knowledge of theater operations, replaced movies with entertainment dilettantes resulting in a slow, long slide in popularity, and was on verge of being converted into retail space throughout the 1990s.

MTC's rebirth came about under the guidance of Stephanie Ansin, who took on the role of artistic director of the decaying facility in 2006. Ansin was described as the "artistic visionary, imaginative playwright, emotional sparkplug, and effective fundraiser at the heart of the operation" by Bill Hirschman of the blog *Florida Theater Onstage*. She



Photo by Hugo Seijas, DesignDistrict.net

Stephanie Ansin: MTC's "artistic visionary, imaginative playwright, emotional sparkplug."

renovated the facility and brought in her traveling PlayGround Theater production of family entertainment and stage plays. For the next six years, PlayGround provided lush productions aimed primarily at youngsters.

Ansin is also notable for making the facility's productions accessible to all, irrespective of disability. The theater became wheelchair-accessible, provided audio and sign language services, and offered sensory-friendly performances

for those on the autism spectrum.

Former Biscayne Park resident Karla Gottlieb enrolled her son Xavier in PlayGround's summer camp program and raves about not only the artistic quality of the program, but the confidence boost it provided him. Over the summers Xavier was enrolled, he took part in writing a play, designing the costumes, and overcoming the dread of acting, dancing, and singing in the culminating summer performance. And let's face it, playing

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the central role of Sheriff Crab from Planet Cheese takes a very high level of poise, courage, and bravery.

The theater also struck up partnerships with the art-film distributor O Cinema and the experimental Sandbox productions, and provided a home for the independent Mad Cat Theatre Company. In 2012, in part to expand the marketing breadth of the theater beyond young people, the company was rebranded as the Miami Theater Center.

Early last year Ansin stepped down as leader of MTC to spend more time with her family. The leadership mantle was passed to board member Giselle Kovac, who assumed role of executive director. Whereas Ansin had MTC become a production house of different programs, Kovac has focused more on identifying and bringing external talent into the theater.

MTC continues a three-pronged approach to programming: youth programming, adult-targeted productions, and films. Central to MTC is family and youth education and performances through camps and a standing Saturday theater club. Offering the opportunity for youth to actively engage in acting and theater production becomes more relevant because schools are offering less by way of

art education. Last year more than 10,000 public-school youth visited MTC to see productions, often exposing some to live theater for the first time.

Beyond youth-centric programming, MTC offers more adult-targeted productions. MTC's resident Mad Cat actively courts a more edgy target audience, stating that its mission is to "promote debate by creating work that illuminates the darker regions of our mental and emotional landscapes."

Witness a recent recreation of Black Sabbath's *Vol. 4* album, replete with horror-movie imagery and gory rituals for shock effect. SandBox productions, in MTC's Black Box theater, provides a venue for aspiring and established artists to create, rehearse, and perform new work.

Finally, MTC continues regular film screenings, albeit no longer in cooperation with O Cinema. O Cinema reportedly sought a commitment to show art films nightly at MTC, which could have impinged on the theater's efforts to promote live theater performances. Instead, MTC independently provides film screenings of selected movies every Wednesday night.

The movies are selected to provoke thought and discussion. A recent

screening of *I Am Not Your Negro*, in partnership with the South Florida People of Color group, resulted in hours of audience dialogue and discussion after the screening. This month the series will highlight vintage films of yesteryear.

With all the quality programming and highlights, the attention now turns to you, dear reader. MTC is one of those undervalued gems hidden in plain sight. Quality programming receives less local attention and attendance than it rightfully deserves.

The challenge of MTC is the challenge of every theater nationally. According to a 2012 national survey conducted by the National Endowment for the Arts, fewer adults attend live visual or performance arts activities, and those who do attend are more elderly. Technology has enabled more people to consume entertainment within the confines of their own home, precluding the need to even venture out the front door.

Kovac highlights the essence of the theater experience as being more deeply social, interactive, and personal. Bonds are nurtured through the shared experience, and a kind of social capital is built. With visitors in the tens of thousands, MTC's

success and downtown's vitality are inherently linked. Alas, after performances, dining and drink destinations for patrons along NE 2nd Avenue remain sparse.

More broadly, MTC needs to continue increasing awareness of all it does. Beyond its website (www.mtcmiami.org) and social media, information can be hard to come by. Strolling directly in front of the theater, chances are you'll have little idea what's occurring inside. Quick, what movie is playing this Wednesday at MTC?

A tastefully designed, digitized, LED marquee that highlights showings, activities, and performances on an ongoing basis would go a long way to combating our collective ignorance. Past Village councils and planning and zoning boards have unfortunately spiked efforts for a digital marquee, citing concerns with aesthetics, size, precedents, blah-blah-blah.

Either we support the progress of MCI as an institution, and more broadly arts and culture in the Miami Shores, or we don't.

Play your part, village art boosters. After all, as Shakespeare noted, we the public are players on the village stage as well.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

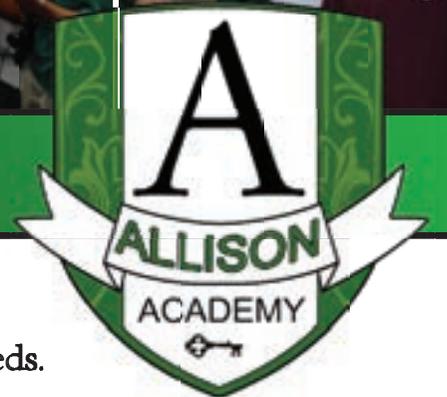


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Israel on the Agenda

Aventura should pass an anti-BDS law

By Jay Beskin
BT Contributor

Back in late 2015, Bal Harbour Village passed a law designed to prevent the municipality from doing business with any commercial entity engaged in boycotting Israel. The language didn't single out Israel per se, but it essentially said that companies engaged in boycotts should be boycotted by the city of Bal Harbour Village. It was a reaction to the BDS (Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions) movement. BDS is the term of art for the campaign to isolate Israel economically.

Like my Mama used to say, boycotts will be boycotts.

At the time, much was made of the Bal Harbour Village being the first municipality in the nation to enact an ordinance of this sort. Well, at least they tried to put that narrative out there, but

it didn't seem that a lot of research had been done on the subject.

So almost all the coverage had little phrasal escape hatches built in, just in case they were being fed the wrong information. The *Sun-Sentinel*, for example, called Bal Harbour Village the first municipality "of note" to go this route. Morton Klein issued a statement on behalf of the Zionist Organization of America that this was the first municipality they "were aware of" to put such legislation into place.

Well, once the novelty of being first was no longer up for sale, the anti-BDS movement in municipal law ground to a halt in these parts (although across the pond, Paris signed on in February 2016). Here, organizers went after bigger fish, and in March 2016, three months after the Bal Harbour Village law, the State of Florida did the same thing. The bill passed the legislature 112-2, and Governor Scott signed



it into law within days. So the state as an entity will not do business with companies engaging in BDS, and neither will Bal Harbour Village.

The truth is that when we were younger, there was something called the Arab Boycott. From the inception of the State of Israel, most Arab countries,

including supposedly moderate ones like Saudi Arabia, not only refused to do business with Israel, they refused to do business with anyone who did business with Israel.

Furthermore, they refused to do business with anyone who did business with any company which did business

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with Israel (the Congressional Research Service calls this a “tertiary boycott”).

The result was that a lot of American companies, especially ones engaged in construction and oil work in the Middle East, were actually boycotting Israel. They never said so out loud, of course, but they whispered it into the ears of the Arab states, and they merrily proceeded to build and pump oil in those countries.

The boycott has never officially ended. It is still an official function of the Arab League, and there is a Central Boycott Office based in Damascus. All Arab League members — Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestinian Authority, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen — are officially parties to this boycott. This has been in place since 1948, so alongside the celebrations for 70 years of the State of Israel, we can “celebrate” the Arab Boycott attaining the same age.

In 1977, Congress passed a series of laws forbidding any American company from participating in the boycott, and

required companies to report any requests by Arab League countries for them to participate. (Some said at the time this was done more to annoy the Carter administration than out of true concern about the issue.) These laws included a very important clause, which forbade companies to provide any information to Arab League countries about the extent of business done with or in the State of Israel.

In theory, then, the problem is solved. In practice the situation is very different. Companies that openly do business in Israel need not apply for deals with Arab League countries, so the laws only protect companies that conduct limited and below-the-radar transactions with Israel.

The Department of Commerce claims that the tertiary boycott is not being enforced anymore, and we hope that assessment is indeed accurate. It seems more reasonable to accept the judgment of the Congressional Research Service that the boycott is “sporadically applied and ambiguously enforced,” which in plain English means it has learned how to avoid leaving tracks.

Be that as it may, it is no longer fashionable to defend the Arab Boycott.

On the international intellectual scene, it has cleverly been replaced by the BDS movement. If a rose by any other name still smells as sweet, a thorn by any other name still hurts, still pierces the skin, still draws blood.

The proponents of BDS have translated their anti-Semitism into an extensive lexicon of euphemisms. They label the State of Israel as an occupying force, an oppressive imperialistic expansionist neighborhood bully that egregiously violates the human rights of Palestinians and others.

Instead of focusing on how wrong this is, let us use our remaining lines to describe the miraculous modern State of Israel. After 70 years, this country stands out as a jewel of democracy, a Western island in the Eastern world. There are open elections for all 120 Knesset seats, and Arab citizens of Israel have voting rights in the Jewish State. Among Arab League members, the closest you get to democracy are Algeria and Lebanon, and that should tell you all you need to know.

As an economy, Israel thrives by any standard. Israel has been at the forefront

of technology, especially in the medical field, and if you had an MRI or a CAT scan lately, chances are the machine was manufactured in Israel. The amount of venture capital for all manner of new enterprise that emerges from Israel is astonishing; indeed some charts list this small country as No. 1 in the world in that category.

The idea that a nation that maintained an ethnic and religious character in a diaspora over two millennia could return to a homeland and make it work this well — and this fairly — should be a source of astonishment, even awe, to any thinking, feeling person.

The City of Aventura put the subject of BDS on its agenda lately, and I definitely endorse the notion of passing a law similar to the one pioneered by Bal Harbour Village. The State of Israel is a loyal ally of the United States, as well as being the beneficiary of material assistance from this country, virtually since its founding. This is not a Democrat or Republican issue, or should not be. America stands with Israel, and so should Aventura.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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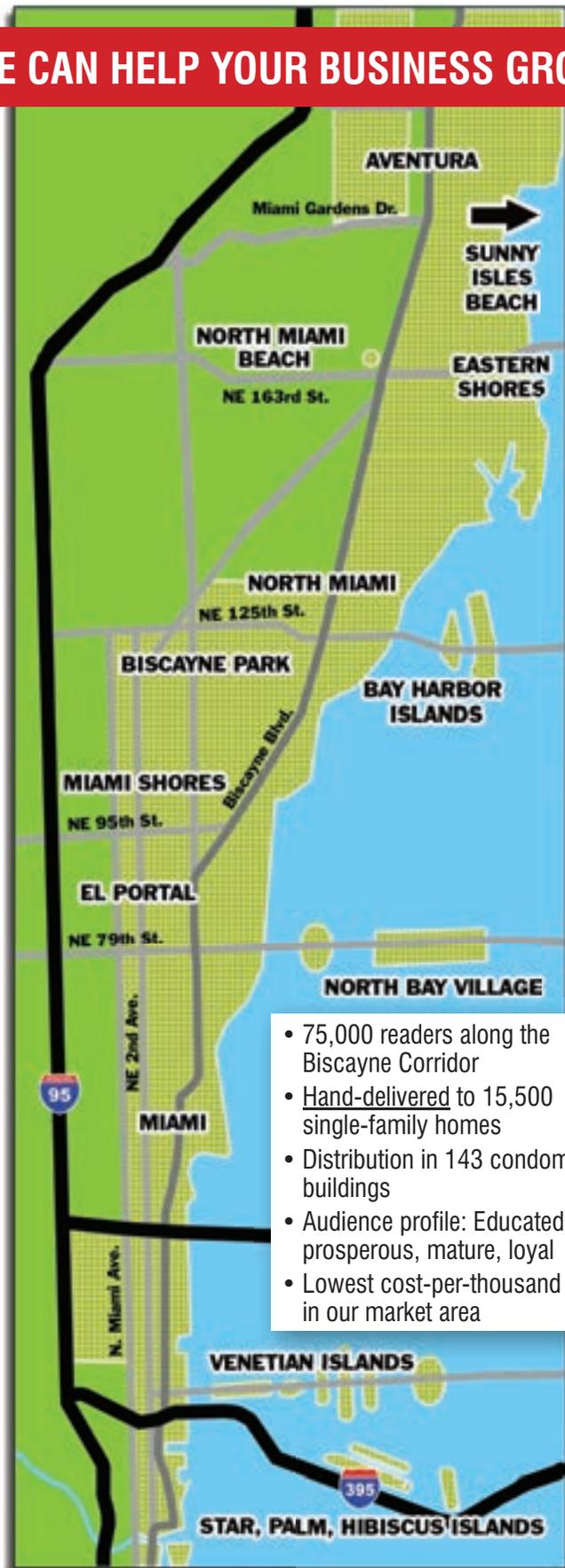
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Courtesy of Seth Bramson

The once and future NE 79th Street: This undated photo from the collection of Seth Bramson shows the popular Juniors Restaurant at the corner of NE 79th Street and Biscayne Boulevard.

Giddy for This Shorecrest Vision

Let's hear it for a 79th Street renaissance

By Ken Jett
BT Contributor

Amid deserved celebration for new and newly renovated businesses in the MiMo Historic District, the nonprofit MiMo Biscayne Association (MBA) has been working feverishly to secure letters of support for a re-envisioned streetscape that adds landscaped medians, more pedestrian crosswalks, and on-street parking.

All this circling of the wagons is presumably being done to avoid a repeat of the previous FDOT plan outcomes for the same area — wherein differing opinions resulted in what we have now: a freeway. However, I've seen the future and it is 79th Street!

MBA's new plan focuses only on the needs of the MiMo District. But the traffic calming could create a bottleneck and/or speeding zone in Shorecrest, where the plan stops. In addition, the plan would likely compete for the same public funds as the traffic reconfiguration that is *not* part of the current resurfacing project along NE 79th Street.

The current FDOT project will result in some pleasant landscaping in our downtown Shorecrest area, with mid-block pedestrian crosswalks, on-street parking, and curb extensions (“bump outs”) to calm traffic. Wait! Wait! Maybe the MiMo Biscayne Association has seen the same future that I've seen.

From pioneering early investors in this recent upturn, like Yasmine Kotb, chef/owner of Mina's Mediterranean restaurant, to long-timers like Alex Richter, the chef/owner of Royal Bavarian Schnitzel Haus, I hear excitement about this underdeveloped roadway that flows through the heart of Shorecrest. A look at the property appraiser's website will show that some properties have changed hands recently, which leads one to speculate about what may be in the hopper.

And all indicators — from the soon-to-open bayfront Shorecrest Luxury Apartments to the shell of the new CVS at Midpoint Plaza (formerly Biscayne Plaza), and from plans for the old INS building to Avra Jain's design for Magnum Lounge — point to 79th Street as the future of the Upper

Eastside. The buzz is loud and bright.

Giddy excitement is not limited to 79th Street. There is a long-awaited renewal happening along Biscayne Boulevard between the Little River Canal and 87th Street, too. It doesn't have streetscaping as part of its realized future yet. But why shouldn't a comprehensive approach, a communitywide proposal that would fix all outstanding roadway issues, be undertaken as one seamless project that encompasses the MBA concerns, traffic reconfiguration of 79th and 82nd streets, Biscayne Boulevard streetscaping, and calming above 77th Street? Hmmm?

The new antique mall shops at 87th Street are going up quicker than the CVS. Property owners along this corridor appear to be changing, too. Add this to the commuter rail station proposed for Shorecrest, and the future unfolds.

Some may not like the future I see, but fighting against change is sometimes a fool's errand. So bear with me for a bit. Starting at NE 79th Street and the FEC tracks, imagine a commuter rail stop. High-rise condos and apartments spring up from the east side of the Little River canal to act as a bookend to the Shorecrest Luxury Apartments on the bay. I think we'll see these buildings as part of Midpoint Plaza, replacing both the areas along the canal south of 79th Street and north of 82nd Street. Apartment buildings will infill the areas north and south of 82nd Street. If they front Biscayne Boulevard, there will be a retail wrap. Picture Midtown, only a bit shorter.

You've seen the Triton Tower (INS) plans. I see an eventual reconceptualization for the remainder of Midpoint Plaza, too. I don't see the single-story commercial structures being salvaged on the northeast corner of 79th Street and the Boulevard. I don't know of any commercial properties available from there to the bay. So the rest is waiting ... and fantasizing.

I see more restaurants, specialty food stores (more than just Marky's), and office buildings (doctors, dentists, veterinarians). Live, work, eat, and play. Maybe (hint, hint) John Kunkel of 50 Eggs group or Michelle Bernstein of Michy's fame could find a place on NE 79th Street for a new restaurant — I hear tell of a public storage facility that is unlikely to happen on a large parcel zoned for restaurant use.

I hope new development is held to current zoning, with adjustments where they're reasonable and sensible. Please, no 20-story buildings next to successful two-story businesses, forcing them into obsolescence — but skillful placement

next to irresponsible business owners might be welcome. I challenge developers to look at the community comprehensively, as opposed to how high, how much profit, and how to exit.

If done well, NE 79th Street (along with the rest of Shorecrest) will become the crown jewel of the Upper Eastside, instead of the oft-forgotten neighborhood north of the MiMo district. It can be a place people want to live and play. Now is the time for a business district association to form and work with area leaders to shape and polish that jewel. We are primed to become a Cinderella story.

Unfortunately, past zoning decisions suggest that the city will not always concern itself with the right decision. The jet ski rental allowed to take up shop in Ted Vernon's old place to tear up the backs of manatees was not of concern to the city's zoning department. Surprisingly, the shop is now vacant. Kudos to those of you reporting to police the rentals being operated above wake speed! Remember that you do have some power, and we didn't have to resort to picketing.

Bad decisions and lack of enforcement still plague the Little River Club and Tokyo Valentino issues. Both are under settlement agreements that they appear to be violating. The city's responses are slow but ongoing. Persist, people, and contact your commissioner, city mayor, and city attorney to request that they take action. If you don't think the bayfront area really needs a large storage facility, let these folks know about it.

Transformation is sometimes slow, painful, and compromising. The scale of change is often larger than expected. Evolution is at times iterative. Moving forward may mean taking a step back before moving ahead again. With time, the brilliance at the other end is often amazing.

The MiMo district is having an amazing resurgence, and applause is in order for all of those responsible. Scaling safeguards, while beneficial in maintaining height restrictions, can create dilemmas when thinking about mixed-use projects. Given traffic, available space, ease of working with the area's civic organization, and some incredible plans in all phases of development, NE 79th Street is indeed the future, and the future is now.

Shorecrest is poised to become the Upper Eastside's superstar.

This column originally appeared in November 2014.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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More Growing Pains

The Haitian Cultural Arts Alliance faces a fight as it expands its reach

By Anne Tschida
BT Arts Editor

For many, Little Haiti existed for years as a neighborhood to drive through if you had to. It wasn't touted as a tourist destination like Little Havana, it wasn't an arts center, and it certainly wasn't glamorous. But it was always a vibrant, mostly working-class

community, as those who paused to stop by discovered. Those already there didn't need to discover their roots, but they did want to promote Haiti and bring their culture to a wider world. Back in 1994, the Haitian Cultural Arts Alliance (or Alyans Atizay Ayisyen, its Haitian name) opened as a non-profit, with the aim to highlight the arts and culture not just from Haiti, but the Afro-Caribbean world and its diaspora. The HCAA, as the Alliance was known, was headed up by businesswoman Mireille Chancy Gonzalez, the



Photos courtesy of HCAA

HCAA's exhibit "Borderless Caribbean: Liquid Knowledge" examined the way many forms, from food and plants to art, migrated with slaves from Africa to the Americas.



Acclaimed Haitian author Edwidge Danticat at the opening night of "Haiti — Art and Crafts — State of Affairs," an HCAA exhibit in response to the Haitian earthquake.

community, as those who paused to stop by discovered.

Those already there didn't need to discover their roots, but they did want to

popular bookseller Jan Mapou, and well-known artist Edouard Duval-Carrié.

It wasn't easy to raise funds in and for a fairly disadvantaged community

when the Alliance didn't even have a real home. But in 1995, the HCAA pulled together its first exhibit, "Contemporary Expressions of Haitian Art," presented

at what was then the South Florida Art Center (now ArtCenter/South Florida) on Lincoln Road.

That was followed in 1996 by an exhibit of antiquarian maps of Haiti from Duval-Carrié's collection at what is now called HistoryMiami. The HCAA would then collaborate with the Bass Museum and other groups.

In 2002 Art Basel Miami Beach arrived and transformed the art landscape, but Little Haiti remained far off the beaten path.

Then in 2006, the Little Haiti Cultural Complex (which is funded by the City of Miami) opened its doors on NE 59th Terrace, in the heart of the neighborhood, and the HCAA found a permanent collaborator.

With money from French institutions and other grants, the HCAA expanded its scope to include international exhibits and more community outreach. In 2009, the program "Global Caribbean" was launched to produce contemporary art shows not just for its gleaming new art gallery, but also internationally.

In 2012, "Haiti Kingdom of this World" presented artists from Haiti and its diaspora, in coordination with the Agnes B. Gallery in Paris, and became the first Haitian entry at the Venice Biennale. A new lectures series, also in 2012, started to include broader topics having to do with urban development and social issues.

Other influences were having an impact on the HCAA's mission, including the devastating earthquake that hit the island in 2010, sending a wave of refugees to Miami. Outreach to the newly displaced population became a

focus. The exhibit titled “Haiti — Art and Crafts — State of Affairs,” which displayed an array of products from artisans and companies based in Haiti, was one result.

“Post-earthquake reconstruction was at the forefront when we decided to launch this project and the ones that would follow,” says Duval-Carrié, who has been instrumental in much of what has transpired at the HCAA and the Little Haiti Cultural Complex.

Eventually, in 2014, the alliance collaborated with the French Heritage Language Program (FHLP) to set up classes for children at the complex, with the objective to teach French to Creole-speaking students, many of whom had recently arrived from Haiti, to help them acclimate to their new home, the idea being that French could then ease the way to understanding the English language.

All didn’t go well, and the land beneath the HCAA quaked a bit itself.

In the end, a paltry number of kids showed up, and the FHLP, which is funded by the New York-based FACE Foundation, decided to turn off the spigot in the spring of 2017. And then things got a little nasty.

The language program coordinator, Alexandra Jeanty, claimed that the HCAA hadn’t paid her for her last months of work, and filed a Wage Theft Complaint with Miami-Dade County’s office of consumer protection. In fairly personal terms, Jeanty addressed her complaint to then chair Chancy Gonzalez.

The HCAA then brought in lawyer Sarah Steinbaum to respond officially.

The dispute is summed up like this: The HCAA claims the FACE Foundation cut off funding as of June 2017, and informed Jeanty that there would be no summer programming unless matching funds could be found. They weren’t.

HCAA claims that, while knowing the funding had ended, Jeanty continued to show up for work and went ahead with the summer session.

Jeanty maintains that because the HCAA wrote her checks for the entire time she worked at the language



“Visionary Aponte” is a traveling exhibit based on a book of paintings by José Antonio Aponte, who led an 1812 slave revolt in Cuba.



Artist Edouard Duval-Carrié, an HCAA founder, is angry that the nonprofit’s limited funds must be spent on legal wranglings.

program, she was in effect on the Alliance payroll, although she never received a W-4 form, which is for employees, and instead filled out the form for independent contractors, the W-9.

The formal hearing for this case is scheduled for May, before the county’s

Consumer Protection Mediation Center.

If that left a bad taste in the mouths of the HCAA members, they became downright irate when someone named Alexandra Jeanty incorporated a new organization last November, with the name of...the Haitian Cultural Arts Alliance.

“We are most outraged and worried that such an individual with absolutely no moral compass should have the capacity to act or represent us somehow, and we feel we should let the general public know of her devious intent,” says Duval-Carrié. He’s also angry that the limited funds the nonprofit raises must be spent on such legal wranglings.

Attorney Steinbaum thinks there could be two reasons to set up an entity with the exact name of another: out of spite or “to sell back the name.” To fight for naming rights in court would be very expensive, says Steinbaum.

Steinbaum also believes there was a misstep in the original naming, which was Alyans Atizay Ayisyen d/b/a (doing business as) the Haitian Cultural Arts Alliance, because it leaves a door open to ownership of the English name.

Reached by phone, Jeanty says she has no knowledge of this new HCAA. “I don’t know what you’re talking about,” she said. “It’s impossible to have two [organizations] of the same name.”

The one that will be heading into its 25th year anniversary is hitting its stride. Little Haiti is no longer a forgotten enclave, but one rapidly gentrifying and filling with art galleries. Duval-Carrié says he wants to expand the physical reach of the HCAA, possibly setting up residencies or studios in the neighborhood, becoming an integral part of a thriving new cultural destination.

Late last year, HCAA produced an eclectic exhibit, “Visionary Aponte: Art and Black Freedom,” based on a single book of paintings by José Antonio Aponte, an obscure black carpenter who led an anti-slavery rebellion in Cuba in 1812 (taking his cue from the Haitian Revolution). Fifteen artists interpreted his work for this show, which will travel to Duke University in the fall and, Duval-Carrié hopes, eventually to Cuba, so Aponte won’t be obscure anymore.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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Laura Aguilar, *Grounded #111*, inkjet print, 2006, at the Florida International University Frost Art Museum.

Mexican-American artist Laura Aguilar, an intersectional feminist photographer known for her tender and oftentimes challenging portrayals of marginalized communities, is the subject of a powerful retrospective on view now at the Frost Art Museum. Organized by the Vincent Price Art Museum and presented in collaboration with the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center, "Show and Tell" comprises more than 100 photographs by Aguilar, combining iconic portraits with seldom-seen works uncovered during a recent resurgence of interest in her career. The works on view vacillate between intimate snapshots of queer artists, friends, and immigrant families, among others, mixed with bold political statements that reconcile her cultural identity. The most stunning works feature the artist alone and nude, sitting or kneeling while surrounded by the earth. Here, Aguilar, a large-bodied woman, negotiates a new existence among the rocks, challenging the audience to see her not as a societal outcast but rather a work of beauty. Representation is a crucial aspect of the artist's practice, similar to the communities she documents; her portraits invite audiences to see her subjects for who they are, and nothing else.

— *Melissa Wallen*

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Compiled by *Melissa Wallen*

Send listings, jpeg images, and events information to art@biscaynetimes.com

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Morocco with a New York Twist

The Brooklyn-based **Innov Gnawa**, one of the top musical collectives in the U.S. Arabic music scene, is featured on Bonobo's *Bambro Koyo Ganda*, a 2017 Billboard Top 100 dance recording. Gnawa, a form of Moroccan ritual trance music, originated in Morocco's black communities whose forbearers were brought in as slaves or soldiers from Mali and Mauritania. Innov Gnawa uses vocals, a lute-like sinter, and metal castanets, and fuses New York Latin percussion and piano. The group performs **Saturday, May 5, 8:00**, at the North Beach Bandshell (7275 Collins Ave.). Tickets: \$20. www.rhythmfoundation.com.

The Merry Museum Month of May

Miami Museum Month is the perfect cusp-of-summer gift to us, with two dozen museums offering BOGO admission and other discounts (check your favored destinations for details). Participants throughout this **month of May** include: PAMM, MOAD MDC, the Art Deco Museum, Wolfsonian, the Bass, the Rubell Family Collection, Frost Art Museum, Lowe Art Museum, the Institute of Contemporary Art Miami, ArtCenter/South Florida, MOCA North Miami. Plus the Haitian Heritage Museum, Jewish Museum, Gold Coast Railroad Museum, Vizcaya, Coral Gables Museum, the Deering Estate, Ancient Spanish Monastery, the Black Police Precinct and Courthouse Museum, Museum of Science, HistoryMiami, Wings Over Miami, Children's Museum, and Historic Homestead Town Hall Museum. Got to miamiandbeaches.com for details.

Andalusian Nights

The 24-member **National Arab Orchestra** began as a small chamber ensemble in Michigan in 2009 with a goal of preserving and sharing classical and contemporary Arab music and culture. Today the orchestra tours frequently and has a chamber ensemble of its own, plus a full-sized chorus. NAO comes to Miami on **Saturday, May 12**, at 8:00 p.m., with the program "Layali al-Andalus," or "Andalusian Nights," celebrating the music of Muslim Spain. The program at the Olympia Theater (174 E. Flagler St.) also features Flamenco guitarist José Luis de la Paz and singers Marian Layousse, Usama Baalbaki, Alfonso Cid, and Susana Behar. Tickets: \$25-\$65. www.olympiatheater.org.

olympiatheater.org.

Behold the Chamber Eclectic

Nu Deco Ensemble, Miami's chamber ensemble moderne, closes another season at the Light Box at Goldman Warehouse (404 NW 26th St.) with an adventurous mix of compositions by Nicholas Omiccioli ("Push/Pull"); Darius Milhaud ("Creation of the World"); David Lang ("Learn to Fly"); and a symphonic suite by hip-hop Outkast artist Sam Hyken. Guest artist not announced by press time. The concerts take place Thursday through **Saturday, May 17-19**, at 8:00 each night. \$40-\$90. www.miamilightproject.com.

HistoryMiami's Island Chronicles

HistoryMiami's resident historian, Paul George, hosts a **Biscayne Bay Cruise on Sunday, May 13**, from 10:00 a.m. to noon, with a focus on some of the bay's famous islands, including Fisher Island; the property of D.A. Dorsey, Miami's first black millionaire; Flagler Memorial Island, named for railroad magnate Henry Flagler; barrier island Miami Beach and early developer Carl Fisher; and Palm Island, final home of "Scarface" Al Capone. The tour aboard an Island Queen Cruises vessel leaves from Miamarina at Bayside Marketplace (401 Biscayne Blvd.). Museum members: \$50, nonmembers: \$60, children 12 and under: \$25. Reservations required: www.historymiami.org.

Something Old, Something New

The **Haitian Compas Festival** turns 20 this year and tries out its new home at Mana Wynwood (318 NW 23rd St.). Tied

in with Haiti's Flag Day (May 18), the festival takes place **Saturday, May 19, 4:00 p.m. to 3:00 a.m.**; but events include pre- and two after-parties during the week. Headliners include Tabou Combo, Gabel, Enposib, Harmonik, Djakout #1, Nu Look, T-Vice, Kai, Kreyol La, Vayb, Disip, Septen, Admiral T, Rutshelle, Tamara S. Ada, JPerry, Roody Roodboy, and Chiwawa, along with deejays Tony Mix, Nicky Mix, Power Mix, and DJ FMA. Look for plenty of Haitian dishes to enjoy with the music. Tickets start at \$45; more for VIP tickets, party tickets, and package deals. www.haitiancompasfestival.com.

Hardy and Lush, Exotic and Easy

The **Redland International Orchid Show**, the nation's largest, boasts more than 80 flower vendors, potting services, orchid judging, orchid talks, food for every palate, and music and crafts. You'll learn that orchids can flourish despite benign neglect, which will make it easier to bring home armfuls of these showy plants. The show at the Fruit and Spice Park runs **Friday through Sunday, May 18-20**, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. each day. The 37-acre park is located at 24801 SW 187th Ave. in Homestead. Admission: \$10. redlandfruitandspice.com.

Night Paddle on the Bay

What's more soothing than moonlight on water? The monthly **Oleta River Full-Moon Kayak Tour** will put you right *en scène*. Sit back and navigate by glow sticks as you paddle gently through the mangroves out into the bay **Saturday, May 26**,



Prodigious Musicality

The **Miami International Piano Festival** presents Alexander Gavryluk. Born in Ukraine in 1984, Gavryluk began performing at age nine, and by age 16 had won both first prize and gold medal at the Horowitz International Piano Competition; first prize at the Hamamatsu International Piano Competition; and gold medal at the Arthur Rubinstein International Piano Masters Competition. Achievements like these have made him a guest of every major orchestra worldwide. He comes to the Aventura Arts and Cultural Center (3385 NE 188th St.) on **Sunday, May 6, 5:00 p.m.**, with a program of Bach, Haydn, Chopin, Scriabin, and Rachmaninov. Tickets: \$17-\$35. www.aventuracenter.org.

from 7:30 to 10:30 p.m. Offered by the BG Oleta River Outdoor Center inside the state park (3400 NE 163rd St.), the group excursion includes a guide escort. You need a swimsuit, towels, waterproof shoes, and insect repellent. Cost: \$50 per person plus park entry fees. bgoletariveroutdoor.com/event/full-moon-kayak-tour-14/

Your New Line of Summer Shorts

Welcome summer with the most in-demand shorts around — **City Theatre's "Summer Shorts,"** that is. The only theater company that produces short plays exclusively, the group saw its founding artistic director, Gail Garrison, honored last month for outstanding achievement in the arts at the Carbonell Awards. The 2018 shorts production runs at the Adrienne Arsht Center (1300 Biscayne Blvd.) from **Thursday, May 31, through Sunday, July 1**, with each performance date offering nine ten-minute comedies, dramas, and mini musicals. Recommended for ages 16 and up. Tickets \$39-\$59 www.arshtcenter.org.



Here for the Grilling

Coconut Grove's best-known fire worshipper, **Steven Raichlen**, comes off season three of his popular PBS series, *Project Smoke*, with a reading and signing of his newest book, *Project Fire: Cutting-Edge Techniques and Sizzling Recipes from the Caveman Porterhouse to Salt Slab Brownie S'Mores*. He'll be at Books & Books (265 Aragon Ave.) **Wednesday, May 16, 7:00 p.m.** booksandbooks.com.

Compiled by BT contributor Dinah McNichols. Please send information and images to calendar@biscaynetimes.com.

Early Miami Hospitals

A view of our past from the archives of HistoryMiami

By Paul S. George
BT Contributor

Jackson Memorial Hospital is 100 years old. Not surprisingly, it has had a role in the city's rich history, including its efforts to treat the many victims of the flu epidemic in 1918-1919, its medical care for the injured after the killer hurricane of 1926, and its desegregation initiatives in the 1950s as the area began grappling with the insidious effects of Jim Crowism. Further, the hospital has been on the cutting edge of medical technology, surgical procedures, and new treatment facilities.

Early on, the need for a hospital in the rapidly growing City of Miami prompted Henry M. Flagler, the oil and railroad tycoon who helped found Miami in 1896, to build a hospital on the corner of today's NE 9th Street and Biscayne

Boulevard, with the proviso that the city maintain it.

But the city fell short in that effort, leading Flagler to take back the 24-bed hospital and convert it to a rental apartment. Flagler reversed course in 1905, reconvertng the building into the Florida East Coast Hospital for railroad employees and their families.

James M. Jackson, M.D., who arrived in Miami as the Florida East Coast Railway doctor in 1896, was placed in charge. Jackson also brought his private patients to the hospital, as did other physicians. But prior to U.S. entrance into World War I, the hospital was converted into living quarters for the armed forces stationed here.

Already, however, another hospital had opened, known as the Friendly Society Hospital for its chief sponsor, Father A.B. Friend, pastor of the Church of the Holy Name, today's Gesu Catholic



Photo courtesy of HistoryMiami, 1978-068-276

Church. Opened in 1909 one block east of the Florida East Coast Hospital, the facility quickly became burdened with financial problems, leading Father Friend and other directors to request the City of Miami to assume control of its operations, which it agreed to do in 1911.

Even with the addition of an operating room, the City Hospital, as it was now called, couldn't meet the medical needs of a spiraling population. In 1918 it was replaced by another building one mile northwest of the original hospital in

a pine-studded area where today's giant Jackson Memorial Hospital complex stands. Next month we'll examine the history of the new hospital and its successor, Jackson Memorial Hospital.

Paul George is historian at HistoryMiami Museum. To order a copy of this photo, contact HistoryMiami archives manager Ashley Trujillo at 305-375-1623, atrujillo@historymiami.org.

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Biscayne Crime Beat

Compiled by Derek McCann

Random Playpen

400 Block of NE 71st Street

A woman observed one of her neighbors as he was leaving his house. It's nice to know your neighbors and even their routines. Her neighbor didn't leave the area, though. Instead, he went to the house next door and threw a large rock through a window. He then entered the house and stayed inside for a long 20 minutes, in burglary terms. He finally left via the front door and damaged it to the point that it could no longer close. Police later noted that the house hadn't been ransacked and that nothing was apparently stolen. It's a mystery what he did inside. He's been arrested.

Denial of Warning Signs

300 Block of NE 35th Street

This homeowner would leave town on a regular basis — nothing wrong with that so long as he has strong locks and a security system. This wasn't the case, as owner admitted the front lock could be manipulated and opened if one knew what he or she was doing. Upon arriving after two weeks out of town, he saw that his door was open, and that several items had been taken. Shortly before he'd left for this last trip, he saw a vagrant standing in front of his house, looking inside. He shooed him away, left town, and didn't report the incident. Let's hope owner will at least get a barking dog tape.

Your Mother Should Know

600 Block of NE 83rd Terrace

While watching television on his couch, a man heard a loud commotion

coming from his kitchen. He arrived and saw his tough-as-nails mother wrestling with an intruder over her bag. At first the son watched as Mom threw the man to the ground while holding the bag. The suspect released the bag and tried to run out, but by this time, Son had his gun and chased

him outside. A struggle ensued, which included fighting for the gun, which went off at one point. A neighbor, who was also packing heat, came running and forced the suspect to the ground. They held him, police came, and arrested the suspect. Don't hit this neighborhood, Miami scum.



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Free Marketing Maybe

7600 Block of Biscayne Boulevard

A clothing boutique had been broken into overnight. Glass-door entrance was found shattered the next morning. Many items of clothing were taken, including two boxes of shirts that said "Roma Bakery and Coffee shop." The burglars exited via the shattered glass door. There are no cameras and no witnesses. Be wary of Roma Bakery enthusiasts. Food is so good at Roma, we may now have a criminal fencing operation aimed at people who love it and want the world to know.

Watch Your Wallet at the Dollar Store

400 Block of NE 81st Street

An employee flagged down a police officer and told him a perpetrator had taken a customer's wallet and left the store. The officer found the man and saw the brown wallet protruding from his pocket. The officer checked the picture on a driver's license inside the wallet, and the picture didn't match the offender. Man was arrested and wallet returned to its rightful owner. Miami denizens, don't flash cash at the Dollar Store. Be smart. Be humble.

Out of the Mouths of Babes

5100 Biscayne Boulevard

Victim placed her camera on a store counter at Dunkin' Donuts and went to pay her bill. After getting her food and then sitting down to eat, she noticed that not only did she not have her camera, it was missing. She asked a cashier if she saw it, and a child in the location pointed at a man and said, "He have the camera," which he repeated over and over. The suspected thief got into a car, but someone did get the license plate. When police arrived, the child and his parents had left the store. Arrest has not been made yet, and the little witness is no doubt currently eating Captain Crunch, and not talking to anyone.

Shelter Phone Switcheroo?

1500 Block of North Miami Avenue

A man living in a shelter woke up and went for his phone, which was inside his pants. His phone was wet, though his pants were dry. When he looked at this phone, something was off: it was an LG Stylo 1, and not the 2. This was not his phone. He thinks it may have been

a staff member who asked him about the phone earlier in the day, wondering what model number it was and obviously coveting his neighbor's possession. Now stuck with the crappy 1 model, and the loss of his personal contacts, games, and sex sites, there is nothing else to do. No arrests have been made.

Drinking Pal Did Him Wrong

NE 2nd Avenue and 57th Street

Police were called after witnesses said they saw a violent dispute between two men. While they were hanging out and having drinks — beer in paper bags — the suspect got hold of victim's wallet and took \$400. One would think that \$400 could have gotten them into a bar, rather than the sidewalk. After a ruckus, the victim got his wallet back; supposedly the suspect threw it on the ground and ran off. Police found it strange that \$140 was still left in the wallet as perhaps the suspect felt bad and wanted to leave him something. Story changed a bit during the interview, and no leads have been generated.

Volleyball Out of Bounds

2400 Block of S. Bayshore Drive

At lunchtime, a woman went to play volleyball with likeminded aficionados. She put her Tommy Hilfiger purse at the side of the court and headed to the net for play. Hey, exercise through your lunch break, be free and open, and always wear the latest. Of course, "the latest," went missing. This is a sad moment for the loss of innocence, as another Miamian becomes jaded.

Condiment Cold Case

400 Block of Biscayne Boulevard

A food delivery employee was making his rounds, emptying his truck over several locations. At each location, he removed crates and left them on the pallet as he took out that day's order from his truck. Stealing was not his concern, because who in the world is going to steal a heavy box of ketchup in broad daylight with the victim only several feet away? Well, with the worker's back to the items, a suspect quickly grabbed a heavy box of ketchup and waddled off, as it is hard to run with a box of ketchup. He was not detained; let them eat ketchup!

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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APPROVED SHIPPER

More Than Mangroves

East Greynolds Park now has watercraft rentals and a dog park

By **Janet Goodman**
BT Contributor

East Greynolds Park at 16700 Biscayne Blvd. in North Miami Beach is mostly an undeveloped, protected natural area.

Not to be confused with the vast Greynolds Park at 17530 W. Dixie Hwy., East Greynolds Park is the home of the Northeast Regional Dog Park, one of Miami-Dade County's four fenced-in, off-leash dog parks (Haulover Park, Amelia Earhart Park, and Tropical Park are the other three). But most visitors refer to this dog park as East Greynolds Dog Park or simply Greynolds Dog Park.

The parks are named for A.O. Greynolds, who owned Ojus Rock Company, the area quarry. He donated 110 acres of land in 1933 that became the park on W. Dixie Highway.

As reported by the *BT* ("Green Piece," June 2013), in 1935, Sunny Isles developer H.B. Graves donated 56 acres of land to North Miami Beach, land that is east of the railroad tracks and 2000 feet southeast of Greynolds Park, with the intention of expanding the main park. It was called East Greynolds Park, and North Miami Beach eventually gave the property to Dade County.

In 1953, North Miami Beach tried to get the underutilized land back, with the case ending up in the Florida Supreme Court. The county won.

During the 1960s and 1970s, outdoor concerts were held there in a large open field. Big bands of the day, such as Led Zeppelin and the Grateful Dead, were among the headliners.

In 2013, county parks planner R.S. Tietgen told the *BT* that East Greynolds Park "is as developed as the county intends to have it. This is a park site that will be preserved in as natural a state as possible."

A curvy quarter-mile road off of Biscayne Boulevard leads into the park's parking lot of about 70 spaces. Weekday parking is now \$2 an hour. There's a bathroom building nearby and a large pavilion available for rent with picnic tables and a water fountain. Since May 2017, Alfresco Fun rentals has had a trailer broadcasting popular music in the parking lot. They rent single and double kayaks, standup paddle boards, and canoes. Prices for single kayaks start at \$12 for 45 minutes, and you can rent one for up to a full day. According to Alfresco employee Sol, who sets you up with the proper equipment, "We're dog friendly — you can actually bring any



Looking south across a wide expanse of open space, with The Harbour condo towers in background.

BT photos by Janet Goodman



Alfresco Fun rentals provides kayaks, paddleboards, canoes, and gear for people and pets.

animal. People have brought cats along. They seem to like it."

Sol explains that the price of the craft rental includes life vests for everyone, even pets. Before you launch, she hands you a laminated map of the area, highlighting water trails up Royal Canal, across adjacent Maule Lake, and a cool mangrove water trail that heads south through nearby Oleta River State Park, pointing out areas of dolphin and manatee sightings. Crocodile warning signs are posted by the kayak launch area.

Owner Henry Galiano chose East Greynolds as a good location for his first kayak business. "I was already familiar with the park, and since being here, we've seen an increase in the number of park visitors. People see our signs for kayak rentals along Biscayne Boulevard and tell us they had no idea there was a park here." He leases the space from the parks department and

is enjoying his first anniversary at East Greynolds Park.

In 1993, the Miami-Dade County Environmentally Endangered Lands Program (EEL) acquired a three-acre riverfront site adjacent to East Greynolds Park. Invasive Australian pines were removed to help restore it to its natural state. It is a protected natural area of mangrove forest, part of 20,700 acres of environmentally endangered land that has been protected public land in Florida since 1990, and part of 2800 acres within the county's parks that are managed and protected by the Natural Areas Management Division of the Miami-Dade County Parks, Recreation, and Open Spaces Department.

It is also the site of the Metro Dade Biscayne Bay Restoration Enhancement Program's East Greynolds Park Shoreline Enhancement Project, restoring mangrove forest shoreline that filters

EAST GREYNOLDS PARK



Park Rating

★★★★★

16700 Biscayne Blvd.
North Miami Beach, FL 33160
305-945-3425

Hours: Sunrise to sunset

Picnic tables: Yes

Barbecues: Yes

Picnic pavilions: Yes

Tennis courts: No

Camping field: Yes

Kayak rentals: Yes

Dog park: Yes

Playground: No



Protected mangroves filter toxins, prevent flooding, and provide food and shelter for wildlife.



Visitors can get a view of mangrove restoration from the pier, which overlooks Maule Lake.



A walkway leads from the parking lot to the dog-park gate, which doesn't shut and lock.

toxins, prevents flooding, and provides food and shelter for native animal life. Visitors can get a view of the mangrove restoration by walking down the park's short wooden pier, which overlooks Maule Lake. Those fishing are urged to recycle filament fishing line in the PVC receptacle by the pier's entrance.

In 2007, a fenced 1.76-acre dog park was built at a cost of \$215,000. This "bark park" is north of a large field often used for camping by Boy Scouts. A cement walkway leads from the parking

lot to the dog-area entrance gate, which doesn't shut and lock. Inside the six-foot chain-link-fenced dog park, visitors can choose to enter either the park designated for small dogs under 35 pounds or the park for large dogs over 35 pounds, which also has a gate that doesn't shut and lock, and is a concern for owners who don't want to lose their pets.

Currently, a rock is used to hold the gate shut and two garbage bags tied together serve as a gate latch. Best to save plastic bags for the two pet waste

stations, which are empty in the large dog park. The park for small dogs does have bags in its two waste stations.

Each dog park has three garbage cans, a canine water fountain/shower spray, a blue canvas pavilion for shade, and a concrete footpath running through the yard. The small-dog park has two benches and three picnic tables, while the large-dog area has benches, six tables, and two barbecues in a very shaded picnic area. Picnic tables are quite weather-worn.

Ray Fernandez gives East Greynolds Dog Park high marks, compared to Legion Dog Park, where he used to take Boomer, his one-year-old Dogo Argentino. "I like it here because there's grass," he says, explaining that shade trees at Legion Park prevent grass from taking hold. This columnist hands Fernandez a plastic poop bag she keeps in her pocket; he points to a hose that comes in handy if you step in a poop pile.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com



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Doodle Dogs, Part II

Kids and goldendoodles are a good mix

By Janet Goodman
BT Contributor

Long-time Miami Shores resident Liz Cowen got her first goldendoodle in 2009 for \$700 from a West Palm Beach breeder, after doing Internet due diligence. Cream-colored Sophie grew to 44 pounds, which makes Cowen happy, since the largest of these golden retriever/poodle hybrids weigh twice that.

A year later she decided that Sophie needed a companion herself, and Cowen, who is retired, set out to find an even smaller goldendoodle. In an e-mail to the *BT*, Cowen writes that she was referred by friends to Diamond Dogs in Missouri, which specializes in mini doodles. “I picked her out of a line-up of puppies that I could see online and bonded with her from that picture. It was all about the eyes: Gracie hugs you with her eyes. She looks inside of me,” Cowen confesses.

Cowen certainly picked a special one. She and 37-pound Gracie have become a therapy dog team, volunteering at an Alzheimer’s/cancer center and leading the reading-to-dogs after-school program at the Miami Shores Brockway Memorial Library (see “Book Hounds,” February 2015). Curled up on a bean-bag chair, Gracie patiently listens each week as elementary schoolers read favorite books aloud.

Having had German shepherds all her life, Cowen was ready for a smaller dog with a large-dog mentality, one that didn’t shed and wasn’t aggressive. “I wanted an easy-to-train, smart, affectionate, and easygoing companion,” she

says. “Sophie is a wonderful dog, but Gracie is a reincarnated person. Our souls are connected to each other.”

Not only is Gracie a therapy dog certified for visits to schools, libraries, nursing homes, and hospitals, but she has become a service dog for her owner, aiding Cowen, who has hearing loss. “She assists me in identifying sound direction,” says Cowen, “and uses her paws to alert me to people speaking.”

Allergies had been a problem for Gracie, but they are now under control with occasional injections. Cowen warns that goldendoodles are susceptible to hip dysplasia and eye issues. They need grooming and haircuts, and fur matting can become an issue since the breed loves the water. “My dogs are always up for a swim,” says Cowen. She often takes them on drives to Atlanta and on to North Carolina to visit friends. “They don’t mind the car ride,” she insists. “And once in the mountains, no leashes are required.”

She recommends goldendoodles to families with children, and to singles. Her future dog? “Definitely a goldendoodle,” she says.

“You must teach English,” I tell Miami Shores resident Greg Cabana upon meeting him and Chaucer, his now seven-month-old goldendoodle. Indeed, Cabana teaches middle-school English at the Cushman School in Miami, where his wife, Leanna Rodriguez, teaches social studies. I’ve been the puppy’s “nanny” since he was 12 weeks old.

The couple wavered between getting a goldendoodle or a rescue dog. They have two friends with goldendoodles and did online research before deciding on a doodle. “The breed’s hypoallergenic



BT photo by Janet Goodman

Seven-month-old Chaucer: “The kids love him.”

qualities sold me, as our ten-year old daughter has had rashes,” Rodriguez says, although many breeders acknowledge that the hypoallergenic dog is a myth. Luckily, their daughter isn’t allergic to Chaucer.

They located a breeder in Jupiter who’d had a litter in October 2017; that made Chaucer old enough to come home for Christmas, and they bought him for \$2800. The Cabanas also have a six-year-old daughter and a four-year-old son, and consider Chaucer’s best quality his gentleness with kids.

“He’s very sweet and smart, and doesn’t shed,” Rodriguez tells the *BT*. Keeping a house of five tidy is hard enough, so the lack of shedding is a big deal.

Chaucer is quickly approaching his breeder-anticipated adult weight of 30-35 pounds, and local veterinarian John Yao believes he’ll reach 40. Cabana may consider breeding Chaucer once and thinks he’d make a good therapy dog.

“Ninety-nine percent of the time he’s great,” says Cabana. “He’s really smart with the morning routine, got crate training right away, and is content in the crate

at night and while we’re gone. No accidents. The kids *love* him and play fetch with him. I take him for walks with my youngest, and we’ll do more [with other dogs] after his last vaccinations.”

Sometimes Chaucer playfully grabs fingers and jumps up on people. His toys are strewn throughout the house and backyard to help prevent destructive chewing. “He chewed through the cable wire twice,” admits Cabana.

This young pup has already learned to sit; and from a distance of 15 feet, after getting the “home” command, he walks into his crate. Besides that, he’s already got perfect timing and smooth moves. One day in February in his yard, which is landscaped with quartz gravel, Chaucer dropped a rock at my feet. I reached down and picked up a reddish heart-shaped stone. It was, of course, Valentine’s Day.

Goodman is a dog trainer and principal of Good Dog Bad Dog: info@gooddogbaddogmiami.com.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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Parental Wrath

A basketball mom is shocked at behavior in the stands

By Jenni Person
BT Contributor

I've been thinking a lot lately about the issue my co-columnist, Stuart Sheldon, addressed a few years ago in this space: "No more meaningless rewards and praise unless the kids truly earn it." The entitlement and self-righteousness bred by the trend of "participation awards" is bad for our culture and for future generations.

Stuart goes on to outline how through this practice we are "overpraising and trying to keep our kids happy all the time, and 'protecting' them from life...when they never grasp the concept of having to do something in order to get a reward or praise."

Meanwhile, having now become a basketball mom, I'm seeing the complete opposite happening. While I don't really understand a whole lot about the game, I'm still pretty sure that what I see is a lot of parents behaving *really* badly in the stands.

At tournaments I attend in South Florida, there's always at least one or two parents being particularly hard on their kids from the sidelines. At more far-flung tournaments, I don't recall seeing it at all, but at home league games, that's where it's the worst. I cringe inside when I hear the way some parents berate their kids from the stands with criticism and name-calling, exclaiming expletives as they express their own frustration.

In some cases these are the same parents who overprotect these same kids in other ways. How can a parent coddle a kid by, for example, not letting that kid walk the six blocks to basketball from school by himself or herself (building independence, self-confidence, and self-esteem) because the kid is so precious and fragile, and then turn around and treat that kid like garbage?

A few years back I witnessed a dad of one of the boys in my son's social group call to a few of them he was driving home. He was ready to leave a birthday party so he needed to gather them, "Let's go, *girls!*" he called out to alert three or four boys as they delayed departure while tossing a football around the adults as we stood and chatted.

I was appalled by this level of misogyny and homophobia from my own generation and community, but I was also appalled because this dad was a part of a family that was well known to be *the* most overprotective at the time, the most overly coddling of their kids. This was an "our kids don't drive with anyone but us, apply hand sanitizer before getting in our car and then again before entering our house, our kids don't do sleepovers" kind of family. They were definitely the kind of family of the participation-award mentality. And yet here was this dad mentally abusing his (and other people's) kids. I heard him do this again and again, and every time as the hairs on my back stood up, I was flummoxed by this contradiction.



It's definitely one thing — and quite necessarily — to abandon the practice of participation awards and overpraise to move away from insulating our kids from the realities of life. They need to learn how to cope and manage with failures and disappointments and imperfections and surprises on the bumpy road of life. This is how they learn to be successful, as Stuart underscored in his column.

But the opposite extreme is problematic as well. We can't express violent anger and disappointment so lightly and normally, either. We want them to learn how to succeed in the name of success, not simply in order to avoid their parents' wrath or demeaning verbal attacks. Also, trust me, if your kids screw up on the basketball court (or anywhere else for that matter), they are feeling badly enough about themselves already. That comes naturally with kid-hood, especially for tweens and teens.

As I said above, I don't really know a lot about this game. Thus, now that

I find myself spending a lot of time watching basketball unprepared, thanks to the tennis and field hockey of my own youth, I have developed the approach of just watching the movement. And it's all beautiful, whether or not a single point is ever scored.

These human bodies, created by other human bodies and nurtured by our love, are stunning in motion. And I'm pretty sure my son knows I feel that way. He gives me a lot to cheer about in the traditional ways on the court, too, and he knows I'm proud of his particular baller prowess. He also knows the tremendous joy I get from witnessing a reverse layup — because of the choreography.

So please, fellow parents, just watch your kids soar and leap and create beautiful shapes and rhythm on the court. That's all you need to do. Shut up and enjoy the grace and the wonder of it all.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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Don't, Don't, and Don't

Three great rules for maintaining a healthy yard

By Jeff Shimonski
BT Contributor

My landscape isn't what the typical trendy high-end garden looks like for all these "white boxes" that are metastasizing throughout our older neighborhoods.

At my place, there's no artificial turf installed. We don't have those three requisite palms, and a couple of native tree hedges jammed into a corner to make up some of the mitigation requirements for the older trees that were cut down so the house and pool could take all the available space.

I have no grass to cut so the lawn guys don't have to run their blowers to send my leaf litter down the street to the closest storm drain. I actually retain most of the leaf litter the palms and trees drop on my landscape. I let it lie where it falls or — in the case of fallen palm fronds — I stack them in piles that I let decompose. This has created a nice organic layer of topsoil, perfect for growing palms and papayas.

The organic layer is also uncompacted, which means tree and plant roots grow deeper. My papaya plants, one over 20 feet tall, withstood Hurricane Irma. They're still producing fruit.

It's a shame when I see people removing leaf litter from their property and sending it out with the garbage. It's a great resource.

What's even more of a shame is when the maintenance folks dump a pile or two of "black dirt" to spread around on the property. I hear this is supposed

to provide nutrition to the plants. Let's see, you spent hundreds, maybe thousands of dollars trucking soil to your property, another few hundred or thousand dollars spreading it around with a front-end loader that's compacting the ground so you'll have poor drainage and the roots will have a difficult time growing — and you'll watch as, over the next year, all of that organic matter oxidizes and disappears into thin air?

What did you accomplish, other than throwing away thousands of dollars?

Throwing a thin layer of black dirt on top of the ground or your lawn accomplishes nothing other than raising the per-caps of the landscape maintenance company.

Throwing "black dirt" into the holes surrounding the root balls of newly planted trees doesn't accomplish anything and is also a waste of money. The new plant or tree roots will eventually need to grow into the surrounding soil. So make the surrounding soil uncompacted and more hospitable to the plant roots.

We need to start retaining the organic material that our landscaping produces on our property. The organisms that decompose the leaf litter actually provide a steady pulse of nutrients for your plants. The organic matter provides a substrate for the beneficial fungi that will provide moisture and nutrients to your plants.

As you create a layer of organic matter in the top few inches of soil that we have here in south Florida, you will need to irrigate less often. Organic matter retains moisture, and this is significant for



BT photo by Jeff Shimonski

A beneficial dog poop mushroom in my garden.

the health of your plants. They'll have less drought stress, which is the initial cause of many insect problems that affect our lawns, shrubs, trees, and palms. Besides, you'll have lower water bills.

The accompanying photo is the dog poop mushroom, or *Pisolithus tinctorius*, one of the fungi that are beneficial symbionts of our plants and trees. It has nothing to do with dogs or poop; it's so named because it looks like dog poop to some of us. When it first emerges, it's brown, smooth, and shiny. As it weathers, it begins to break down and become lumpy. It pops up in my landscape regularly. I also see it on older home sites where the soil isn't compacted and there's some organic matter in the soil profile.

Seeing the different beneficial mushrooms in landscapes is a good sign of soil health. Normally, the soil isn't compacted, which results in good drainage — so less run-off, roots grow deeper. Trees are better able to withstand high winds, roots have more and better access to nutrients and available soil moisture.

I always encourage architects and landscape architects to save the native soil on a property about to be demolished. This is the topsoil and added fill that should be around and in the planting beds of the new landscape. This soil normally has excellent drainage and a good organic component, with the accompanying micro-organisms and fungi that the new landscape needs. The soil profile and its resident micro-organisms evolved over many years.

Don't throw it away and waste a good resource.

Don't purchase "black dirt" and fancy soil additives.

And don't waste your money fertilizing newly installed landscape plants and trees.

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

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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A Park and What Surrounds It

City asks Little Havana residents for ideas

By Blanca Mesa
BT Contributor

Replace the palm tree with shade trees in Miami, and what do you get? A livable city, a community where you can walk and bike, and be connected.

So says world-renowned urbanist Gil Penalosa, founder of the nonprofit 8 80 Cities, a Toronto-based urban parks and mobility advocacy group.

“We’re happier walking because when we walk, we use all our senses,” Penalosa says, adding that we were created to walk, just as birds fly and fish swim.

Penalosa came to Miami recently as part of the Miami Downtown Development Authority’s (DDA) “Linked & Liveable” Miami Immersion Week. One stop on his whirlwind tour of public meetings? Henderson Park, a small urban green space in the city’s crowded East Little Havana neighborhood.

Crammed into the park are tennis courts, soccer fields, a community center, a playground, and two scrappy parcels of grass that no one seems to know what to do with. A tall metal fence holds it all in. Narrow, treeless streets with narrow sidewalks surround the park, making the journey to it feel unsafe and uncomfortable.

Henderson is ground zero in the battle to re-green and reconnect Miami. It was identified by the DDA as a critical component in its plan to promote transportation and connectivity through better transit, and “complete streets” that give

walkers and bikers equal rights.

“Henderson is in a very strategic location close to downtown,” says Anneliese Morales, a Little Havana resident and long-time activist. “It’s a secret park in an area that has virtually no parks.”

In the waning light of a recent weekday, teens kick soccer balls in the park, and children scramble on the playground equipment. Inside the community center pavilion, a crowd is eager to hear Penalosa’s 8 80 philosophy for urban spaces. He tells them that a city gets it right when its public spaces work for both 8-year-olds and 80-year-olds.

The residents give feedback on what they’d like to see in their park and their community. Trees and flowers get the most “votes” on a poster board list of priorities.

“I’m not surprised,” says Laurie Fucini-Joy, an engineer with Urban Health Partnerships (UHP). “Going to a park is a relief. It’s hot and you need a relaxing green area.”

UHP works with the Live Healthy Little Havana initiative in the City of Miami to find ways the built environment can help improve the health of residents. Parks, bike lanes, and safe sidewalks play a crucial role, she says. UHP will paint colorful crosswalks on the streets leading to Henderson Park to make them more visible. Shade trees and more parks would be great, too, she adds.

“We need community leaders to step up and listen to the voices of people in Little Havana,” she says.



Hotwheels.com

Urbanist Gil Penalosa on Biscayne Boulevard: “It doesn’t make sense for the street to be so wide.”

Penalosa is big on public spaces that accommodate everyone. “The community’s quality of life depends on how we treat our most vulnerable — our children, the elderly, the poorest among us,” he explains. He is also big on mobility and public spaces.

Parks should include everything from tot-lots to *viejotecas*, or *discoteques* for elders to dance to their music, he says. And above all, safe passage by making streets accessible, safe, lined with shade trees, and with marked crosswalks, which are sorely missing at Henderson Park and throughout the city.

Penalosa loves walking and biking because he says they’re the only individual transport methods and also the most democratic and affordable. Instead of spending money on widening roads, governments should shift funds to make streets safer for pedestrians and bicyclists, and invest in public spaces and parks.

“It’s very clear Miami has been built for cars, not people,” Penalosa

explains. “It will need a major transportation shift. Right now, many streets are too big, too wide, and it’s very dangerous for pedestrians.”

In downtown Miami, Penalosa was struck by the unwieldiness of Biscayne Boulevard, and its air pollution and traffic noise. And he was dismayed by how the grand boulevard with a parking lot in the middle cuts off the waterfront from the rest of the city.

“It doesn’t make sense for the street to be so wide,” he says.

The city also needs many more trees. Greening the city is tied to economic vitality, he believes.

“World-class cities have the best quality of life, which is one of the most important tools of economic competitiveness in a globalized world. Miami could be a very green city but it has to be more ambitious to get there.”

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com



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Have Some French Chardonnay for May

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

By **Jacqueline Coleman**
BT Contributor

Those of you who read my column last month may remember that we were celebrating a very important red wine holiday in April with Malbec World Day. Fortunately for us, the festivities of spring drinking will continue through May.

We have two very important celebratory wine-drinking holidays back-to-back this month, starting with International Chardonnay Day on May 24, and National Wine Day on May 25. And what better way to commemorate both than by combining them into a celebration of the mother of all wines, or at least the wine that all our mothers drink, French Chardonnay.

The region made famous for producing some of the most classic Chardonnays is of course the region of Burgundy in France. A white Burgundy is always Chardonnay, but many think of the Chablis region as the epicenter of the finest of this varietal. It is true that almost any white Bourgogne will be worth your money, but you don't have to pay top dollar to experience a satisfying French Chardonnay.

Let me tempt your tastes with one of these eight economical Chardonnays from France and give you a reason to say *ooh là là* without breaking the bank.

Let's start with one white Burgundy that is arguably the best wine of the bunch. The **2016 Louis Jadot**

Mâcon-Villages Chardonnay is sure to be a crowd pleaser at your International Chardonnay Day celebration. Strong melon, green apple, and a bit of fresh earth on the nose give it a very traditional Burgundy personality right off the bat. Refreshing, crisp, and light with balanced acidity, this unoaked Chardonnay is perfect for a spring day.

For something a little creamier, try the **2016 Debeaune Special Selection Chardonnay**. Fresh and clean on the nose with citrus and apple notes, this fruity Chardonnay smooths out with a touch of oak on the palate. Flavorful and round in the mouth means that will not leave you wanting.

The **2016 Ropiteau Chardonnay** is another lovely light- to medium-bodied wine with a crisp but not overwhelming flavor palate. Citrus and apple dominate, but there is also a hint of nuts. If you're looking for an entry-level Chardonnay, this is a great one to share with traditionally non-Chard drinkers.

If your wine tribe prefers more unoaked options for your Chardonnay Day, try the **2016 Luc Pirlet Classique Chardonnay**. This medium-bodied, pale-yellow wine will leave you with a hint of pear-tart on the palate. Fresh acidity means that it will go well with your seafood feast, or even some creamy goat cheese.

Another crowd pleaser is sure to be the **2016 St. Martin Reserve Chardonnay** from the South of France. Lots of stone fruit, apples, and pears hit you on

the nose, and a balanced palate awaits with a round and slightly nutty finish. Not too tart, and not oaky at all, my notes on this wine say that it's definitely a "good pick."

The color of the next wine will most certainly bring about some smart comments from guests. The **2013 Kinetic Chardonnay** may be showing a bit of its age with a deep, concentrated gold color. Strong almonds, pear, and honey on the nose lead you to a bold and round Chardonnay on the tongue. With a fuller body, this wine is more typical of the Chardonnays you see coming out of California.

For something that is extremely pleasant on the palate with a hint of nutty flavor and oak, be sure to pick up a bottle of the **2016 Bouchard Aîné & Fils Chardonnay**. Rich pear and apple, along with intimations of something floral strike out on first sniff, leading to a fuller bodied wine with just a dab of butter to round it out. Another great "in-between" Chardonnay for those who can't decide between crispy or oaky.

Finally, we have a label that will surely provoke a chuckle in even the

most serious Chardonnay snobs. Try a **2016 Fat Bastard Chardonnay** if you need to lighten up the mood. With more of that honey sweetness and a predominant tropical melon flavor, I'd say that this wine will pair better with your humorous conversation than with anything on the dinner table. Regardless of your level of wine mastery, don't let anyone tell you that you can't have an occasional Fat Bastard.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com



Louis Jadot Mâcon-Villages Chardonnay is \$11.99 at the North Miami Beach ABC Fine Wine & Spirits (16355 Biscayne Blvd., 305-944-6525). The North Miami Total Wine & More (14750 Biscayne Blvd., 305-354-3270) carries the Réserve St. Martin Chardonnay, Ropiteau Chardonnay, and the Luc Pirlet Chardonnay Unoaked for \$9.99, and the Kinetic and Jean-Claude Debeaune Special Selection Chardonnays for \$10.99 each. Whole Foods Market in North Miami (305-892-5505) carries the Bouchard Aîné & Fils Chardonnay for \$10.99. And Publix at Biscayne and 18th has Fat Bastard Chardonnay for \$9.99 (305-358-3433).



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New Seasonal Menus Pop Up Across Miami

Food news we know you can use

By **Geoffrey Anderson Jr. and Dianne Rubin**
BT Contributors

Spring is well under way, and restaurants are rolling out new menus to celebrate the season. As a result, diners have been busy enjoying fresh seasonal bites throughout the 305. Before you know it, though, summer will be here, so make sure to rush in and try some of these great items before they may disappear.

Côte Gourmet in Miami Shores (9999 NE 2nd Ave., 305-754-9012) is one of the eateries that recently revamped its Italian and French offerings. Classic dishes like escargot in parsley butter and the croque madame are joined by spinach ravioli, lamb chops with goat cheese cream, and smoked salmon crêpes at this neighborhood spot. Whether you're in the mood for a light bite or a heavy meal, there's something for everyone.

If it's been a while since you visited **Pinch Kitchen** in MiMo (8601 Biscayne Blvd., 305-631-2018), the new menu can look daunting. Instead of focusing on individual entrées, Pinch has delved into the world of sharing plates and family-style cuisine; you're going to want to come with a large party to try delicious entrées like the Black Angus ribeye, octopus croquettes, and oxtail and polenta. Veggies abound, too: cauliflower, shishito peppers, and baby eggplant are just a few of the plant-based options available.

Up in North Miami Beach, **Duffy's Sports Grill** (3969 NE 163rd St., 305-760-2124) is trying its hand at healthier fare. The chicken wings and carbs that have defined the sports bar's menu are now featured alongside lighter bites like burrata salad, tequila lime shrimp tacos, and orange ginger mahi. You no longer have to worry about derailing your diet when catching the big game.

When we think of **Sugar** (788 Brickell Plaza, floor 40, 786-805-4655) at East, Miami in Brickell, food is the last thing on our minds; we see it as more of a post-work watering hole. The new food menu at this rooftop bar is changing that perception, though. Sharing plates like bang bang shrimp and the Sugar sushi roll — tempura shrimp, salmon, avocado, and carrot — pair nicely with the array of new spring cocktails and the venue's signature skyline view.

New additions have also popped up at **Boulud Sud** (255 Biscayne Blvd. Way, 305-421-8800) just over the bridge. The downtown Mediterranean establishment has swapped in items like agnolotti with mushrooms, snap peas, bresaola, and parmesan fonduta; grouper with venere risotto; and an under-the-radar corn soup. Just wait until you see what pastry chef Saeko Nemoto has up her sleeves, as well.

OPENINGS

Seasonal menus aren't the only new things appearing across Miami's dining scene. South Florida also welcomed several



Courtesy of Côte Gourmet

Escargot de Bourgogne from Côte Gourmet.

eateries in recent months, including **222 Taco** (1624 79th St. Cswy., 833-222-8226). The North Bay Village taco shop comes from one of the founders of the wildly popular Coyo Taco, and as you'd expect, usual suspects like tacos and burritos make an appearance. What really caught our eye were the family-style options, which we haven't seen at other Mexican spots; the al pastor taco platter and "nacho friends" are designed for big groups (or appetites). Needless to say, we're already planning our next office party.

Carnivores can now head to **Fleming's Steakhouse** (600 Brickell Ave., Suite 150, 786-915-8790) in Brickell for hearty steaks and stiff drinks. We know what you're thinking: "Great, another steakhouse." That's an understandable comment, considering it's in a saturated area known for power lunches and big-money deals. But there's just something about that delectable prime bone-in ribeye and the miso glazed Chilean sea bass that has us hopeful about Fleming's future in a crowded field.

Over in Edgewater, **C Si Bon** (350 NE 24th St., 786-615-4820) is serving

up tasty French cuisine. Although it's not exactly new to the scene, it's new to us: The restaurant opened at the tail end of last year, and it has since gained a loyal following. With varied offerings like sautéed lobster tail, old-style-mustard-crusting salmon steak, and roasted corn-fed chicken breast, it's not hard to see why.

CLOSINGS

Downtown Miami lost another great restaurant recently: **Downtown Bistro**. The French restaurant was a hotspot during lunch, but like other downtown eateries, it wasn't able to draw much of a dinner crowd. We're going to miss that French onion soup.

Geoffrey Anderson Jr. and Dianne Rubin are co-founders of Miami Food Pug, an award-winning South Florida food blog that fuses the couple's love of dogs and food.

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Dining Guide

Restaurant Listings

The Biscayne Corridor's most comprehensive restaurant guide. Total this month: 272

Restaurant listings for the BT Dining Guide are written by Geoffrey Anderson Jr. and Dianne Rubin of Miami Food Pug (MFP), Andrew McLees (AM), Mandy Baca (MB), and the late Pamela Robin Brandt (PRB) (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.

\$ = \$10 and under
\$\$ = \$20
\$\$\$ = \$30
\$\$\$\$ = \$40
\$\$\$\$\$ = \$50 and over

MIAMI

Brickell / Downtown

1111 Peruvian Bistro 1111 SW 1st Ave., 786-615-9633

Peruvian cuisine gets honest with an ethos for ultimate transparency in the kitchen. Executive chef Geancarlo Juneorga and food superstar Diego Muñoz have gone back to the drawing board to not only find better ways to highlight every ingredient in simple dishes like causas and anticuchos, but to use higher quality products like duck and filet mignon. The team has fun with the catch of the day, so make sure to order it. \$-\$\$\$ (MB)

Alloy Bistro 154 SE 1st Ave., 786-773-2742

Deep within the bowels of an otherwise unspectacular swath of urban sprawl lies a small but wondrous urban oasis where the food is fresh, creative, and presented with playful finesse. Chef Federico Genovese's imaginative Mediterranean fusion menu rotates daily, and features fresh, seasonally driven recipes whose ingredients are sourced both locally and overseas. On a recent visit, nothing fell short of divine: the 24-hour short rib served over aged white cheddar and topped with mashed potatoes was expertly prepared. A show-stopping take on a classic blueberry tart dessert served with coconut foam garnished with powdered green tea was an inspired way to end the night. Even the bread was baked to perfection and served with the most fragrant olive oil I've ever had the pleasure of tasting. If there is an oyster's pearl to be found in the heart of downtown Miami, this is it. \$\$\$ (AM)

All Day 1035 N. Miami Ave., 305-699-3447

Here is a stroke of inspired insanity: an artisanal coffee shop and all-day breakfast bistro at the edge of downtown Miami's clubland corridor. Fans of breakfast have plenty to fawn over, including a delicious baked egg and leek skillet served with a side of toasted baguette, and a curiously exotic poached egg and congee bowl. Sandwiches and salads are also available. The space is bright and accented with beautiful natural woods, and sports some seriously hip flourishes including a neon drink menu illuminating the coffee station. Single-origin coffee is a specialty here and the baristas prepare it with effortless finesse. For the weekend warriors, after the all-night EDM bender, thankfully there is All Day. \$\$ (AM)

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. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$ (PRB)

American Social 690 SW 1st Ct., 305-223-7004

The gastropub grows up, offering a huge modern playground for the social butterfly to enjoy all aspects of life. From indulgent chicken and waffles at brunch to open-faced short rib flatbreads at dinner, dozens of craft beers and a long list of cocktails for happy hour, flat-screen TVs to watch all the important games, and even an area to dock your boat. Your most difficult task will be choosing between plush indoor seating and outdoor riverside seating. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$ (MB)

Arson 104 NE 2nd Ave., 786-717-6711

James Beard-nominated chef Deme Lomas is known for his Spanish tapas restaurant NIU Kitchen in downtown Miami, but his latest venture is poised to steal the spotlight. Located just a stone's throw from NIU Kitchen, Arson remedies some of that restaurant's shortcomings — a tight space and limited menu — to craft a distinct yet

familiar experience that will appeal to NIU fans and first-timers alike. The Jospier charcoal oven makes meats like the Patagonian lamb chops and Angus grass-fed skirt steak come out perfect; one bite either will entice you to order a second round. \$\$\$ (MFP)

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. \$\$ (PRB)

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 Juneo-dressed lobster sandwich, crisp-skinned snapper with grapefruit salsa and basil aioli, a bracing orange tart, even citrus butter in the bread basket. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$ (PRB)

Baby Jane 500 Brickell Ave., 786-623-3555

Budget ramen be gone! Shimuja Ramen has arrived at Baby Jane, a swanky new pop-up turned menu mainstay by Ariete honchos Jason Odio and Michael Beltran. Literally meaning "With No Wicked Thoughts in Mind," Shimuja ramen implores you to forget what you know about store-bought ramen and indulge in the myriad flavors of Kagoshima, Japan. So what makes this ramen special? For one thing, chef Keiichi Maemura prepares the tonkotsu-style broth from scratch, eschewing thin broth for a thicker, milkier pork and bone broth that releases a pleasantly fragrant billowing steam. Try the signature Kagoshima Ramen bowl for the real Shimuja experience, featuring pork that is leaner than expected, however no less welcome. Smaller tapas-style plates round out the menu, including expertly roasted shishito peppers, edamame, pork soup dumplings, and Japanese-style fried chicken. The yuzu salt served with the edamame is the dark horse at the table. Feel free to sprinkle it on everything. \$\$\$ (AM)

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. \$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

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. \$\$\$ (PRB)

Bazaar Mar 1300 S. Miami Ave., 305-239-1320

Chef José Andrés has another hit on his hands. The renowned chef's seafood concept embraces the playful menu touches and whimsical décor of his other Miami restaurant (The Bazaar), treating diners to an unforgettable dinner and show. To see the spectacle in action, start with a liquid nitrogen caipirinha and watch as it's made tableside. Dinner items like the fish-shaped bagel and lox, rose-shaped cobia ceviche, and octopus-shaped "funnel cake" need to be seen to be believed. Thankfully, the presentation isn't compensating for anything: The food tastes as good as it looks. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$ (MFP)

Bengal Indian Cuisine 109 NE 1st St., 305-403-1976

To say that there's a lack of Indian restaurants in South Florida would be an understatement. Thankfully, Bengal Indian Cuisine in downtown Miami helps bolster the county's slim offerings with tasty classics like chicken tikka masala, pakora (lentil-based vegetable fritters), and naan bread. Although they warrant their prices, the à la carte offerings for dinner can quickly put a dent in your dining budget. Instead, take advantage of the generous lunch buffet that won't break the bank. \$\$\$ (MFP)

Big Easy 701 S. Miami Ave., 786-866-9854

If you visit Big Easy with expectations of po'boys, muffuletta, and beignets, you're going to be very disappointed. The restaurant has

NEW THIS MONTH

MIAMI

BRICKELL / DOWNTOWN

La Centrale 601 S. Miami Ave.

There's no such thing as too much Italian food at La Centrale, the three-floor Brickell City Centre dining hall. Each floor houses a variety of themed concepts: Meat and seafood lovers should head to the second floor, where Pesce and Carne, respectively, will hit the spot, while pizza fans can find satiety at Pizza e Pasta on the first floor. In a hurry? Head to the Mercato for grab-and-go bites or to do a little ingredient shopping for a hearty meal at home. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (MFP)

MIDTOWN / WYNWOOD / DESIGN DISTRICT

Le Chick 310 NW 24th St., 305-771-2767

Out of the ashes of Dizengoff and Federal Donuts rises Le Chick, a rotisserie-chicken spot that should hopefully avoid its neighbors' fate. While chicken is the restaurant's signature protein, it's not the only standout. A delicious Royale With Cheese is sure to please burger fanatics (and *Pulp Fiction* fans with two hefty patties, cheddar, pickles, and secret sauce). The best value, though, is the Why Not platter that comes with all the hits: rotisserie chicken, fried chicken, pork ribs, and onion rings. \$\$\$ (MFP)

NORTH BAY VILLAGE

222 Taco 1624 79th St. Cswy., 833-222-8226

nothing to do with New Orleans — it's actually the nickname for South African golfer Ernie Els, one of the restaurant's partners. Here's what you can expect: delectable South African cuisine incorporating a wealth of flavors and spices. Start with the Boerie Bites — they look like mini-hot dogs but elevated — then work your way to the bison ribeye and the toasted couscous risotto, which can double as a meal. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$ (MFP)

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 Biscope 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. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

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

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

Boulud Sud 255 Biscayne Blvd. Way, 305-421-8800

Those mourning the loss of db Bistro Moderne in downtown Miami now have reason to smile. Renowned chef Daniel Boulud hasn't given up on South Florida. He's brought down his popular Mediterranean concept Boulud Sud to fill the space. Items like lamb flatbread, grilled octopus, and Baharat chicken have replaced the French-focused fare of Sud's predecessor. Although much of the restaurant has changed, one thing hasn't: It's still home to one of the best happy hours in the city. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (MFP)

Burrito San 119 SE 1st Ave., 305-533-1288

How often do you see something and ask yourself, "Why didn't I

think of that first?" Mad genius is oftentimes a simple yet elusive feat of imagination, so go easy on yourself for not coming up with the sushi burrito, also known as the "Sushirrito," or "every college student's fantasy meal." What began as a West Coast trend has finally found a home in Miami; now you can find sensational sushi burritos at Burrito San, a fast-casual concept and one-trick pony that it does exceptionally well. Go straight for the rolled dog: a hearty portion of either white or brown sushi rice wrapped in seasoned nori, stuffed to the brim with pickled vegetables, meats, and seafood, among other fresh ingredients. Some personal favorites include the satisfying Hanoi Hog with braised pork, or the signature Mt. Fuji with sashimi tuna, crispy wontons, pickled cucumbers, and mango sauce. The crispy wontons served on the side are largely forgettable, but will come in handy when it's time to finish what didn't stay in the burrito. Ask for their secret menu. \$\$ (AM)

NORTH MIAMI

Sergio's Cuban Café + Grill 1821 NE 123rd St., 305-702-7211

Abuela's Cuban cooking can make us feel all warm and fuzzy. Unfortunately, it can also make us fat. Enter Sergio's Cuban Café + Grill, a somewhat healthier approach to the beloved cuisine. Guests can create their own bowls and add healthy mix-ins like lean ground turkey and cauliflower rice for a satisfyingly "skinny" meal. Of course, the usual suspects like the Cuban sandwich and even a Cuban cheesesteak make an appearance for those not watching their waistline. \$ (MFP)

AVENTURA

Shake Shack 19565 Biscayne Blvd., Space FH5, 786-204-3807

New York favorite Shake Shack has brought its burgers and shakes to Aventura Mall's food hall. The company's third South Florida location provides guests with the staples they've come to know and love. Among them: the ShackBurger with its house "ShackSauce" as well as the Shack-cago Dog, the brand's take on a Chicago hot dog. Frozen custard flavors range from decadent to downright diet-destroying: the Shack Attack's mix of chocolate, more chocolate, and even more chocolate is worth the visit to the gym. \$\$\$ (MFP)

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Café Bastille 248 SE 1st St., 786-425-3575

Anyone looking for brunch, a quick lunch or dinner would be remiss to snub Café Bastille, a quaint bistro that practically vanishes against downtown Miami's dreary cityscape. Once inside, however, this modern French eatery oozes charm and boasts seriously hearty portions, especially during brunch. The ham and salmon benedicts as well as the crêpes are phenomenal, and no French meal is complete without sampling dessert. For dinner, try the filet mignon de boeuf served over a creamy peppercorn sauce. Remember to ask about daily specials; it's easy to overlook the tiny board located in the back of the restaurant. \$\$ (AM)

Café at Books & Books 1300 Biscayne Blvd., 305-695-8898

Adding unique literary/culinary arts components to the Arshet Center, this casual indoor/outdoor café, directed by Chef Allen Susser (arguably Miami's earliest and most dedicated local-ingredients booster), serves fresh and fun farm-to-table fare all day, everyday — unlike the Arshet's upscale Brava!, open only for pre-performance dinners. Especially delightful vegetarian/vegan dishes range from snacks like cornmeal-battered "urban pickles" with dlltatziki to a hefty curried cauliflower steak. Major breakfast pluses include heritage pork hash, eggs with Miami Smokers bacon, and free parking till 10:00 a.m. (in Lot C). \$\$\$ (PRB)

Cantina La Veinte 495 Brickell Ave., 786-623-6135

In a spectacularly stylized indoor/outdoor waterfront setting, this first U.S. venture from Mexico's Cinbersol Group serves upscale modern Mexican fare with international influences transcending Tex-Mex. No ground-beef tacos here. Rather, fillings range from cochinita pibil (pork in achiote/orange sauce) to grilled bone marrow — even escamoles: butter-sautéed ant eggs. For the less adventurous, fried

Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

calamari with a Jamaican-inspired hibiscus reduction or dobladitas de jaibas suave, delectably crunchy softshell crabs wrapped in flour tortillas with creamy/kicky jalapeño sauce, are irresistible. Bonus: A specialty market/deli with imported packaged goods, cheeses, pastries, more. \$\$\$ (PRB)

Casa Tua Cucina 70 SW 7th St., 305-755-0320

Casa Tua, the Miami Beach institution, has made its way to the mainland. Unlike the South Beach location, this outpost of Casa Tua isn't an Italian restaurant — it's an Italian food hall. Located inside Saks Fifth Avenue at Brickell City Centre, the first-floor concept is made up of various dedicated stations. Those craving pasta can choose from several delicious white- and red-sauce dishes, while guests in the mood for pizza have no shortage of selections. Portions are big, so come hungry. \$\$\$ (MFP)

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. \$\$\$\$ (PRB)

Clove Mediterranean Kitchen

195 SE 3rd Ave., 786-717-6788

Clove Mediterranean Kitchen whips up affordable and healthy fare for the businessperson on the go. Streamlined counter service offers a selection of basic building blocks: a base (pita, bowl, or salad), a dip or spread, proteins and veggies, and toppings and dressings, including smoked paprika mustard, honey and orange tahini, and creamy feta. Although the cuisine tends toward the light side of Mediterranean cooking, portion sizes are undeniably hearty, making Clove a serious value. With its hip, clean, fast-casual appeal and above average cuisine, this is a welcome addition to the bustling downtown neighborhood, where people are hungry for exciting alternatives to the brown bag lunch and leftovers. \$\$\$ (AM)

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. \$\$\$ (PRB)

The Craftsman

900 S. Miami Ave. #135, 305-400-8226

Diners who frequented Brother Jimmy's in Mary Brickell Village will find that its replacement — The Craftsman — has kept a few of the now-shuttered restaurant's amenities (namely the televisions). That's where the similarities end, though. The new bar has swapped barbecue dishes and large-format cocktails for small bar bites like avocado toast and an array of whimsical libations. Unlike its casual predecessor, The Craftsman pulls in a classier clientele, ultimately making it a better fit for the Brickell neighborhood. \$\$\$ (MFP)

Crust

668 NW 5th St., 305-371-7065

Chef-restaurateur Klime Kovaceski is back, and we are oh so glad. Not only does his pizza-focused restaurant fill a hole in the neighborhood, it offers a cozy space that feels more like someone's rustic home. A lot of thought went into their crusts, and it shows — sturdy enough to hold less traditional ingredients like perfectly cooked octopus and steak, and still doughy on the inside. The medium at 14 inches and 6 slices is large enough for two, and there will still be leftovers. Delivery available. \$\$ (MB)

CVI.CHE 105

105 NE 3rd Ave., 305-577-3454

Fusion food — a modern invention? Not in Peru, where native and Euro-Asian influences have mixed for more than a century. But chef Juan Chipoco gives the ceviches and tiraditos served at this hot spot his own unique spin. Specialties include flash-marinated raw seafood creations, such as *tiradito a la crema de rocoto* (sliced fish in citrus-spiked chili/cream sauce). But traditional fusion dishes like Chinese-Peruvian Chaufa fried rice (packed with jumbo shrimp, mussels, and calamari) are also fun, as well as surprisingly affordable. \$\$ (PRB)

DIRT

900 S. Miami Ave. #125, 786-235-8033

DIRT, South Beach's popular clean-eating concept, has brought its talents to Mary Brickell Village. The restaurant's third location features an extensive menu that has Brickell diners covered from morning to evening. Breakfast is served all day here, so if you want a frittata tostada or matcha pancakes at 3:00 p.m., DIRT can make it happen. Tasty toasts — including the ever-present avocado variety — and sandwiches abound, but it's the seasonal platters that will keep you coming back. \$\$ (MFP)

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. \$\$\$ (PRB)

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 restolounge, bringing discounted prices on treats like rock shrimp tempura with spicy aioli. Regular prices are reasonable, too, for seafood flown in daily, and makis displaying solid creativity rather than gimmicky. 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. \$\$\$ (PRB)

Downtown Bistro

114 SE 1st St., 305-374-7284

From a transplanted French couple, this pleasant place (whose restrained ambiance, resistant to terminal hipster invasion, makes it suitable for casual business lunches) serves a mix of traditional Parisian corner-bistro fare and more modern fusion dishes. The latter range from familiar tapas (bacon-wrapped dates, mini-crab cakes, sesame oil-infused tuna tartare) to simple but sophisticated surprises (velvety butternut squash soup shooters). But classics rule, especially lunchtime's perfectly mustard vinaigrette-dressed frisée salad with lardons and poached egg, or solidly satisfying steak au poivre with frites. Portion sizes satisfy, too. \$\$\$ (PRB)

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. \$\$\$\$ (PRB)

F'ilia

1300 S. Miami Ave., 305-912-1729

F'ilia ("daughter" in Latin) is the newest edition to James Beard Award-winning chef Michael Schwartz's foodie empire. Here, Italian cuisine is treated with a delicate twist, as Old World offerings and regionally specific recipes are prepared with exquisite attention to detail. F'ilia finds a warm home in the ultra sleek and modern SLS Brickell, handsomely designed by Philippe Starck. Touches of teak and twine give this sophisticated dining experience a rustic touch. Service is thoughtfully choreographed to welcome and engage with diners. This being a Michael Schwartz restaurant, fresh ingredients are paramount; oregano is freshly snipped to season olive oil, and caesar salads are served tableside. Cocktails are sublime, and the kitchen makes no short use of their brick oven, churning out dishes such as charred eggplant spread, wild mushroom pizza, and braised short rib crespelle. With comfort food this hip and fresh, F'ilia just June be well on its way to becoming your new favorite date-night haunt. \$\$\$ (AM)

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 generous plates of risotto with shrimp and grilled asparagus; homemade pastas like seafood-packed fettuccine al scoglio; or delicate Vitello alla Milanese on arugula. \$\$\$ (PRB)

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. \$\$\$ (PRB)

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. \$\$\$\$ (PRB)

Kaori by Walter Martino

1250 S. Miami Ave., 786-252-4955

Italian meets Japanese in the most ornate of ways: think perfume bottles, glass, and metal trees. So artistic, you almost don't want to eat it, but do as the blend of cuisines provides a perfect balance for the taste buds — sweet, salty, sour, umami — with trios of risottos, small ravioli, and sushi. An art video installation provides entertainment. Reservations highly recommended. \$\$\$\$ (MB)

Komodo

801 Brickell Ave., 305-534-2211

Accommodating a whopping 300 seats, this contemporary three-floor behemoth blurs the line between restaurant and lounge. An indoor/outdoor layout festooned with floating bird-nest pods creates a treehouse ambiance enhanced only by Southeast Asian fusion of tuna porterhouse, lobster onion rings, skewers of miso black cod, and wasabi shrimp. \$\$\$\$ (MB)

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. \$\$\$ (PRB)

La Mar by Gastón Acurio

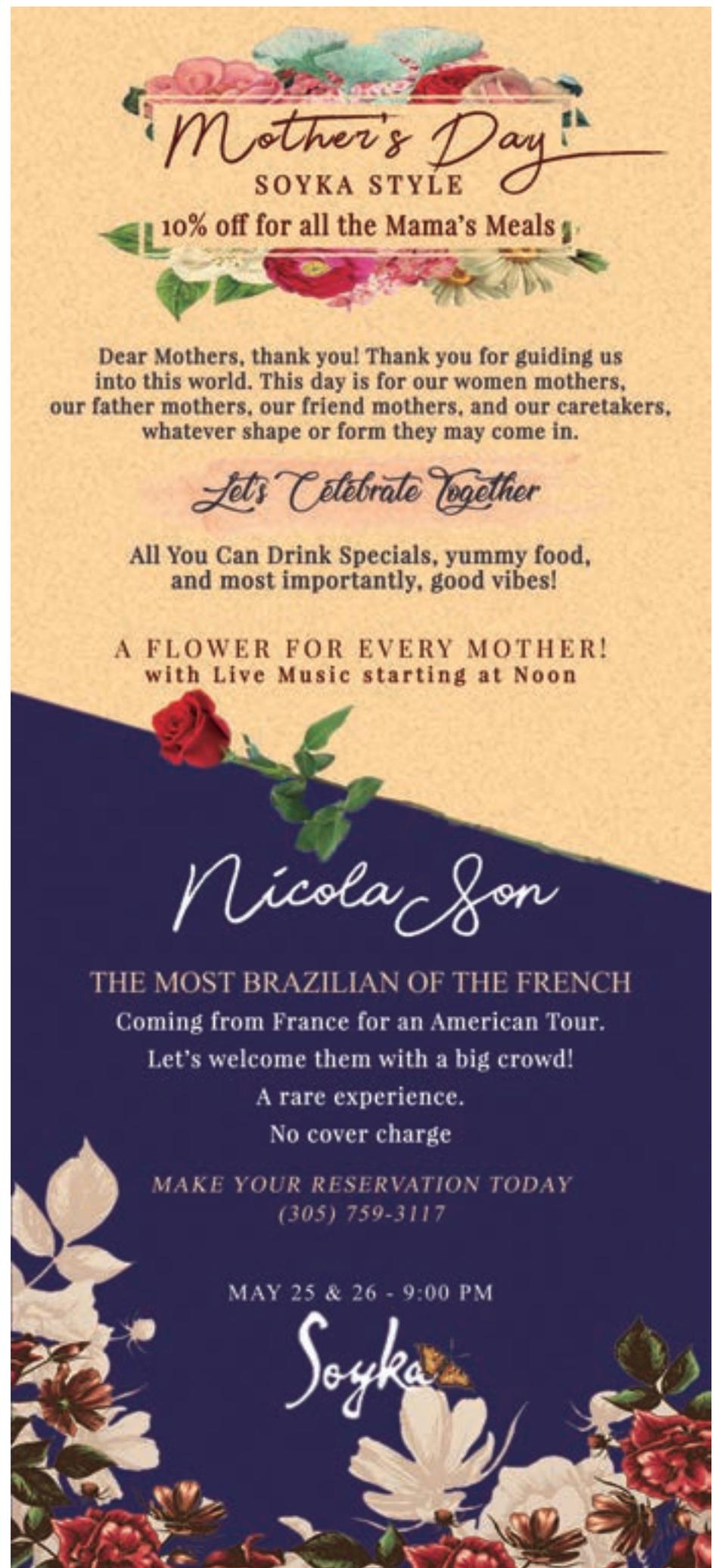
500 Brickell Key Dr., 305-913-8358

It's said that Peruvian cuisine is Latin America's most varied and sophisticated. Reserve a patio table at this indoor/outdoor Mandarin Oriental eatery to experience Miami's best for yourself — along with some of the city's best bayfront vistas. The specialty is seafood, and the beautifully balanced recipes of Acurio (called Peru's food ambassador to the world), executed flawlessly by onsite executive chef Diego Oka, especially elevate ceviches, similar but more delicate tiraditos, uniquely lively "Nikkei" (Peruvian-Japanese fusion) sushi creations, and elegant whipped potato/fresh seafood causas, to world-class fine-dining level. \$\$\$\$ (PRB)

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



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Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

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. \$\$\$ (PRB)

La Petite Maison

1300 Brickell Bay Dr., 305-403-9133

On any given night, you're sure to find a lively crowd at La Petite Maison. The internationally acclaimed French and Mediterranean restaurant has unsurprisingly garnered a loyal following since its opening. Don't expect out-of-the-box creations here: La Petite Maison focuses on getting the classics right. Items like the tuna carpaccio, grilled veal chop, roasted baby chicken, and rack of lamb may sound simple on paper, but once they hit your palate, you'll realize what all the fuss is about. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$ (MFP)

Luke's Lobster

Brickell City Centre, 701 S. Miami Ave., #353, 786-837-7683

Lobster rolls are tiny, sometimes overpriced slices of luxury, especially when portions run about as small as your average New York City apartment. This is not the case at Luke's Lobster, the venerable New England fast-casual chain championing traceable, sustainable seafood. Luke's understands the key to its destination status involves copious amounts of fresh lobster (1/4 pound, to be exact) as well as a healthy dose of disarming simplicity. True to its simple charm, Luke's Lobster is about as cheap and cheerful as seafood gets. All of the rolls — lobster, crab, and shrimp — are delicious, but it's the signature buttery lobster roll with its split top bun and mysterious seasoning that is an absolute must-try for the uninitiated. Considering its limited seating, it's safe to say this playfully rustic yet diminutive eatery gets hit hard during peak lunch rush at Brickell City Centre. \$\$ (AM)

Lutong Pinoy Filipino Cuisine

195 SE 3rd Ave., 786-717-6788

For the adventurous epicurean of Asian persuasion, Lutong Pinoy offers a deep dive into authentic Filipino cuisine, an otherwise unmapped territory to a great majority of South Florida's bon vivants. Influenced by Malay-Indonesian, Indian, Japanese, Chinese, Spanish, and American cuisines, Lutong Pinoy crafts plates showcasing ingredients indigenous to the Philippines, and offers an extensive menu touching upon a full spectrum of exotic flavors. Some of the highlights at this diminutive hole-in-the-wall include the boneless lechon belly (roasted pig), kare-kare kawali (Asian vegetables cooked in peanut sauce), and the Sinigang na Hipon (shrimp in sour broth). For many, however, the main event is the halo-halo, a popular Filipino dessert made with shaved ice and evaporated milk, topped with a mélange of ingredients, including sweet red and white beans, bananas, coconut, sweet potato, coco jellies, leche flan, and milk. The boodle fight platter is piled high with an assortment of meat, rice, and vegetables on a bed of banana leaves. First conceived in the mess halls of the Filipino military, the boodle fight platter encourages eating with your hands. When checking in, remember to keep your mind and stomach wide open. \$\$\$ (AM)

Marion

1111 SW 1st Ave., 786-717-7512

Third time's the charm for this behemoth space that works best when broken up into different offerings. In this case, this rose-colored Mediterranean palace by the guys behind Bào!li Miami is a café, restaurant, bakery, and oyster bar all at once. Save space for French classics like whole rotisserie organic chicken (large enough for two) and whole fish baked in Normandy sea salt and filleted tableside. Other (smaller) standouts include piquillo peppers, tuna belly ribbons, and of course, dessert. \$\$\$ (MB)

Meraki Greek Bistro

142 SE 1st Ave., 786-773-1535

Tucked away in an unassuming and quaint nook of downtown Miami, Meraki Greek Bistro is a pleasant surprise for anyone hunting for an urban hideaway. With a pride that is palpable, this bright little bistro boasts friendly service and delicious Mediterranean menu to large plates. Sample Mediterranean fare à la carte from Meraki's souvlaki (skewer) bar, or share a polikilies (family meal). Specials are also served daily, further expounding upon all of the wonderfully slow-cooked options on the menu. Meraki Greek Bistro offers everything you'd hope for in casual dining at a reasonable price. When it comes to Greek, the proof is in baklava — and these guys nail it. \$\$\$ (AM)

Momi Ramen

5 SW 11th St., 786-391-2392

Banish all thoughts of packaged instant "ramen." Perfectionist chef/owner Jeffrey Chen (who cooked for more than a decade in Japan), changes his mostly ramen-only menu often, but constants are irresistibly chewy handmade noodles; soups based on creamy, intensely porky tonkotsu broth (made from marrow bones simmered all day); meats like pork belly and oxtail; and authentic toppings including marinated soft-cooked eggs, pickled greens, more. Other pluses: It's open 24/7, and the ramen ranks with the USA's best. Minuses: It's cash only, and the ramen might be the USA's most expensive. \$\$\$ (PRB)

My Ceviche

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

When three-time James Beard "Rising Star Chef" nominee Sam Gorenstein opened the original My Ceviche in SoBe, in 2012, it garnered national media attention despite being a tiny take-away joint. Arguably, our newer indoor/outdoor Brickell location is better. Same menu, featuring local fish prepared onsite, and superb sauces including a kicky roasted jalapeño/lime Juneo), 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. \$\$ (PRB)

N by Naoe

661 Brickell Key Dr., 305-947-6263

Like local secret-star chef Kevin Cory's dinner-only Naoe, newer lunch-only N by Naoe shares a reservations-only, omakase-only (chef's choice) policy—and actually shares the same door. Turn left for Naoe, right for N. Main differences: N has one elegant communal table, perfect for impressive power lunches (vs. Naoe's intimate individual seating), and prix fixe lunches are \$80 vs. \$200 for dinner. Admittedly, lunch is abbreviated: soup and multi-course bento box plus one dessert, without the dozen or so sushi dishes. But bents are much bigger (seven compartments vs. four), and equally unique. Think of N as a relatively bargain-priced introduction to Naoe, or as a revelatory dining experience on its own. \$\$\$ (PRB)

Naoe

661 Brickell Key Dr., 305-947-6263

Chances are you've never had anything like the \$200 prix-fixe Japanese dinner at Kevin Cory's tiny but internationally acclaimed oasis, but trust us: It's one of those rare, exhilarating, instantly revelatory Eureka! dining adventures that'll keep you thinking about it for years. The reservations-only, omakase-only (chef's choice) meals begin with a subtly inventive seasonal soup true to both Japanese tastes and local terror (like miso/fresh Homestead corn) and a four-course bento box of the chef's creations, proceed to about a dozen sushi dishes eons above others in Miami, and end with three desserts. Always changing, always astonishing. \$\$\$ (PRB)

NIU Kitchen

134 NE 2nd Ave., 786-542-5070

This contemporary Catalan eatery is located, according to its three playful proprietors, "somewhere between Dalí's moustache and Gaudí's Sagrada Família." Actually, it's in the heart of downtown, but the description does reflect the Barcelona-born chef's weirdly wonderful yet seriously skilled twists on tapas. Instead of Catalonia's rustic, bread-thickened tomato soup, there's a refined cold tomato broth poured over a mustard ice cream-topped crouton. Mato, a simple cheese and honey dessert, translates as custardy fresh cheese atop eggplant "jam," with candied hazelnuts. \$\$\$ (PRB)

Novocento



1414 Brickell Ave., 305-403-0900

For those who think "Argentine cuisine" is a synonym for "beef and more beef," this popular eatery's wide range of more cosmopolitan contemporary Argentine fare will be a revelation. Classic parilla-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. \$\$\$ (PRB)

Nusr-Et

999 Brickell Ave., 305-415-9990

Internet sensation Salt Bae (aka Nusret Koche) has made his way to Miami with a new outpost of his popular steakhouse, Nusr-Et. The restaurant, which opened inside the old Coya space, is unsurprisingly heavy on meat, particularly beef. Expect beef ribs, beef chop, beef tenderloin, and much more alongside lamb and other hearty proteins. If you want to meet the star himself, your best bet is to order one of the pricier cuts, which he salts tableside like you've seen in the videos. \$\$\$ (MFP)

Pega Grill

15 E. Flagler St., 305-808-6666

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

Perricone's

15 SE 10th St., 305-374-9449

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

Pieducks

1451 S. Miami Ave., 305-808-7888

If you can overlook a name as unenlightening as most in-jokes (it evidently refers to a favorite character of owner Claudio Nunes's kids — we assume the Pokémon Psyduck), you'll experience pretty perfect pizza. Sadly, not all brick ovens turn out perfectly char-blasted crusts, consistently fine 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. \$\$ (PRB)

Pilo's Street Tacos

28 SW 11th St., 305-800-8226

Three words describe Pilo's Street Tacos in Brickell: good, fast,

and filling. The area already has its fair share of taco shops, and Pilo's is among the pricier offerings, but that's because of the quality — and quantity. These tacos are filled to the brim with proteins like "drunken shrimp," brisket strips, and crispy chorizo. Don't miss out on the salsas: There are ten different ones from which to choose, and they range from sweet to spicy to "Somebody call a fire truck." \$\$\$ (MFP)

Pincho Factory

1250 S. Miami Ave., 786-536-4557

What started as a humble burger and kebab shop in Westchester turned into one of South Florida's biggest restaurant success stories. Pincho Factory has quickly expanded throughout Dade and Broward, and the new Brickell location continues its tradition of mad-scientist creations. Case in point: the Toston Burger, which uses fried plantain patties for buns. While there are healthier options like the kebabs (pinchos in Spanish), being adventurous pays off — especially when it comes to the mouthwatering chalkboard specials. Just save room for Pincho's sweet potato tots and apple butter. \$\$\$ (MFP)

Poké 305

169 SE 7th St., 305-563-3811

Hawaiian poké is currently enjoying a nice long moment in the sun, and if you're even the slightest bit excited by the thought of sushi, it's easy to understand why. This exotic raw fish dish is front and center at Poké 305: seven exotic signature dishes and a trendy build-your-own-bowl option, served fast-casual style amid a spartan smattering of industrial décor. The signature "Big Mao"

Si Bon
Happy hour Tues. - Fri. 4 to 7pm
Glass of wine or beer served with a chef's special board: \$12
Wednesday: Mussels Day
Large serving of Prince Edward Island mussels with glass of house wine, Pinot Noir or Pinot Grigio: \$24
Breakfast and Brunch
Sat. - Sun. 8am - 4pm. Complimentary mimosa.
Biscayne Boulevard at NE 24th Street | 786-615-4820
Tues. - Fri. 11 am - 11 pm, Sat. 8 am - 11 pm, Sun. 8 am - 4 pm

Alaka'i bowl — salmon, tuna, and crab salad drizzled with wasabi aioli — is the biggest and baddest bowl of the bunch, but all the dishes are equally adept at satisfying a raw fish craving. Word of advice: skip the overpriced drinks. \$\$ (AM)

Quinto La Huella

788 Brickell Plaza, 786-805-4646

Uruguayan beef is in a class of its own, but it requires serious skill and the right tools to prepare it the way Uruguayan *parilleros* do. Located within the hulking steeled Brickell City Centre, Quinto La Huella brings a dark, moody ambiance and the prestige of one of South America's best restaurants, Parador La Huella, to the complex. The centerpiece of this rustic eatery is an authentic wood fire parilla, an essential component to grilling meat like a true *gaucha*. It should come as no surprise then that the beef — ordered medium rare, of course — is the main attraction here. Other options represent typical steakhouse fare, with some standout wood-fired seafood entrées and pastas that deserve a try. Snag a seat outdoors during the more temperate Miami months; otherwise, opt to sit near the heart of the controls: the parilla. Bring a liberal side of patience with you while dining room service sorts itself out. \$\$\$ (AM)

Raja's Indian Cuisine

33 NE 2nd Ave., 305-533-9551

Despite its small size and décor best described as "none," this place is an institution thanks to south Indian specialties rarely found in Miami's basically north Indian restaurants. The steam-tabled curries are fine (and nicely priced), but be sure to try the custom-made dosai (lacy rice crepes with a variety of savory fillings) and uttapam, thicker pancakes, layered with onions and chilis, both served with sambar and chutney. \$\$ (PRB)

Raw Juice

901 S. Miami Ave., 305-677-3160

Brickell's Raw Juice is making healthy living easy with a colorful array of cold-pressed "juice." Fruit-forward and vegetable-forward creations not only refresh but also give customers a quick vitamin boost. Despite the name, Raw Juice isn't just about juices: acai bowls, oatmeal parfaits, and salads are available to get patrons ready for their workout or help them recover from a grueling one. For those of you in need of a serious detox, Raw Juice's cleanse packages have you covered. \$\$\$ (MFP)

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. \$\$\$ (PRB)

Rosa Mexicano

900 S. Miami Ave., 786-425-1001

This expansive indoor/outdoor space offers a dining experience that's haute in everything but price. Few entrées top \$20. The décor is both date-worthy and family-friendly — festive but not

kitschy. And nonsophisticates needn't fear; 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. \$\$\$ (PRB)

Seaspice Brasserie & Lounge

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 thermador, as rich as it is pricey. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$ (PRB)

Soya & Pomodoro

120 NE 1st St., 305-381-9511

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

Sparky's Roadside Barbecue

204 NE 1st St., 305-377-2877

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

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, EVOO) prove some rules should be broken. \$\$ (PRB)

Station 28

91 SE 2nd St., 305-905-0328

A little paradise in the heart of downtown Miami, complete with hidden patio, lush greenery, long communal tables, tropical juices like papaya and lucuma, and extra large Peruvian sandwiches and burgers. This oasis offers a more casual taste of the cuisine, the comfort foods that will remind you of home, no matter where you come from. Their \$10 daily special includes your choice of a sandwich or burger with fries, salad or soup, and dessert. Delivery available. \$ (MB)

Tacology

701 S. Miami Ave., 786-347-5368

Tacology, the latest concept from Cantina La Veinte's executive chef Santiago Gomez, is a more approachable and affordable ode to Mexican food. Unlike its dimly lit upscale sibling, Tacology embraces a bright color palette and vibrant décor that is undeniably enticing — a description that also applies to the cuisine. As the name suggests, delicious tacos abound on the menu, but they shouldn't be the only items you order: The Mexican nachos and crispy pork skin are other standout dishes that should be on every diner's mind at this Brickell City Centre restaurant. \$\$\$ (MFP)

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. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$ (PRB)

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 finocchiona (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. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$ (PRB)

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. \$\$\$ (PRB)

Truluck's Seafood, Steak, and Crabhouse

777 Brickell Ave., 305-579-0035

Compared to other restaurants with such an upscale

Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

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. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$ (PRB)

Verde Restaurant & Bar 1103 Biscayne Blvd., 305-375-8282

Located in the Pérez Art Museum Miami, this indoor/outdoor bayfront 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 definitively local dessert. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

Whole Foods Market 299 SE 3rd Ave., 305-995-0600

From the minute you walk through its doors or pull into a spot in the underground garage, you’ll notice this Whole Foods is a bit different. Not only have local artists outfitted its walls in graffiti art, but also half of the store is dedicated to grab-and-go food and an ample and comfortable seating area, including casual counters and tables. Grab a coffee for energy at MET café, because you June be there awhile. Options include items from Jugofresh, Zak the Baker, and pre-made desserts by Versailles restaurant. There’s also La Churrasqueira, Sushi Maki, Pizza Bar, and a soup bar featuring 20 soups like stone crab and chicken corn chowder. Parking is free for one hour with the purchase of an item. \$\$\$ (MB)

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. \$\$\$\$ (PRB)

Zest 200 Biscayne Blvd., 305-374-9378

Cindy Hutson finally has a home in the neighborhood with her “cuisine of the sun.” If you can manage to order the entire menu, from cast-iron charred calamari to 50/50 meatballs and conch scampi, do it. You won’t be disappointed in food that is so perfectly matches the city’s weather and overall culture. The décor also screams Miami, in lively lime green, orange, and neutrals with pops of blue in between. Don’t forget the tropical drink. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$ (MB)

Zuma 270 Biscayne Blvd. Way, 305-577-0277

This Miami River restolounge has a London parent on San Pellegrino’s list of the world’s best restaurants, and a similar menu of world-class, Izakaya-style smallish plates (robata-grilled items, sushi, much more) meant for sharing over drinks. Suffice to say that it would take Junebe 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. \$\$\$ (PRB)

Zuuk Mediterranean Kitchen 1250 S. Miami Ave. #105, 305-200-3145

Middle Eastern cuisine receives the fast-casual treatment at this build-your-own-meal concept focused on serving quality salads, pita wraps, and customizable rice and grain bowls. It’s refreshing that executive chefs Sam Gorenstein and Danny Ganem deliberately chose to eschew fried foods; all of Zuuk’s offerings sit pretty on the “fresh, fast, and light” side of dining. Star-making dishes include a delicious spiced lamb kefte, slow roasted beef, and baked falafel, replete with regional Mediterranean sauces, spreads, and other flavorful toppings that add character to your meal. Table service is practically nonexistent, but the financier with 15 minutes to spare will appreciate the fact that counter service is about as brisk and pleasant as a cool Mediterranean sea breeze. \$\$\$ (AM)

Midtown / Wynwood / Design District

1-800-Lucky 143 NW 23rd St., 305-768-9826

Say hello to Miami’s first Asian food hall. Wynwood’s 1-800-Lucky is home to seven concepts, each with its own signature cuisine. In the mood for ramen? Step up to Hayato for the Tonkotsu. Craving a hearty sandwich? Les Banh Amis is cooking up delicious tuna and Proper Sausages Vietnamese banh mis. Dim sum, sushi, and Chinese BBQ are also available at the food hall. A must: Taiyaki, the Instagram-famous ice cream with a fish-shaped cone. It’s a lot tastier than it sounds. \$\$\$ (MFP)

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. \$\$ (PRB)

Amara at Paraiso 3101 NE 7th Ave., 305-702-5528

Edgewater isn’t usually a neighborhood that comes up in discussions of Miami’s food scene. Amara at Paraiso could change that soon, however. This Latin America-inspired concept from chef

Michael Schwartz overlooks Biscayne Bay, providing guests with a beautiful backdrop for an equally alluring menu. The stars of the show are the restaurant’s wood grill and Josper oven that turn out an array of items like grilled lamb ribs, beef short rib, and hefty meat and seafood platters. The view alone is worth a visit. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (MFP)

Alter 223 NW 23rd St., 305-573-5996

Award-winning chef Brad Kilgore offers some of the most exciting food in town, with menu items like soft egg with sea scallop espuma, chive, truffle pearls, and Gruyere; and grouper cheeks with black rice, shoyu hollandaise, and sea lettuce. Novices don’t fret — the staff will guide you through your eating journey. The warehouse vibe speaks to the neighborhood’s appeal while letting the food speak for itself. Grab a spot at the chef’s counter, the best seat in the house. Reservations a must. \$\$\$\$ (MB)

Baja Bao 55 NW 25th St.

Pubbelly, the beloved Miami Beach eatery, continues its expansion on the mainland with a new concept that melds Asian and Latin flavors. Located inside Wynwood’s Veza Sur brewery, this permanent food truck treats imbibers to an array of steamed buns filled with the likes of chicken mole, carnitas, and crispy mahi-mahi. Smaller bites like fried calamari and BBQ steak quesadillas are also available. No matter what you order, make sure to throw in one of the decadent creations from Pubbelly dessert queen Maria Orantes. \$\$\$ (MFP)

Beaker & Gray 2637 N. Miami Ave., 305-699-2637

Named after essential tools in the kitchen, you can’t miss the restaurant, with its rooftop orange neon sign. Inside industrial meets rustic chic, as is the standard in Wynwood. All menus are expertly labeled and separated into fun, yet useful categories like Bites, Colds, Strange, and Shaken. The sandwichito with pork belly and watermelon rind on plantain brioche, and adult-friendly chicken nuggets with avocado and sweet ‘n’ sour have become quite iconic. The wine list includes lesser-known vineyards. \$\$\$ (MB)

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. \$\$\$ (PRB)

Bunbury 2200 NE 2nd Ave., 305-333-6929

Bunbury has an easy charm that is hard to deny and even harder to fake. The eclectic décor and quirky yet cozy ambiance, earmarks of many new eateries, comes off as unpretentiously artful. The fact that the restaurant is located in a converted tire shop and features ample outdoor seating makes the dining experience even more fun. But atmosphere would mean zilch if the food didn’t pass muster. Thankfully, Bunbury’s affordable Argentinian-American cuisine is fantastic. Count on a good selection of cheeses, cured meats, appetizers, well-portioned seasonal entrees, an extensive wine list culled mostly from Argentina (naturally), and some incredible house-made empanadas. If you’re dining during the cooler months, definitely grab a seat outdoors. \$\$\$ (AM)

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

At this casual café/bakery, co-owned by Buena Vista Bistro’s Claude Postel, the day starts in authentic French fashion, with fresh breakfast breads, chocolate almond croissants, and other delights. At lunch cornichon-garnished baguette sandwiches (containing housemade pâtés, sinfully rich pork rillettes, superb salami, and other charcuterie classics) are irresistible, and a buttery-cruste, 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 June have to kill you. \$\$\$ (PRB)

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. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

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 the 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. \$\$ (PRB)

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. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$ (PRB)

Carrot Express Midtown 3252 Buena Vista Blvd. #108, 786-312-1424

In the past few years, healthy fast-casual concepts have become



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Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

a dime a dozen in Miami. Predating many of them is Carrot Express, a Miami Beach staple that's been serving up lean and green offerings for roughly half a decade. The latest Carrot Express outpost in Midtown finally brings favorites like poke bowls and stuffed sweet potatoes to the mainland. Herbivores, in particular, have reason to rejoice: Vegan burgers and sausages are just a few of the plentiful meatless options available. \$\$ (MFP)

Cervceria 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. \$\$ (PRB)

Charcoal Garden Bar + Grill 82 NW 29th St., 786-646-2998

The Wynwood Yard, a community gathering place known for its revolving food truck lineup, is now home to a full-service restaurant. It's easy to spot: Just look for the modified shipping containers that make up the whole space. Charcoal gets its name from the resident Josper oven, which is used to cook practically the entire menu, including vegetables, seafood, and meats. You'll be tempted to load up on skillet bread (corn bread 2.0), but make sure to save space for the whole branzino and "house specialty," an Egyptian kosheri that you'll want all to yourself. \$\$\$ (MFP)

Chef Leon 118 Buena Vista Blvd., 786-814-8433

This quaint, unpretentious Midtown eatery offers simple and conscious organic meals at an affordable price. The expansive menu helmed by former Bistro Cassis chef Giovanni Lopez offers breakfast in its myriad forms served throughout the day, healthy lunch options like salads and wraps, as well as well-portioned signature dishes and entrées with a distinctly Argentinean flair. Sweet teeth June tingle ever so gently as one passes owner Vanesa Simon's pièce de résistance: the desert stand. \$\$\$ (AM)

Coyo Taco 2300 NW 2nd Ave., 305-573-8228

If you go to this affordable Mexican street-food-themed joint expecting one of today's many fast-casual, healthy-type Mexican taco/burrito chains, where the attraction is mainly just that fillings are fresh, you'll be pleasantly surprised. Here tortillas are handmade and fillings are either genuinely traditional (like cochinita pibil) or delightfully original — and sometimes satisfyingly sinful, like duck confit with enough skin and fat to scandalize all the health-obsessed places. There are first-rate vegetarian fillings, too, like mushroom/huitlachihe with cotija cheese; tasty churros for dessert; and beer and margaritas. \$\$\$ (PRB)

Crazy Poke 312 NW 24th St., 786-401-7542

Crazy Poke, Wynwood's latest poke spot, is joining a crowded landscape; the neighborhood is already full of places that serve the Hawaiian specialty. Fortunately, the restaurant has one big advantage: flexibility. Guests who make their own bowl have a laundry list of ingredients available, including over one dozen mix-ins and an array of sauces like creamy miso and wasabi aioli. Signature selections like the Citrus Shrimp take the guesswork out of ordering, but we suggest you let your creativity run wild. \$\$ (MFP)

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. \$\$\$ (PRB)

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

Not so much a restaurant as an artisanal cheese shop with complimentary prepared foods, this place's self-service café component nevertheless became an instant hit. Impeccable ingredients and inspired combinations make even the simplest salads and sandwiches unique — like bacon and egg, elevated by hand-crafted cream cheese, roasted red peppers, avocado, and chipotle Juneo. 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. \$\$ (PRB)

Dr. Smood 2230 NW 2nd Ave. 786-334-4420

Its large windows and corner location will draw you in, but the comfortable and expansive minimalist interior with Carrera marble, walnut wood, and hotel-like seating will keep you. While their motto is "smart food for a good mood" in the form of mylks, smoozy's, and organic live juices, the menu also includes coffee, soups, salads, sandwiches, spreads like cacao mushroom tahini and seasonal berry jam, and non-traditional desserts with flax, almond meal, and coconut butter. Most of the items can be grabbed to-go, but expect to wait in line. \$\$\$ (MB)

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. \$ (PRB)

Ella 140 NE 39th St., 786-534-8177

Located off of the Design District's upscale Palm Court, this sun-filled, airy café with pops of sea foam and blonde maple, is Michael Schwartz's newest eatery, inspired by his

daughter, Ella. A breakfast and lunch spot, it focuses on simplicity with perfectly honed sandwiches, salads, and pastries. Offering only eight seats indoors, the majority of the seating is outdoors under large café umbrellas providing an excellent view of the courtyard. \$\$\$ (MB)

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 Junebe a bib. \$ (PRB)

Fireman Derek's Bake Shop & Café 2818 N. Miami Ave., 786-449-2517

As a genuine City of Miami firefighter, Derek Kaplan puts fires out, but since age 15 he's also been lighting fires — in his oven. The decades of baking experience shows in both his locally award-winning signature pies, especially Key lime and salted caramel "crack," and in changing produce-based seasonal selections. For full, balanced (i.e., all-pie) breakfasts and lunches, there are also savory options like mac 'n' cheese pie, or satisfyingly rich, totally non-sissy quiches. \$\$\$ (PRB)

Gaijin Izakaya by Cake 3500 N. Miami Ave., 305-456-3207

Chef Phuket Thongsodchavondee, who goes by Cake, is trying his hands at Japanese food after successfully opening two outposts of his namesake Cake Thai restaurant. Gaijin, which has taken over the former Gang Miami location, features a massive menu of items including sushi and Asian specialties like okonomiyaki, a Japanese-style pancake with pork belly and bonito flakes. There are more than just traditional dishes here, though. Playful plates like the mixed seafood Miami ramen will keep your palate on its toes. \$\$\$ (MFP)

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Ghee Indian Kitchen 3620 NE 2nd Ave.,

786-636-6122 Chef Niven Patel, the talent behind the wildly successful Ghee Indian Kitchen in Dadeland, is giving Design District foodies a reason to salivate. Cypress Tavern's former space is now home to his restaurant's second outpost, where patrons can enjoy mouthwatering bites like smoked chicken samosa, turmeric marinated grouper, and turkey kofta. Although you can order à la carte, the three-course, family-style tasting menu for \$55 is a steal and deserves your consideration; it's one of the most affordable tastings in the area. \$\$ (MFP)

GK Bistronomie 218 NW 25th St., 786-477-5151

First and foremost a seafood restaurant with nautical style and aqua tones throughout, GK and its chef, Rafael Pérez, add global flavors like gamey Cornish hen, lamb, and foie gras to Peruvian classics like ceviches, tiraditos, and anticuchos. Refreshing cocktails like the Chilcano — ginger ale, lime juice, bitters, and Pisco — highlight an ample Pisco selection, while an indoor/outdoor bar and breezy courtyard offer a great respite from the Miami heat. \$\$\$ (MB)

GLAM Vegan 3301 NE 1st Ave. #103-1, 786-864-0590

Whether you're a full-fledged vegan or just experimenting with plant-based fare, GLAM Vegan serves up enough unique culinary twists to keep you coming back. The Midtown Miami establishment takes what you know about "green eating" and turns it on its head with dishes like jackfruit tacos and spaghetti and meatless balls, both of which look, taste, and feel like they contain meat. Thirsty? Choose from a selection of vegan-friendly wines and beers or treat yourself to the Palm Springs Date Shake. \$\$\$ (MFP)

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 pizzack from Nemo). Beautifully blistered, ultra-thin-crust pizza 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 zepolles, and Florida craft beers. \$\$ (PRB)

Jack's Miami 2426 NE 2nd Ave., 305-640-5507

Diets stand no chance against Jack's Miami, Wynwood's new red-sauce Italian joint. Housed in the former Jean Paul's House location, Jack's delivers heft and flavor in spades. Start with the San Gennaro sausage and peppers — a satisfying mix of savory and sweet that's a meal in itself — and then move on to the most-rigorous chicken Parmesan if you dare. Another menu highlight: a rigatoni with Sunday gravy that'll bring back memories of Mom's cooking. Prepare to eat a lot no matter what you order here. \$\$\$ (MFP)

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 tripieta containing roast pork, bacon, Black Forest ham, provolone, and caramelized onions. \$\$ (PRB)

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. \$\$\$ (PRB)

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

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. \$\$\$ (PRB)

The Lunchbox 78 NW 25th St., 305-456-1677

If there was ever a restaurant that nails the hip and manufactured veneer of Wynwood, it's The Lunchbox, a funky, eco-friendly eatery offering simple rebos of classic lunchtime favorites. Much like the neighborhood, The Lunchbox flaunts some serious hipster moxie; reclaimed wood fixtures frame farmhouse tables sporting thrift store chairs (\$100 and they can be yours!); rom com DVDs replace traditional table numbers; and they even use buzzy, ostensibly made up catchwords like "neo-traditional" to describe the cuisine. Despite the eyeroll-inducing trendiness, the food — tapas, sandwiches, salads, and wraps, pretty standard fare — is relatively cheap for new Wynwood standards and plenty cheerful, especially the hearty salads. Counter service is particularly helpful when it comes to navigating the menu, which periodically rotates between seasons. \$\$\$ (AM)

Mad Lab Creamery 140 NE 39th St.

Pastry chef Soraya Kilgore, known for her desserts at Alter, now has her own place dedicated to sweets: MadLab Creamery. Located in the Design District's Palm Court, the ice cream store features a wealth of Instagram-worthy creations, many of which can be adorned with your choice of over two dozen toppings. Among those toppings: sprinkles, chocolate honeycomb, and cotton candy (a must). Here, no order is complete without a Japanese cheesecake or chocolate slab. Prepare to kiss your diet goodbye. \$ (MFP)

Mandolin Aegean Bistro 4312 NE 2nd Ave., 305-576-6066

Inside this converted 1940s home's blue-and-white dining room — or even more atmospherically, its tree-sheltered garden — diners feast on authentic rustic fare from both Greece and Turkey. Make a meal of multinational mezes: a Greek sampler of creamy tzatziki yogurt dip, smoky eggplant purée, and airy tarama caviar spread; and a Turkish sampler of hummus, fava purée, and rich tomato-walnut dip. The meze of mussels in lemony wine broth is, with Mandolin's fresh-baked flatbread, almost a full meal in itself. \$\$\$ (PRB)

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. \$\$\$ (PRB)

Miam Café & Boutique 2750 NW 3rd Ave. #21, 786-703-1451

It's hard to miss the striking striped Wynwood Building housing this indoor/outdoor café, intended as a European-style all-day breakfast-through-dinner hangout. Featuring the best locally sourced products and organic produce, the fare created by chef Gail Goetsch (ex-Yardbird and Essentia) is simple — sandwiches, salads, pastries/desserts — but as the name says, "miam" (pronounced "meeAHM"), French slang for "yum"). Delicate-crust quiches, accompanied by salad, are particularly recommended. To drink: craft beers and wine plus local Eternity coffee. An integrated mini-mart features artisan foods, plus foodie gift items. \$\$ (PRB)

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. \$\$\$ (PRB)

Mignonette 210 NE 18th St., 305-374-4635

From Day One this Old Florida/New Orleans fusion oyster bar, from Blue Collar's chef/owner Danny Serfer and food blogger Ryan Roman, received myriad raves for its cuisine and informed service. All manner of oysters (roughly six superb selections available raw daily, and cooked choices including subtly brandy-sauced oysters Bienville), plus other superb seafood and Blue Collar's famous veggie creations — even a dynamite prime rib — is of a caliber that catalyzes its own neighborhood gentrification, rapidly. \$\$\$ (PRB)

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 cheap eats and drinks. Regulars know daily specials are the way to go. Depending on the day, fish, churrasco, or roast turkey with all the trimmings are all prepared fresh. Big burgers and steak dinners are always good. A limited late-night menu provides pizza, wings, ribs, and salad till 3:00 a.m. \$\$\$ (PRB)

Mister-O1 2315 N. Miami Ave., 786-991-9343

With pizza this good, it's hard to remain hidden. Mister-O1, the once-secret pizzeria in a Miami Beach office building, is embracing its mainstream success with a third location — this time in Wynwood. The restaurant knows not to mess with a good thing, so expect to see all its beloved classics on the menu. The burrata and Barbara salad are still must-eats, as is the literal star of the show: the Star Luca, a star-shaped pie with spicy salami, ricotta and mozzarella. \$\$ (MFP)

Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

Morgans Restaurant 28 NE 29th St., 305-573-9678

Housed in a beautifully refurbished 1930s private home, Morgans serves eclectic, sometimes internationally influenced contemporary American cuisine compelling enough to attract hordes. Dishes are basically comfort food, but ultimate comfort food: the most custardy, fluffy French toast imaginable; shoestring fries that rival Belgium's best; mouthwatering maple-basted bacon; miraculously terrific tofu (crispy panko-crusted and apricot/soy-glazed); even a "voluptuous grilled cheese sandwich" — definitely a "don't ask, don't tell your cardiologist" item. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

NOA Café 2711 NE 2nd Ave., 305-573-2557

Originally just a catering company, tiny NOA (initials of Israeli-born chef/owner Adi Kafri's three daughters) gradually became a "best-kept secret" lunch spot for its budget-friendly fresh focaccia sandwiches, plus perfectly dressed full-meal MediterAsian salads. The cute Edgewater oasis now serves dinner, too. Highly recommended: the big, beautiful Middle Eastern mezze platter (with falafel balls, silky hummus, tahini, grape leaves, heaps of grilled veggies, more), or lavishly veg-studded pad Thai (with an unusual lemongrass/orange peel-spiked sauce), either enough for two to share over wine. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

OTL 160 NE 40th St., 786-953-7620

Coffee, breakfast, sandwiches, and yoga, anyone? Yes, there's now such a place, and it's naturally in the Design District. OTL is an ambitious concept pushing light bites and strong coffee, courtesy of an auspiciously motley troika of influencers, including the team behind The Smile NYC, LIV impresario David Grutman, and Miami Design District braintrust Craig Robins. Coffee shops are oftentimes the beating hearts of creative hubs, and OTL is no different; expect to see plenty of over-caffeinated designers, artists, developers, and retail employees on their lunch breaks. The place is bright and clean, and could double as a white cube gallery with its pastel chairs, light wood accents, blue chip artwork, and upstairs multipurpose space reserved for performance and pop-ups. The food, while flavorful, is mildly overpriced, but it's an afterthought when you realize that good coffee has finally arrived in the Miami Design District. \$\$\$ (AM)

Ono Poké Shop 2320 N. Miami Ave., 786-955-6894

A casual, clean, and vibrant little eatery, Ono Poké Shop is the latest eatery to catch the trending "poké fever" that's hit some of Miami's most up-and-coming neighborhoods. Greatly influenced by traditional Japanese cuisine, the menu consists of tried and true combinations, such as spicy ahi tuna tossed in a spicy soy dressing, as well as flexible options to customize your own poké bowl to taste. Quality ingredients and fresh fish make for a satisfying, healthy meal when lunch o'clock rolls around. \$\$ (AM)

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 ackee 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. \$\$\$ (PRB)

Palat Miami 4702 NE 2nd Ave., 786-953-7577

When you're craving Italian food, where do you go? Palat Miami should be on your shortlist. The neighborhood Italian-fusion restaurant is serving flavorful food that hits the spot no matter the occasion. Small bites like piquillo peppers are perfect for splitting with friends over a bottle of wine, whose budget-friendly pricing may tempt you to order a second. Larger appetites are welcome, too, and they can indulge in braised rabbit tagliatelle and other hearty items. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (MFP)

Prohibition 3404 N. Miami Ave., 305-438-9191

Frankly, we don't get why this expansive, high-ceilinged space with enormous front windows and open kitchen is so often described as evocative of a Prohibition-era speakeasy; ambiance here is artfully and amusingly sinful, not secretive. Fare is a fun, familiar mix of modern comfort foods (truffled lobster mac 'n' cheese, NY strip steak with truffled parmesan fries, many other items featuring truffle oil) and retro favorites like meatballs. It's simple, solid stuff served in generous portions to match the menu items that best truly evoke Prohibition times: hefty, old-fashioned, two-fisted cocktails. \$\$\$ (PRB)

R House 2727 NW 2nd Ave., 305-576-0240

A strikingly stylish restaurant that's part art gallery could be pre-emptious, 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. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

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 (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. \$\$\$ (PRB)

Sabor a Peru 2923 Biscayne Blvd., 305-573-6736

Opened many years before ceviches became a staple on every Miami hipster-bar menu, this formerly tiny family-run Peruvian place serves food that's traditional, not trendy. That includes ceviches, simple and servicable. But Sabor's strong suit — and

why it has not only survived but thrived (as a recent expansion attests) — is its cooked dishes, always fresh, flavorful, and served in prodigious portions. Our personal fave: jalea (a delicately breaded, crisp-fried mix of tender marinated fish and shellfish, with yucca and criolla onion sauce); one order feeds at least three diners. Note: Open for big breakfasts, as well as lunch/dinner. \$\$\$ (PRB)

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. \$\$ (PRB)

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-

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/fenneh-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. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

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. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

plus artisan charcuterie/cheese platters, creative salads, and housemade salted caramel gelato. Not your typical hospital food. Call ahead regarding dinner. At this writing, it's being served Fridays only. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

Tony Chan's Water Club 1717 N. Bayshore Dr., 305-374-8888

The décor at this upscale place, located in the Grand, looks too glitzy to serve anything but politely Americanized Chinese food. But the American dumbing-down is minimal. Many dishes are far more authentic and skillfully prepared than those found elsewhere in Miami, like delicate but flavorful yu pan quail. Moist sea bass fillet has a beautifully balanced topping of scalion, ginger, cilantro, and subtly sweet/salty sauce. And Peking duck is served as three traditional courses: crêpe-wrapped crispy skin, meat sautéed with crisp veggies, savory soup to finish. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

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). \$ (PRB)

Wynwood Diner 2601 NW 2nd Ave., 305-747-7888

Filling a much-needed gap in the neighborhood, this quirky and expansive Wynwood-style American diner offers something for everyone at anytime (open until 1:00 a.m. on most days) from all-day breakfast to salads, burgers, chicken, and waffles, and even buffalo chicharrones. What shines here, though, are the cocktails like Peach Pie Old Fashioned and the West Side Swizzle. Hair of the dog? They do that, too. \$\$ (MB)

Wynwood Kitchen & Bar 2550 NW 2nd Ave., 305-722-8959

The exterior is eye-popping enough, with murals from world-famous outdoor artists, but it's the interior that grabs you. Colorful and exotic work by Shepard Fairey, Christian Ave, 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 Aguiar (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. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

Zak the Baker 405 NW 26th St., 786-280-0327

This part-rustic/part industrial-chic breakfast and lunch spot, located in Zak Stern's bakery, is one certified-Kosher café where neither religious dietary laws nor culinary standards are compromised. Reason: The menu of open-face sandwich "toasts," soups, salads, and small plates doesn't overreach, but stays centered on Zak's substantial and superbly crusty organic sourdough loaves, arguably the best bread in Miami. Varieties range from classic Jewish deli rye to exotic olive & za'atar or All American cranberry/walnut. Toast toppings, sweet or savory, are mainly local vegetable and dairy combos, so non-carnivores, as well as diners keeping Kosher, luck out. \$\$ (PRB)

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 topped 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. \$\$\$ (PRB)

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. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

BarMeli 6927 Biscayne Blvd., 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 taramosalata 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 flan, 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. \$\$ (PRB)

The Anderson 709 NE 79th St., 305-757-3368

"Come for the drinks. Stay for the food." That should be the sign outside The Anderson, the neighborhood watering hole from the team behind Miami Beach's award-winning bar Broken Shaker. To complement the outstanding drink menu (which is full of South Florida-inspired concoctions), the venue offers a just-as-outstanding list of snacks and mains that includes the likes of smoked wings, queso dip, and a fried chicken sandwich. If you only order one thing, make it that last one — it's heaven on a plate. \$\$ (MFP)

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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. \$\$\$ (PRB)

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. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

Shokudo World Resource Café 4740 NE 2nd Ave., 305-758-7782

At its former Lincoln Road location, World Resource's café was better known for people-watching than for its standard sushi/Thai menu. But as the new name signals, this relocation is a reinvention. The indoor/outdoor space is charming, but creative takes on popular pan-Asian street foods are the real draw. Travel from Japan and Thailand through Korea, Vietnam, China, the Philippines, and beyond via light housemade momo, curried potato-stuffed Tibetan/Nepalese steamed dumplings; savory pulled pork buns with kimchi and crisped onions. Noodle dishes, hot or chilled, are especially appealing. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

St. Roch Market 140 NE 39th St.

Food halls are all the rage, and the Design District isn't missing out on the fun. St. Roch Market, the popular New Orleans multi-vendor establishment, has opened a Palm Court outpost that features something for everyone. Sushi (Itamae), fried chicken (Coop), and banh mis (Tran An) are just a few of the market's standouts, all of which pair nicely with a sazerac or another signature cocktail from St. Roch's Mayhaw bar. With so many options available, you'll quickly become a regular. \$\$\$ (MFP)

Tap 42 3252 NE 1st Ave. #101, 786-864-0194

With all the growth that Midtown Miami has seen, there's been one type of restaurant sorely missing in the neighborhood: a decent sports bar. Tap 42, which recently took over the short-lived Apeiro location, runs with this idea and complements it with a flavor-forward mentality. The eatery started as a Fort Lauderdale watering hole and has since expanded to Coral Gables — and now Midtown Miami. Staples like the Prohibition burger and Drunken Goat burger make an appearance, but so do location-specific items like the grilled salmon Zen bowl that serves as a lighter alternative for guests. \$\$ (MFP)

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 restoleague Joey's, which explains both the stylishness and the menu, highlighted by imaginative wood-oven designer pizzas,

Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

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. \$\$\$ (PRB)

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. \$\$ (PRB)

Café Roval

5808 NE 4th Ct., 786-279-6800

Café Roval's Old World flourishes set the perfect mise-en-scène for magic. Restaurateur Mark Soyka of News Café, the Van Dyke, Andiamo, and Soyka Restaurant made a bold move opening his latest restaurant in the storied pumphouse building just north of his 55th Street Station property. The subtly anachronistic décor casts an ambience suspended in time. Coral-rock walls extend toward a beautifully vaulted ceiling in the dining room adorned with antique chandeliers. Elsewhere, quirky touches abound throughout the dining room and into the outdoor seating area. During the cooler months, dining is best experienced by candlelight on the backyard patio, comfortably nestled between lush gardens and a reflecting pool. The restaurant's menu is influenced by a savory fusion of Mediterranean, Asian, French, and American cuisine. Lots to try here, including caviar, tuna crudo, grass-fed lamb burgers, oxtail buns, and some vegetarian options such as sprouted chickpea cakes and the vegan dish du jour. Selections from the bar include playful cocktails eschewing liquor in favor of wine, beer, and sake. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$ (AM)

Cake Thai Kitchen

7919 Biscayne Blvd., 305-534-7906

Helmed by a perfectionist young chef (formerly from Makoto) and his host/dessert-maker mom, this hip hole-in-the-wall serves typical Thai street food. Many dishes are astonishingly ambitious, like peanut/garlic chip/cilantro-sprinkled roast duck noodle with Chinese broccoli, and intense pork fat-enriched broth. Other unique specialties include spicy house-cured pork/crispy rice sausages, soy and whisky-marinated steak jerky, swoonfully sinful pork belly with basil sauce, and citrus/curry-tinged fried chicken wings. Arrive early to score the wings. Surprisingly scrumptious tofu and veggie preparations, too. \$\$\$ (PRB)

Cream Parlor

8224 Biscayne Blvd., 786-534-4180

Don't let the name fool you: This eclectic eatery is a lot more than just ice cream. At this cozy neighborhood spot, you can enjoy breakfast items all day or nosh on house specialties like the grilled smashed potato – the name says it all – for lunch or brunch. Dessert is a must at Cream Parlor, and first-timers need to experience Unicorn Poop ice cream (much more appetizing than it sounds). Even if you're not hungry, stop in to admire the vintage décor and crack a smile. Check out the patio in back. \$\$\$ (MFP)

Doggi's Arepa Bar

7281 Biscayne Blvd., 786-558-9538

MiMo residents, rejoice: Doggi's Arepa Bar has brought its Venezuelan street food offerings up north. The restaurant's second location features everything that regulars have come to know and love about the place: giant portions, reasonable prices and an extensive menu. If it's your first foray into this type of cuisine, start with the shredded beef arepa – essentially a corn flour pocket of flavor. The cachapa – a corn pancake with cheese and cream – is another beloved specialty that's not to be missed. \$\$\$ (MFP)

Dogma Grill

7030 Biscayne Blvd., 305-759-3433

Since opening, this hot dog-PLUS (capital letters intended) joint has had several owners and menu changes. Currently it's in a "Best of" phase. Main draw remains 100% beef dogs with numerous regionally inspired topping combos (our favorite: the elaborate, authentic Chicago), but vegetarians can again enjoy the original menu's veggie franks, absent for several years, topped identically. More recent adds worth sampling are regional specialty sandwiches, like New Orleans shrimp po'boys. And though there's no indoor seating, current owner Diego Villamedia has expanded the outdoor area and spruced up its landscaping for better insulation from Boulevard traffic, making picnicking more pleasant. \$ (PRB)

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. \$ (PRB)

Ferraro's Kitchen

1099 NE 79th St., 786-534-2136

Seasoned restaurateur Igor Ferraro, who's honed his chef chops here and abroad in Italy, has opened a new eatery for those seeking two of life's tastiest pleasures: pasta and wine. The inviting dining room is also spacious, and you'll find ample room at the bar as well; saddle up to the latter for a better view of the kitchen, where Chef Ferraro is busy creating homemade pappardelle, lasagna, and other Italian classics. Complement your meal with a bottle from the expansive wine selection, then order the signature tiramisù for a sweet ending. \$\$\$ (MFP)

Fiorito

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. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

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, comfie counter seats enable on-premises breakfasting, lunching, and coffee/pastry breaks. \$\$\$ (PRB)

Firito Taco

1071 NE 79th St., 305-793-6676

Nestled between Tap 79 and Royal Bavarian Schnitzel House, this low-key taco shack features two sections – one for eating and one for playing bocce. The menu is limited to ten overstuffed tacos (two per order), quesadillas, desserts like churros and paletas, and floor-to-ceiling fridges of ice-cold beer. The most popular tacos are the carne asada with tomato, onion, cheese, garlic chili aioli, and cilantro and the Tinga Club with chicken, avocado cream, bacon, tomato, queso, garlic chili aioli, and scallions. \$\$ (MB)

Ironsides Pizza

7580 NE 4th Ct., 305-531-5055

From the team behind Brickell's upscale Toscana Divino, this casual indoor/outdoor pizzeria (hidden inside Little River's artistic Ironside complex) retains the strengths of its predecessor, Ironside Pizzeria – an award-winning Neopolitan pizzeria; mouthwatering wood-oven crusts; vegetarian/vegan and gluten-free toppings. But



the expanded menu, including impeccable cured meat options, is a vast improvement. Especially recommended: housemade porchetta; nduja Calabrese (salami spread); the Regina pizza with prosciutto crudo, buffalo mozzarella, perfectly ripe tomatoes, and arugula; involtini (stuffed beef arepa); an unusual carciofi salad with pine nuts and mint slivers. \$\$ (PRB)

Jimmy's East Side Diner

7201 Biscayne Blvd., 305-754-3692

Open for more than 30 years and still regularly packed with locals, Jimmy's respects the most important American diner tradition: breakfast at any hour the place is open – though that's only through mid-afternoon. Menu highlights include pecan waffles, biscuits with sausage gravy, and eggs any style, from old-school western omelets to trendy frittatas. Among sides, truly crispy hash browns are neighborhood legend, with creamy grits a satisfying second. For those who like lunchier fare, hot open-faced turkey sandwiches feature the real deal, not gelatinous deli-type turkey roll. \$ (PRB)

Loba

7420 Biscayne Blvd., 786-536-6692

As suggested by this comfie gastropub's interactive literary ambience (décor features shelves of paperbacks), the concept of young financial-analyst-turned-restaurateur Jessica Sanchez is to encourage creativity, including exploring Miami's unique culture-agriculture through food created by a staff including experienced chefs, FIU culinary students, and her mom Libia, former owner of the traditional Colombian Patacón chain. Needless to say, the menu is eclectic, ranging from South American (the Patacón, a bandeja paisa-inspired sampler plate) to modernized Old South (MiMo Fried Chicken with crispy kale and local honey). Boredom? Impossible. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

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. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

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 Kott, 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. \$\$ (PRB)

Ms. Cheezious

7418 Biscayne Blvd., 305-989-4019

This brick-and-mortar location of Miami's most awarded food truck has an expanded menu, featuring favorites like mac 'n' cheese, but what you'll mostly want is just grilled cheese. Which is a misnomer. "Just grilled cheese" sandwiches are what your mom made. Here you'll find cunning creations like Frito Pie Melts (the Southwestern classic corn chip/cheese/jalapeño/onion/chili combo, served on sourdough instead of in a Frito bag), or the Croqueta Monsieur (ham croquettes, tavern ham, Swiss cheese, béchamel). A welcome expansion: the spacious backyard, featuring lawn chairs and sizable shade trees, is definitely a more relaxed dining area than a hot sidewalk. \$\$ (PRB)

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. \$\$\$ (PRB)

Ni.Do. Caffè & Mozzarella Bar

7295 Biscayne Blvd., 305-960-7022

Don't let this little caffè'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. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

O Munaciello

6425 Biscayne Blvd., 786-907-4001

Neapolitan pizza is the star of the show at 'O Munaciello Miami, whose roots originate in Florence, Italy. The full-service restaurant and pizzeria is bright and inviting, and its menu is home to an array of pizza selections sure to please the pickiest of palates. A standout: the San Daniele, which masterfully mixes mozzarella, fresh arugula, shaved Parmesan, and cured ham. Diners not in the mood for pizza can opt for pastas like a linguine with clams or a spaghetti cacio e pepe with prawn; a small selection of meat and seafood entrées is available as well. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (MFP)

Organic Bites

7010 Biscayne Blvd., 786-542-9654

Too often healthy eating is associated with deprivation, but not at this breakfast/lunch/dinner bistro. Co-owners Andres and Ana Reid's concept focuses mainly on people-pleasing dishes that are 100% chemical/GMO-free, not on calorie-counting. The ingenious international comfort food menu of ex-José Andres Bazaar chef Goncalo Costa does include vegetarian/vegan dishes but ranges far beyond: deceptively decadent-tasting eggs Florentine (with tomato and avocado hollandaise); Portuguese bacalhau cakes with black-eyed pea salad; big juicy certified-organic burgers with smoked truffle mozzarella on onion brioche buns, with sweet potato fries. To accompany: fresh juices or organic wines. Ambiance is kid-friendly; prices, atypical of many organic eateries, are parent-friendly. \$\$ (PRB)

Paulie Gee's Miami

8001 Biscayne Blvd.

New York City-style pizza is the stuff of culinary lore. Whether it's the flour, the mineral content, or the microscopic copepods found in NYC tap water that lend this pie its *je ne sais quoi* is the subject of fervent debate; but, it's safe to say that NYC-style pizza is king. Restaurants often go so far as to outsource its water to offer guests a genuine slice of the Big Apple. Paulie Gee's Miami is one such place that goes to great lengths to re-create the formidable magic of its flagship Brooklyn-based pizzeria, and the results are astounding. The pizzas are heavy on attitude: not only are the flavors bold yet balanced, the names themselves tend to be comically creative. Most of the pizzas are major hits, including the vegan pies, so much so that they render everything else on the menu a mere afterthought. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (AM)

Pinch

8601 Biscayne Blvd., 305-631-2018

Small bites, big impact, hence the name, Pinch. Chef-partners Rene Reyes and John Gallo have fun with a freestyle menu incorporating the cuisines of Asia, Italy, and Spain for an eclectic mix that is a welcome addition to the neighborhood. Seared Maine scallops with picquillo sauce, parsnip, and squid ink, and Pinch Salad with brascia greens, shaved veggies, ricotta salata, and cucumber-oregano vinaigrette are served on stoneware plates. Simple items like eight-ounce flat iron steak and organic half chicken are classic standards done right. A unique wine list takes a departure from the typical Chardonnays and Malbecs. There's also a great brunch, including brisquet sliders, stuffed French toast, and eggs Benedict. \$\$\$ (MB)

Phuc Yea!

7100 Biscayne Blvd.

When renowned pop-up Phuc Yea quietly folded back in 2011, restaurateurs Ani Meinhold and Cesar Zapata refused to let their innovative "Viet-Cajun" cuisine become another Miami memory. Fast forward several years and patience has undoubtedly paid off: Phuc Yea is back, sporting a swanky new permanent home and a menu that not only expands upon but improves what the restaurant did right the first time. The new multi-story restaurant is effortlessly hip, featuring neon signs and weathered rustic wood furniture throughout. The menu leans toward smaller tapas-style plates, which are sure to infuriate Miami's gourmards, but make up for diminutive portion sizes with flavor for days. The signature Cajun woks are superb, while the smaller dishes such as the fragrant yet mild-tasting eggplant curry and the stellar "Broken Rice" – saucy caramelized pork belly served over short grain rice – are great for sampling when friends or family join in on the fun. If you order dessert, opt for the extremely popular bread pudding, or the mung bean pudding if you're feeling adventurous. \$\$\$ (AM)

Rail 71 Café

7255 NE 4th Ave. #111, 786-375-6593

Rail 71 Café is what comes to mind when you picture the ideal neighborhood spot: a place with good food and coffee, reasonable prices, a friendly staff, and an inviting ambience. Here at Rail 71, your steak sandwiches, chicken salad wraps, and Caesar salads are served with a smile. And if you're really hungry, you can choose from

an array of heftier entrées like the ocean catch (grilled mahi mahi). Just remember that they're closed on weekends. \$\$\$ (MFP)

Royal Bavarian Schnitzel Haus

1085 NE 79th St., 305-754-8002

With Christmas lights perpetually twinkling and party noises emanating from a new outdoor Biergarten, this German restaurant is owner Alex Richter's one-man gentrification project, transforming a formerly uninviting stretch of 79th Street one pils at a time. The fare includes housemade sausages (mild veal bratwurst, hearty mixed beef/pork bauerwurst, spicy garlickwurst) with homemade mustard and catsup; savory yet near-greaseless potato pancakes; and, naturally, schnitzels, a choice of delicate pounded pork, chicken, or veal paties served with a half-dozen different sauces. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

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. \$\$\$ (PRB)

Sherwood's Bistro & Bar

8281 NE 2nd Ave., 786-359-4030

Little Haiti isn't exactly known for its culinary options, but the new food hall at The Citadel will change that perception by year's end. Until then, Sherwood's Bistro & Bar is doing its part in filling the neighborhood's void. Expect larger-than-life plates like rabbit pot pie, gnocchi with oxtail ragu, and bouillabaisse at this comfort-food-centric restaurant. The word "homey" immediately comes to mind: Sherwood's could literally be someone's house (we're fairly certain it is), and the fascinating design just adds to the eatery's allure. With convenient parking all around, there's no reason not to visit. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (MFP)

Soyka

5556 NE 4th Court, 305-759-3117

Since opening in 1999, Mark Soyka's namesake restaurant has often been credited with sparking the Upper Eastside's revival, providing the neighborhood's first comfortably gentrified gathering place – and simple but satisfying comfort food. Old fans needn't fret; the signature hummus platter remains, but much of the menu, like the neighborhood, is more sophisticated, with fare ranging from shareable snacks (fried Brussels sprouts with pecorino and parsley, smoked salmon/dill deviled eggs) and salads (mango/quinoa with almonds) to hearty retro-modern entrées (slow-roasted short ribs with balsamic/fig reduction). \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

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), 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. \$\$\$ (PRB)

Tap 79

1071 NE 79th St., 305-381-0946

One-time fine-dining chef Alfredo Patino, whose still thriving wine/tapas bar Bin No. 18 was one of the first chef-owned restaurants to bring casual culinary sophistication to the downtown/midtown Biscayne Corridor, does the same for still-transitional 79th Street with this convivial gastropub, which has a similar shareable-plates menu, but built more around beer than wine pairings. Highlights range from carefully curated, imported charcuterie/cheese plates to fun chef-driven items: house-cured beef jerky, brown sugar/ginger-marinated salmon "Scooby Snacks," hearty Coke-braised short ribs with sweet corn polenta and pungent Junetaj blue cheese. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

Terramia

4770 Biscayne Blvd., 786-801-1854

Italian restaurants are a dime a dozen in Miami, but Terramia aims to be a cut above the rest. One way it succeeds is through its diverse menu. Upon first glance, it's a lot to take in. Fortunately, the restaurant makes your decision easy by touting its wood-oven pizza above all. The al fumo – a mix of mozzarella, provolone cheese, smoked bacon, and bell peppers – and its cheese brethren come out fast and ready for their Instagram closeup. Save some calories for dessert: There are more than ten to choose from. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (MFP)

Winewood

7251 Biscayne Blvd., 305-754-8282

Along the Upper Eastside's Biscayne Corridor best known for its historic MiMo architecture, this darkly wooden and quirky neighborhood wine bar stands out. Although a lucky few will appreciate the tiny rustic dining area, the majority of guests will sit outdoors at the mercy of Miami's grueling summer heat. The menu leans heavily upon Argentinean staples and Italian cuisine, echoes of Devita's Restaurant and Che Soprano, which previously occupied this space. Entrées such as lomito, seafood tablas, and fresh pastas and stuffed raviolis are generously portioned and delicious. Exploring the wine menu will take patience as the list promotes a thoughtfully diverse terroir from regions all over the world. Those reeling from weekend withdrawal can opt for a glass of wine with a side of live entertainment beginning Tuesday through Saturday. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (AM)

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 Carrò 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. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

Wabi Sabi by Shuji

851 NE 79th St., 305-707-4360

Hurricane Irma closed many local businesses for good. Among them was Dashi, a stellar Asian eatery in Brickell. Since Dashi's closure, chef Shuji Hyakawa has opened Wabi Sabi by Shuji, a more casual affair dedicated to bowls. Here diners pick their base for one of Shuji's specialty creations, which can include proteins like tuna, crab, and salmon. The chasoba noodles are a favorite, and something

Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

that Dashi guests will immediately recognize. Feeling adventurous? Take a look at the board specials — you won't regret it. \$\$ (MFP)

NORTH BAY VILLAGE

Black Sheep 1884 79th St. Causeway, 305-763-8468

From the masterminds of Morgans in Wynwood comes this snug eatery that serves an all-day menu full of comfort food favorites. Blink, and you'll miss this intimate addition to North Bay Village's dining scene: The only signage outside is the restaurant's namesake animal. Starting at 9:00 a.m. every day, you can indulge in sizeable brunch dishes like the Dutch Baby and the chicken and waffle, which pack as much flavor as they do calories. Lunch and dinner entrées like the duck tacos and short rib pot pie are just as filling. Here, your diet starts tomorrow. \$\$ (MFP)

Oggi's Caffe 1666 79th St. Causeway, 305-866-1238

This cozy, romantic spot started back in 1989 as a pasta factory (supplying numerous high-profile restaurants) as well as a neighborhood eatery. And the wide range of budget-friendly, homemade pastas, made daily, remains the main draw for its large and loyal clientele. Choices range from homey, meaty lasagna to luxuriant crab ravioli with creamy lobster sauce, with occasional forays into creative exotica such as seaweed spaghetti, with sea scallops, shitakes, and fresh tomatoes. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

Shuckers Waterfront Grill 1819 NE 79th St. Cswy., 305-866-1570

Sometimes accidents can lead to better things. Case in point, this North Bay Village waterfront institution is back with their casual, no-fuss service, cheap beer, special grilled wings (that require no sauce), and raw oysters. The revamped space makes the entire experience just a little fresher and a little happier. Speaking of happy, their happy hour deals are still as good as ever. \$\$ (MB)

Sushi Siam 1524 NE 79th St. Causeway, 305-864-7638

(See Miami / Upper Eastside listing) (PRB)

Tacos vs Burritos Cantina 1888 79th St. Causeway, 305-868-2096

When you pit tacos against burritos, everyone wins. Despite its competitive name, Tacos vs Burritos Cantina shows equal love to both culinary vessels. In fact, diners will find a lot more than just tacos and burritos: tostadas, quesadillas, and tortas can also be filled with your protein of choice. While you could load up on the usual suspects like carne asada and chorizo, you're better off being adventurous and going for less traditional (and harder-to-find) fillings like tongue and tripe. \$ (MFP)

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 flocchi 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. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

MIAMI SHORES

Côte Gourmet 9999 NE 2nd Ave., #112, 305-754-9012

When it comes to Miami's dining scene, neighborhoods like Wynwood and Brickell tend to get all of the attention. Côte Gourmet, however, is putting Miami Shores on the map. This locals spot specializes in appetizing French cuisine, such as staples like escargots and foie gras. Brunch is a highlight, featuring more casual cuisine like crêpes and a decadent croque madame to fill you up. Regardless of whether you visit for brunch, lunch, or dinner, expect reasonable prices, service with a smile, and oh-so-satisfying food. \$\$\$ (MFP)

PizzaFiore 9540 NE 2nd Ave., 305-754-1924

Owned by Arcoub Abderrahim, who opened South Beach's original PizzaFiore way back in 1996, this café serves the kind of nostalgic, medium-thin crusted, oozing-with-goey-cheese pizzas reminiscent of our childhood pies in northern NJ Sopranos' territory, except now there are options for today's toppings — sundried tomatoes, buffalo mozzarella, etc. But there's also a full menu of Italian-American classics, including antipasto salads, subs, and particularly popular, pastas. Garlic rolls are a must, but we didn't have to tell you that. \$\$\$ (PRB)

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. \$\$\$ (PRB)

Basilic Vietnamese Grill 14734 Biscayne Blvd., 305-944-0577

Those who say great pho is few and far between are in for a treat: Basilic Vietnamese Grill offers a stunning take on the subtle majesty of this humble noodle soup. It June be enough for some restaurants to rest on the laurels of one spectacular dish, but brothers and co-owners John, Chuck, and Vince Vu aim for the bleachers, offering a broad selection of delicious contemporary and traditional Vietnamese foods that aim to please. The bahn mi sandwich is only served during lunch, but is alone well worth the trip to this wonderful addition to North Miami. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (AM)

Bagel Bar East 1990 NE 123rd St., 305-895-7022

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

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 with them, 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. \$ (PRB)

Barok Café 12953 Biscayne Blvd., 305-456-0002

Barok Café forgoes the usual pomp of upscale eateries and focuses on simple, delicious, and effective French cuisine. The middling

simple dishes in this spacious and welcoming dining room. Service is attentive and friendly, allowing you plenty of space to linger over your velvety latte. A word of caution: Those with an indomitable sweet tooth, beware! Pastry chef Romain Soreauto has made it near impossible to resist the pastries, all baked on-site daily. They will leave visions of coffee éclairs, tarts, macarons, and Napoleon cakes dancing through your mind for days to come. Très bon! \$\$\$ (AM)

Cane à Sucre 899 NE 125th St., 305-891-0123

From the Vega brothers (who pioneered the Design and MiMo districts with, respectively, the original Cane A Sucre and UVA 69), this charming artisanal sandwich bar is the perfect breakfast/lunch stop before or after ingesting visual arts at nearby MOMA. Actually, creations like El Fig (fig confit, gorgonzola cheese, walnuts, and honey on an authentically French crisp-crust fresh-baked baguette) are art in their own right. Inventive, substantial salads, sides, daily soups, and homemade sweets (including mouthwateringly buttery croissants) complete the menu. \$\$\$ (PRB)

Chéen-huyae 15400 Biscayne Blvd., 305-956-2808

Diners can get some Tex-Mex dishes here, if they must. But the specialty is Junean-rooted Yucatan cuisine. So why blow bucks on burritos when one can sample Caribbean Mexico's most typical dish:



Bringing Asian delights and authenticity to Aventura with exotic Japanese and tasty Thai dishes. Open daily for lunch and dinner starting at 12pm

AVENTURA: 2775 NE 187th Street #1 PH: 305-932-8080

KENDALL: 11768 North Kendall Drive PH: 305-275-9003

décor and surrounding sunbleached strip malls leave something to be desired, but all is easily excused when the food is this good. The morel dishes — large, spongy mushrooms in a fragrant sauce served with meat or pasta — steal the show, and are worth the considerable uptick in price. Meanwhile, everything from the pasta to the seafood is fresh, and the service makes up for its slight inattentiveness with affability and charm. The wine menu, while diminutive, is diverse enough to pair well with the meats, pastas, and sauces with aplomb. Considering the quality of the food, Barok Café is a bona fide sleeper hit. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (AM)

Bulldog Barbecue & 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 Juneo 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. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

Café Crème 750 NE 125th St., 786-409-3961

You don't have to circle the world in search of sweet and savory treats from the City of Lights. Situated adjacent to the Museum of Contemporary Art, Café Crème is a French bistro helmed by Buena Vista Café proprietors Claude Postel and Cory Finot. Open for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, their selection of tartines, croissants, soups, salads, and daily quiches won't disappoint diners seeking

cochinita pibil? Chéen's authentically succulent version of the pickle-onion-topped marinated pork dish is earthily aromatic from achiote, tangy from bitter oranges, and meltily 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. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

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 specialties are a tastier way to get healthy. An under-ten-buck early-bird dinner is popular with the former long-hair, now blue-hair, crowd. Frozen yogurt, fresh juices, and smoothies complete the menu. \$\$\$ (PRB)

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. \$\$ (PRB)

Panarea Mediterranean Sea Grill 11052 Biscayne Blvd., 305-640-5580

North Miami's Panarea is serious about Mediterranean cuisine. Instead of focusing its menu on one part of the Mediterranean, the restaurant takes its diners on a culinary journey through each of its countries. France, Italy, Greece, Turkey... There's a little something from everywhere. As you've probably guessed, there's also an emphasis on seafood. You'll find light, refreshing starters like tuna tartare and branzino crudo on the menu, alongside larger fish options like whole turbot and sea bream. Don't worry, meat-eaters: Items like pork loin brochettes and lamb stew have you covered. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (MFP)

Pastry Is Art 12591 Biscayne Blvd., 305-640-5045

Given owner Jenny Rissone's background as the Eden Roc's executive pastry chef, it's not surprising that her cakes and other sweet treats (like creamy one-bite truffle "lollipops") look as flawlessly sophisticated as they taste — perfect adult party fare. What the bakery's name doesn't reveal is that it's also a breakfast and lunch café, with unusual baking-oriented fare: a signature sandwich of chicken, brie, and caramelized peaches and pecans on housemade bread; quiches; pot pies; even a baked-to-order Grand Marnier soufflé. The pecan sticky buns are irresistible. \$\$ (PRB)

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. \$\$\$ (PRB)

Piccolo Pizza 2104 NE 123rd St., 305-893-9550

Pizzas at this spin-off from family-owned Il Piccolo impress even NYC visitors, thanks to recipes proprietor Hubert Benmoussa learned from an authentic Neapolitan pizzeria. Other favorites here include subs on homemade baguettes and, surprising for a pizzeria, delightfully custardy quiche (Benmoussa is part French). But it would be unthinkable to miss the pies, especially our favorite Italia: subtly sweet tomato sauce, fresh tomatoes, mozzarella, onions, plus mixed greens and uncooked prosciutto on top — both pizza and salad. There are also nicely priced catering trays of finger subs, quiche squares, pizza bites, more. \$\$\$ (PRB)

Pinecrest Bakery 13488 Biscayne Blvd., 305-912-4200

Pinecrest Bakery has opened up shop in North Miami and brought an extensive selection of Cuban specialties to the other side of town. As you'd expect, pastelitos, empanadas, and other traditional delights are on the menu, but the bakery also doubles as a café. This means you'll also find sandwiches galore, including staples like the Cuban sandwich (ham, pork, Swiss cheese, pickle) as well as Philly cheesesteaks and turkey melts. And of course, there's no shortage of cafeito. \$ (MFP)

Ricky Thai Bistro 1617 NE 123rd St., 305-891-9292

Named after the Thai/Italian owners' son, this "best kept secret" neighborhood eatery is regularly packed by food-savvy locals for good reason: Southeast Asian herbs grown right outside the bistro, plus locally made rice noodles and precision cooking make the Thai fare among the most sparkling fresh, and authentically spiced/spicy in town. Must-haves include Pad Kee Mow (called "drunken noodles," but a more accurate translation is "drunkard's noodles," for their assertive and alcohol-free chili/basil flavoring); duck or whole hog snapper, both crisp outside, juicy inside; succulently sour ground beef larf salad. Portions are unusually generous. \$\$ (PRB)

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. \$ (PRB)

Sushi Lucy 1680 NE 123rd St., 786-391-2668

One of the worst parts about dining out is the wait. At North Miami's Sushi Lucy, waiting for your food is a foreign concept. The Asian eatery sends out items by the boatload — literally — so guests pick out their dishes as they pass by on a conveyor belt. If you're not in the mood for sushi, rest assured you won't leave hungry. Hot kitchen entrées like the shrimp dumplings, salmon rice bowls, and chicken skewers round out the establishment's extensive menu. \$\$\$ (MFP)

Tatore 15180 Biscayne Blvd., 305-749-6840

Meet the fugazzeta, a regional Argentinian specialty that is essentially a white pizza with mozzarella, onions, and oregano. And although simple, it's hard to come by in town. FYI: You can find it here. An ample outdoor space is popular on the cooler days, and inside, the great red oven takes center stage. You can go traditional with your pizza or try the Nicanora, which has caramelized onions and bacon. The restaurant opens early enough to serve the breakfast of champions — empanadas. \$\$\$ (MB)

Tomato & Basil 653 NE 125th St., 305-456-1193

This rustic Italian eatery with reds, whites, and lots of light wood, will instantly transport you to the carefree streets of Italy. Vespa included — so will the thin pizza, creamy polenta, and carefully curated wine list. Their complimentary rolls with homemade tomato sauce are extra heavenly. Delivery available, but if you decide to dine in, there is plenty of free parking. \$\$ (MB)

Top Notch Bistro 2210 NE 123rd St., 786-452-0398

Bolivian food is hard to find in Miami, but Top Notch Bistro does its part to fill that void — and then some — by mixing it with American influences. Saltenas, the eatery's Bolivian baked empanadas, are an essential starter for any order. From there, you can pick from an extensive selection of gourmet hot sandwiches, juicy burgers, and big platters with proteins like beef medallions and pulled pork. Wash all of that down with their craft beer selection, which leans local. \$\$\$ (MFP)

Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

Whole Foods Market
12150 Biscayne Blvd., 305-892-5500
(See Brickell / Downtown listing.)

Vicky Bakery
19173 NE 163rd St., 305-816-6197
This beloved Cuban bakery recently opened a new location in North Miami, and — judging by its long lines around the clock — it's already a neighborhood hit. To keep your wait time to a minimum, stop in right when they open or at an off time after lunch. Otherwise you'll likely run into other hungry diners clamoring for guava-filled pastries and other Cuban fare. Then again, Vicky Bakery's hefty breakfast special (Cuban toast, coffee, two eggs, ham or bacon, and fries) and pan con lechon (pork sandwich) are well worth braving the crowds any time of day. \$\$\$ (MFP)

Zaika Indian Cuisine
2176 NE 123rd St., 786-409-5187
This friendly and dateworthy-cute spot features "Modern Indian" cuisine — both North Indian-type traditional favorites interpreted without the oiliness and heavy sauces typical of westernized curry houses, plus refined reinventions using authentic (though heat-adjustible) spicing in original creations and/or less familiar South Indian coastal dishes: coconut-rich Konkani fish curry, irresistible lasooni jhinga (yogurt/garlic-marinated char-grilled shrimp). Vegetarian dishes featuring paneer cheese are outstanding, but even samosas sparkle, with peas still popping-fresh. Multi-course lunch specials (\$9-\$13) — custom-cooked, not old steam-table buffet stuff — are a terrific deal. \$\$ (PRB)

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, Juneo-dressed tuna rock makis are universal crowd-pleasers. \$\$\$ (PRB)

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-crusted 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. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

O'Lima Signature Cuisine
1052 Kane Concourse, 305-864-4392
From the moment you enter the dining area to the first bite of the irresistible lomo saltado flambéed in pisco, everything about this upscale Peruvian fusion eatery exudes an understated elegance. The food, a confluence of classic Peruvian cuisine with Japanese zest, tastes just as good as it sounds (delicious). All of the classics from both regions are here — saltados, ceviches, and sushi — modified slightly to incorporate some experimental flavors. Since it's within proximity of ritzy Bal Harbour, the meals are priced slightly higher than your typical casual Peruvian joint. However, considering the atmosphere and chef German Gonzalez's expertise, O'Lima manages to outshine its peers and justify costing a prettier than average penny. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$ (AM)

Open Kitchen
1071 95th St., 305-865-0090
If we were on Death Row, choosing a last meal, this very chef-centered lunchroom/market's PBLT (a BLT sandwich with melt-in-your-mouth pork belly substituting for regular bacon) would be a strong contender. Co-owners Sandra Stefani (ex-Casa Toscana chef/owner) and Ines Chattas (ex-Icebox Café GM) have combined their backgrounds to create a global gourmet oasis with a menu ranging from light quiches and imaginative salads to hefty balsamic/tomato-glazed shortribs or daily pasta specials (like wild boar-stuffed ravioli). Also featured: artisan grocery products, and Stefani's famous interactive cooking class/wine dinners. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

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. \$\$\$\$ (PRB)

NORTH MIAMI BEACH

Ají Carbón
16978 NE 19th Ave., 786- 955-6894
Embracing a decidedly contemporary take on traditional Peruvian dishes, Ají Carbón serves up tacu tacus, rice lomos, and chaufas, risottos, soups, and salads with an artful twist. Among the many standout entrées is the arborio, made with rocoto sauce and panko shrimp, embellished with a surprisingly welcome drizzle of sweet passion fruit reduction. Fans of Peru's most treasured seafood treat, ceviche, will appreciate the variety: in addition to the traditional leche de tigre, guests can sample ceviches made with various sauces, including rocoto, yellow pepper, and cilantro. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (AM)

Campania Coal Fired Pizza
3861 NE 163rd St., 305-940-5200
Coal-fired pizza is no stranger to South Florida, but Campania certainly is. The New York-based chain has opened its first Florida location in North Miami Beach, and the outpost does its upstate brethren justice with 12-inch pies that run the gamut from savory to downright indulgent. The Lombarda — a prosciutto and truffle oil creation — meets the latter criteria, while the Torino with fresh mozzarella, olive oil, and fresh lemon juice is every bit as delicious but a little less decadent. Prefer something less filling? There's a wealth of antipasti and sandwiches from which to choose. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (MFP)

Chef Rolf's Tuna's Seafood Restaurant
17850 W. Dixie Hwy., 305-932-0630
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 Choird has also renovated the interior dining room, and added the Yellowfin Lounge, which features an extensive selection of artisan beers. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

CY Chinese
1242 NE 163rd St., 305-947-3838
Szechuan cuisine is a fascinating and sometimes polarizing art — not everyone is a fan of the pain wrought from the distinctive mouth-numbing heat. But if spicy pain is the name of your game, there's plenty of joy to be found at CY Chinese, a worthy Chinese restaurant specializing in regional southwestern cuisine with a kick. Dishes range from typical Chinese fare (dumplings, egg rolls, pork, and duck served a million-and-one different ways) to exotic (signature dry pots, Szechuan jelly) to adventurous cuisine (tip: don't order the mung bean jelly if you're on a date, and if you don't already know and love tripe, you might want to pass). All of the dishes sampled were delicious and unequivocally authentic, although perhaps a little bit too oily. All meals can be made to taste, so specify how much salt, oil, and spice you'd prefer with your server while ordering. If you can excuse the shabby interior and idiosyncratic yet strangely charming table service, the real deal is waiting for you at CY Chinese. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (AM)

Duffy's Sports Grill
Intracoastal Mall 3969 NE 163rd St., 305-760-2124
Located in a sprawling indoor/outdoor space at the Intracoastal Mall, Duffy's, part of a popular chain that identifies as the official sports grill of every major Miami team, features roughly a zillion TVs and an equally mega-size menu of accessibly Americanized, globally inspired dishes designed to please crowds: stuffed potato skins, crab Rangoon, coconut-crusted fish fingers with orange-ginger sauce, jumbo wings of many flavors. Imagine a sports-oriented Cheesecake Factory. What makes this particular Duffy's different and better? Location, location, location — fronting the Intracoastal Waterway. There's even a swimming pool with its own bar. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

Eat Green
14881 Biscayne Blvd., 305-948-6006
What does it take to be the most eco-friendly, health conscious, and accessible restaurant in the city? Eat Green, a minuscule blip relegated to the sidelines of Biscayne Commons shopping plaza, June have the answers. Tiny but beautiful in a sleek minimalist way, Eat Green deserves credit for its thoughtful design: sustainable bamboo decor, pleasant lighting, and chemical-free dingware make eating clean seem like an infinitely more attractive proposal. Expect star-dusted organic and farm-raised fare, including salads, wraps, quesadillas, soups, cold-pressed juices, and coffee. While this June seem like more of the same, it's in no way disappointing, and should be noted that everything not only tastes good, but is affordable, too. Eat Green succeeds at paying respect to the earth while soothing the body, soul, and wallet with equal aplomb. \$\$\$ (AM)

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). \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$ (PRB)

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 chirp 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. \$\$ (PRB)

Ginza Japanese Buffet
16153 Biscayne Blvd.,305-944-2192
Highlighting the lunch and dinners spreads at this all-you-can-eat Japanese buffet are a hibachi station (where chefs custom-cook diners' choice of seafood or meat), plus many types of maki rolls and individual nigiri sushi, both featuring a larger variety of seafood than at many sushi bars — not just salmon and tuna but snapper, escolar, surf clam, snow crab, and more. But there are also steam-tabled hot Japanese and Chinese dishes: an array of cold shellfish and salads with mix-and-match sauces; and desserts. Selections vary, but value-for-money is a given. \$\$ (PRB)

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. \$\$ (PRB)

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 futo-maki, 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. \$ (PRB)

Holi Vegan Kitchen
3099 NE 163rd St., 786-520-3120
Science confirms that eating an exclusively plant-based vegan diet is unequivocally the healthiest and most eco-friendly lifestyle around. Unsurprisingly, Miami turned a blind eye to science for years, forcing the wandering vegan to settle on steakhouse salads of ill repute and other questionable dishes. Today, after years of compromise, we have another vegan restaurant in town: Holi Vegan Kitchen, a

fast-casual oasis of plant-based treats intended to satisfy the minds, bodies, and souls of earth's most conscious foodies. Expect vegan and gluten-free options for breakfast, lunch, and early dinner, as well as a selection of wine, beer, cold-pressed juices, and delectable plant-based desserts. \$\$\$ (AM)

Hot Mama Kitchen
3207 NE 163rd St., 954-298-5040
At Hot Mama Kitchen, you're the chef: This Asian hot pot restaurant is all about the Chinese specialty, which has you in full control of a simmering soup and its ingredients. Choose from eight different broths — including a signature ultra hot and spicy mala — and then go to town on everything from mushrooms and shrimp dumplings to duck feet and blue crab. If you can think of a protein or vegetable, odds are they have it. Did we mention it's all you can eat? \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (MFP)

Ivan's Gastro
14815 Biscayne Blvd., 305-944-4826
Diners who remember Haitian-born, Le Cordon Bleu-trained Miami chef Ivan Dorvil's lightened/brightened Caribbean dishes at pioneering Nuvo Kafé already know how French technique and gentle global (mainly Asian) touches can elevate homey island fare. A decade later, at the Chopped champion's hip yet blessedly affordable new gastropub, the remarkably refined Haitian/Carib/Asian fusion dishes remain revelatory: rich yet clean-tasting shrimp mofongo; dainty akra (grated malanga fritters, crisp outside, creamy inside), served with puréed watercress sauce; oxtail, slow-braised in a red wine-enriched sauce — as sophisticated as the best boeuf Bourguignon, but more decadent. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

King Palace
330 NE 167th St., 305-949-2339
Specialties here are authentic Chinatown-style BBQ (whole ducks, roast pork strips, etc., displayed in a glass case by the door), and fresh seafood dishes, the best made with the live fish swimming in two tanks by the dining room entrance. There's also a better than average selection of seasonal Chinese veggies, like delicate sautéed pea shoots. The menu is extensive, but the best ordering strategy, since the place is usually packed with Asians, is to see what looks good on nearby tables, and point. Servers will also steer you to the good stuff, once you convince them you're not a chop suey kinda person. \$\$ (PRB)

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. \$\$\$ (PRB)

Lettuce & Tomato
17070 W. Dixie Hwy., 305-760-2260
Despite its inauspicious location, this unassuming gastropub is a certified gem, priding itself on using fresh, seasonal ingredients to create inspired takes on salads, sandwiches, burgers, and gourmet bites. An earnest labor of love for husband and wife team Roy and Agostina Starobinsky, this cozy spot presents a thoughtful selection of flavorful offerings, including a quinoa cremosa adorned with truffle oil and microgreens, a house-cured salmon toast, braised pork belly buns, and grilled octopus. Drink selections include a Tokyo Bloody Mary, mimosas, and a delightfully satisfying Asian take on a classic mojito, made with sake instead of traditional rum. Lettuce & Tomato deserves credit for crafting an unpretentious menu that doesn't skimp on quality or inventiveness. A most welcome surprise. \$\$ (AM)

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. \$\$\$ (PRB)

Merkado 31 by Cholo's
1127 NE 163rd St., 305-947-3338
Merkado 31 is a welcome update to the Peruvian spot formerly known as Cholo's Ceviche & Grill. Apart from its spiffy new digs, there's a new menu, including an entire section called Merkado Green, aimed at healthy eaters, vegetarians, and vegans — the citrusy quinoa is a must-try. But if you're looking for something a little more traditional, the piled-high causas and Ceviche Clasico are mainstays. \$\$\$ (MB)

Moon Thai
Intracoastal Mall 3455 NE 163rd St., 305-974-5129
The original Moon Thai opened in Coral Gables in 2000, and the restaurant has since expanded with Kendall, Coral Springs, and Weston locations (to name a few). One of its newest outposts is in North Miami Beach, where guests can dig into a variety of Thai and Japanese specialties. Whether you choose the organic Japanese menu or the organic Thai menu, there's no shortage of options for any palate. If you're only a little bit hungry, then the à la carte seafood selections are the way to go. Otherwise, the noodles and curries are your best bets. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (MFP)

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 fillet mignon with basil sauce. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$ (PRB)

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. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

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. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

PhoMi2Go
17010 W. Dixie Hwy., 786-916-2790
Run — don't walk — to this hidden North Miami Beach gem that boasts a bevy of Vietnamese staples like pho and bahn mi. Given the name, such selections should come as no surprise. What is surprising, though, is the pricing. The majority of items cost less than \$10, but their quality warrants a higher valuation. No meal here is complete without an order of 5-spice chicken wings or egg rolls, either of which can be had for less than a Lincoln. \$ (MFP)

Siam Square
54 NE 167th St., 305-944-9697
This 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. \$\$\$ (PRB)

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. \$\$ (PRB)

The Tuck Room
3701 NE 163rd St., 786-563-7061
The dinner-and-movie experience just got a whole lot better with luxe iPic Theater's in-house eatery at the Intracoastal Mall. "Soulful social plates" of croquettes, charcuterie boards, sliders, and other little bites will leave you full but not bloated, and are good for sharing with a small group. Outfitted in gray, orange, and white, it has an overall lounge atmosphere, true to Miami fashion. Cocktails are the main draw here, and they have them in a variety of options — cocktails on draft, bottled cocktails, liquid nitrogen bottle service, and even a guarapo machine that makes fresh suga cane juice for the mojitos. Open to the public. Movie tickets not required. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (MB)

Vegetarian Restaurant by Hakin
73 NE 167th St., 305-405-6346
Too often purist vegetarian food is unskillfully crafted bland stuff, spiced with little but sanctimonious intent. Not at this modest-looking vegan (dairy-free vegetarian) restaurant and smoothie bar. Dishes from breakfast's blueberry-packed pancakes to Caribbean vegetable stews sparkle with vivid flavors. Especially impressive: mock meat (and fake fish) wheat-gluten items that beat many carnivorous competitors. Skeptical? Rightly. But we tasted-teste a "Philly cheese steak" sandwich on the toughness of critics — an inflexibly burger-crazy six year-old. She cleaned her plate. \$\$ (PRB)

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 sata — 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. \$\$ (PRB)

SUNNY ISLES BEACH

Beach Bar
16501 Collins Ave., 305-949-1300
For a beach resort town, Miami has surprisingly little waterfront dining, ocean or bay. But it doesn't get anymore waterfront than this indoor/outdoor restobar; in fact, part of it is actually several feet over the Atlantic, on Newport Pier. Fare includes the oysters and other raw bar selections beach-minded diners crave, but gets more ambitious with two veteran chefs and a two-pronged menu: Mike Jin's sushi/sashimi/Asian small plates, and modernized retro-American dishes (ranging from cracked conch po'boys to surf and turf (featuring a Ritz cracker crumb-stuffed lobster tail) from Joseph Whitmore. Big cocktail lun, too. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$ (PRB)

Chayhana Oasis
250 Sunny Isles Blvd., 305-917-1133
Sampling traditional Uzbeki cuisine brings to mind a confluence of several Eastern styles, including the best flavors from Turkish, Russian, and Chinese cooking, cherry-picked and mixed to surprising effect. Chayhana Oasis, a bold mid-size restaurant that manages to look opulent without seeming gaudy, showcases Uzbekistan's diverse cultural heritage in its food, which has a comforting, understated simplicity to it. Vegetarians might have trouble navigating the menu, which skews heavily in favor of carnivorous appetites. If you're game for a meaty dish, try the deliciously authentic pilaf. The Eastern salad made with cucumbers and fried beef, the lamb filled Miami dumplings, and any one of the many kebabs. Service is also friendly and above average. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (AM)

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

Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

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 (sun-dried tomato-stuffed paneer/potato dumplings in smooth cream sauce). \$\$\$ (PRB)

Fresh American Bistro 17315 Collins Ave., 786-923-9305

This stylish French nouvelle restaurant in the swanky Solé on the Ocean Resort and Spa bears the earmarks of excellence, particularly when it comes to Chef Phillip Ruiz, formerly of the sublimely posh Palme d'Or. Presentation is everything here: from the décor to the sultry lighting to the plated dinners, everything appears thoroughly well considered. The food, which includes surf and turf, burgers, sandwiches, flatbreads, and more, leans heavily on "comfort" rather than "gastronomic sophistication," which is surprising considering Chef Ruiz's Michelin star-studded pedigree. After moving to Solé, a slice of paradise replete with some truly breathtaking waterfront vistas, who can blame Chef Ruiz for introducing a little comfort into his repertoire? \$\$\$ (AM)

Il Mulino New York 17675 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. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$ (PRB)

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. \$\$\$ (PRB)

Mozart Café 18110 Collins Ave., 305-974-0103

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 malawah (paratha-type flatbread sandwiches, savory or sweet), and shaksuka (nicknamed "eggs in purgatory"; the spicy eggplant version will explain all). \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

Sumo Sushi Bar & Grill 17630 Collins Ave., 305-682-1243

Sushi June well have been served in Sunny Isles before this long-time 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 Juneo, topped with rich scallop-studded "dynamite" sauce). \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

Sushi Zen & Izakaya 18090 Collins Ave. 305-466-4663

In an area with no lack of Chinese, Japanese, and Thai cuisine, it's hard for yet another Asian restaurant to stand out. But Sushi Zen & Izakaya succeeds by offering variety — and lots of it. Name any traditional dish, and they probably have it here: ramen, fish balls, udon, pad thai, tuna poke ... the list goes on (and on). Don't miss their Japanese lunch specials. At \$12-\$14 for a sizable Bento Box, you'll leave with your stomach and wallet full. \$\$ (MFP)

Timo 17624 Collins Ave., 305-936-1008

Since opening in 2003, the inventive yet clean and unfussy Italian/Mediterranean-inspired seasonal food at this hot spot, created by chef/owner Tim Andriola (at the time best known for his stints at Chef Allen's and Mark's South Beach), has been garnering local and national raves. Don't bother reading them. Andriola's dishes speak for themselves: a salad of crisp oysters atop frisée, cannelloni bean, and pancetta; foie gras crostini with a subtle caramelized orange sauce; a blue crab ravioli with toasted pignolias and brown butter; or a wood-oven three-cheese "white" pizza. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$ (PRB)

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 bubbled, uniquely flavorful crusts that can only be consistently produced by a traditional coal (not wood) oven — like those at Anthony's, which began with one Fort Lauderdale pizzeria in 2002 and now has roughly 30 locations. Quality toppings, though limited, hit all the major food groups, from prosciutto to kalamata olives. There are salads, too, but the sausage and garlic-sautéed broccoli rabe pie is a tastier green vegetable. \$\$ (PRB)

Araxi Burger 17861 Biscayne Blvd., 305-952-3143

If you're in Aventura and find yourself craving a burger, head to Araxi Burger. The low-key restaurant is a burger fanatic's paradise: There are 20 bun-and-patty combos to choose from, including a Greek burger with lamb and tzatziki sauce as well as a Venezuelan burger with garlic mayo and fried egg. Although it's easy to stuff your face with a burger and Araxi's signature BBQ chicken wings, you'll want to save some room for their decadent hazelnut and red velvet milk-

shakes. \$\$\$ (MFP) 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. \$\$ (PRB)

Bonefish Grill 18713 Biscayne Blvd., 305-682-2340

Like other recently opened locations of the popular Tampa-founded Bonefish chain, this one features modernized décor (still casual/comfort, though less rustic, more hip), but the familiar core menu of precision-cooked seafood that's impeccably fresh, but sourced globally, not locally. And here, that's a good thing. For proof, try seasonal (somewhere) specials like indulgent Greenland trout or steelhead, a richly salmonlike yet delicate western river turbot; these come in cheffie preparations, or are simply wood-grilled to subtly smoky succulence and served with choice of skillfully balanced sauces. Naturally, old signatures like bang-bang shrimp remain, and remain irresistible. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

Bourbon Steak 19999 W. Country Club Dr. (Turnberry Isle Miami), 786-279-0658

At Bourbon Steak, a venture in the exploding restaurant empire of chef Michael Mina, a multiple James Beard award winner, steakhouse fare is just where the fare starts. There are also Mina's ingenious signature dishes, like an elegant deconstructed lobster/baby vegetable pot pie, a raw bar, and enough delectable vegetable/seafood starters and sides for noncarnivores to assemble a happy meal.

a good thing." The ceviches, tiraditos, and other Peruvian fare that diners have fallen in love with are available here, including the ever-popular lomo saltado. The one major difference: Diners up north no longer have to make the trek to Brickell or Miami Beach. \$\$ (MFP)

Dr. Smood 19501 Biscayne Blvd., 786-334-4420

It's no secret that dining out adds up — both in terms of calories and costs. Dr. Smood is focused on controlling the former by providing customers with "Smart Food for a Good Mood." That healthy motto has gotten the company far. This beautiful Aventura branch follows successful openings in Wynwood and South Miami. While Dr. Smood is mostly known for its juices and detox programs, this branch at Aventura Mall also provides visitors with grab-and-go grub befitting its setting. The free wireless internet here is the icing on the cake. \$\$\$ (MFP)

Etzel Itzik 18757 W. Dixie Hwy., 305-937-1546

Though this homey kosher oldtimer, self-described as a deli but really more of an Israeli/Middleterranean restaurant (think kebab on pita, not pastrami on rye), opened in 1997, it's still something of a locals' secret due to its location in a nondescript strip mall. But it's worth seeking out even by diners not restricted by religious laws; food is both highly flavorful and hugely fun — starting with the array of free veg appetizers that appear before you even order: herbed chickpeas, pickled salads, more. Especially recommended: shakshuka (eggs poached in complexly spiced and spicy chunky tomato sauce), a breakfast dish but available later, too. \$\$\$ (PRB)

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Christine Lee's 653 900 Silks Run Rd. (Gulfstream Park), 954-457-6255

From the Golden Strand Hotel to a Sunny Isles strip mall and now the racetrack, this iconic restaurant has been revived by Christine Lee's daughter Mary. With floor-to-ceiling windows, intricate Dale Chihuly chandeliers, and comfy leather seating, the restaurant overlooks all the action. And while the menu offers Continental options and sushi, stick to the Chinese fare — house specialties are the spare ribs and dumplings. Wash it all down with their signature Lycheetini. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (MB)

Corsair 19999 W. Country Club Dr. (Turnberry Isle Resort) 786-279-6800

Celeb chef Scott Conant has moved on, but Corsair remains a lively place. Lately they've been promoting their Saturday and Sunday brunches, every week of the year, along with special events tied to holidays. But any day of the week, the restaurant's patio is the place to be, with its sweeping views of Turnberry Isle's lushly landscaped golf course. Full review coming soon. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

CVI.CHE 105 19565 Biscayne Blvd., 786-516-2818

CVI.CHE 105 has made its way up north, opening a location inside Aventura Mall's latest expansion. This is the Peruvian brand's third restaurant, and it follows a tried-and-true formula: "Don't mess with

Frankey's 900 Silk's Run Rd. (Village at Gulfstream Park), 954-464-2333

To describe this casually comfort restaurant (located in Gulfstream racetrack's shopping/entertainment complex) as "a new breed of sports bar," as its own ads do, is an understatement. Take Frankey's drippingly juicy burgers. Not only is the beef from cattle grass-fed-and-finished (both healthier and more richly flavorful than typical grass-fed/grain-finished feedlot cattle), but grown by Gulfstream's owner Frank Stronach on his own Florida farm — rare sourcing even for farm-to-table indie gastropubs, much less a mega-mall eatery. Also irresistible on the full menu of favorites: poutine, Canadian-style fries with bold beefy gravy and fresh cheese curds. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

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. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

Genuine Pizza 19565 Biscayne Blvd. #956, 786-472-9170

Local celebrity chef Michael Schwartz continues to grow his culinary empire with an Aventura location of his new Genuine Pizza concept,

inside Aventura Mall. At first glance, the pizzeria's menu may look familiar — especially to fans of Harry's Pizzeria down south. Genuine Pizza is Harry's 2.0; all of the latter's locations are being rebranded into GP. While the restaurant's design has changed, the food hasn't. Guests can still enjoy favorites like the rock shrimp pizza, polenta fries, and warm chocolate chunk cookies. \$\$ (MFP)

Green Eggs Café 18729 Biscayne Blvd., 786-657-7225

Breakfast? Been there, done that. This first out-of-town location of an award-winning mini chain from Philly serves only the most important meal of the day: brunch. The place's retro-rustic "green" look June suggest Spartan, ecologically purist fare, but specialties follow the too-much-ain't-enough spirit that satisfying brunches demand. Definitely schedule your annual cholesterol test well before chowing down on chicken and waffles Benedict (with both spicy hollandaise and maple syrup), custard-drenched crème brûlée French toast (with both Chantilly cream and crème Anglaise), or the aptly christened "Kitchen Sink." \$\$ (PRB)

Hank and Harry's 19595 Biscayne Blvd., 305-974-2781

"Too much of a good thing" doesn't apply to New York-style delis in Miami — especially when you're talking about Hank and Harry's. You can never have enough of the South Beach deli's offerings, which range from comfort foods like bagels and meatball subs to classics like corned beef and pastrami sandwiches. Because the second outpost is located inside Aventura Mall's Treats Food Hall, there's extra emphasis on grab-and-go options for workers. If you have the time, though, we suggest you stick around. \$\$\$ (MFP)

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 puffey 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. \$\$ (PRB)

Mr. Chef's Fine Chinese Cuisine & Bar 18800 NE 29th Ave. #10, 7, 86-787-9030

Considering our county's dearth of authentic Chinese food, this stylish eatery is heaven-sent for Aventura residents. Owners Jin Xiang Chen and Shu Ming (a.k.a. Mr. Chef) come from China's southern seacoast province of Guangdong (Canton). But you'll find no glopplly sauced, Americanized-Cantonese chop sueys here. Cooking is properly light-handed, and seafood specialties shine (try the spicy/crispy salt and pepper shrimp). For adventurers, there's a cold jellyfish starter. Even timid taste buds can't resist tender fried shrimp balls described this way: "With crispy adorable fringing outfit." \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

Poke + Go 2451 NE 186th St., 305-705-3784

It seemed like only yesterday that South Florida suffered from a lack of decent poke restaurants. In just one year, though, the diced raw-fish specialty has popped up everywhere — including here. Poke + Go's fast-casual vibe is perfect for scarfing down the flavorful Hawaiian seafood bowl, which can feed at least two people here. Mix and match to your tastes or opt for a combo like the Slamm'n' Salmon, which features the namesake fish and adds Asian slaw and white garlic sauce for good measure. Either way, you'll leave full. \$\$\$ (MFP)

Pubbelly Sushi Market Aventura Mall 19501 Biscayne Blvd. #069, 786-522-7889

The Pubbelly empire is trying its hand at a more casual concept: Pubbely Sushi Market. This new Aventura Mall tenant takes the restaurant group's popular sushi gastropub and scales it down into a "grab-and-go" eatery. Menu staples like the butter krab roll and tuna pizza make an appearance, but there are also poke bowls and other light fare better suited for a lunch crowd. Prefer to dine in? Seating is limited, so an off-hour visit boosts your chances of finding a spot. You can also have your meal delivered. \$\$\$ (MFP)

ROK:BRGR 800 Silks Run Rd. (Village at Gulfstream Park), 954-367-3970

Though northern Miami-Dade County has become something of a "better burger" capital, this third location of Rok:Brgr "burger gastropub" chain, just north of the Broward County border, offers attractive upgrades, including nightclub/bar ambiance instead of a fast-casual feel, and food with more dramatic devotion to artisan and/or local ingredients (deviled local eggs; sourced Duroc pork belly) as well as cheffie taste trends: candied bacon, a bacon jam-topped burger, chicken 'n' waffles with bacon/bourbon syrup. More than 40 craft beers, too. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

Serafina 19565 Biscayne Blvd., #1944, 786-920-0989

New York's Serafina is now open at Aventura Mall, and this location is a pizza lover's dream. Pies are a big part of the menu, which also includes a bevy of Italian classics and more creative fare. Skip the basic margherita and get the tartufo nero with black truffles — your sense of adventure will pay off with this pizza that's the very definition of richness. Also, save room for the panna cotta, whose simple description hides some mind-blowing flavor. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (MFP)

Sr. Ceviche 2576 NE Miami Gardens Dr., 786-440-7851

While northern Miami-Dade County has other Peruvian places, none serve award-winning ceviches like those of chef/co-owner Alonso Jordan, who took top honors at the first International Day of Ceviche festival. Varieties range from traditionally based (albeit with distinctive personal tweaks) flash-marinated raw fish preparations to contemporary creations like Lima-style fried ceviche, crisp-coated like jalea but sauced/garnished in ceviche's more complex style; sampler platters feature several choices, and serve a small army. Also a standout on the full Peruvian menu: pescado a lo macho, precision-fried whole fish showered in an unusually luxurious assortment of seafood. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

Sushi Siam 19575 Biscayne Blvd., 305-932-8955

(See Miami / Upper Eastside listing)

Whole Foods Market 21105 Biscayne Blvd., 305-682-4400

(See Brickell / Downtown listing.)



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102-114 NW 62 ST. | LITTLE HAITI DEVELOPMENT SITE

Metro 1 Commercial is proud to offer a 31,900 SF T5-O corner development site located in Little Haiti. This site is visible to over 25K vehicles per day. Site is home to a flex space and a house. NE 62 ST is one of Little Haiti's main East to West corridors that connects I-95 to Biscayne Blvd. Population growth in the area is expected to increase at a high rate 4.6%.

Jack Conrad | 305-571-9991 | info@metro1.com

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299 NW 25 ST. | WYNWOOD RETAIL

Metro 1 Commercial is proud to present 299 NW 25 St (The Property) For Lease. The 3,000 SF Property is located in the heart of Wynwood, adjacent to NW 3 Ave and the new Goldman Garage with upwards of 400 spaces. This space is ideal for Showroom, Retail & Restaurant use.

Andres Nava | 305-571-9991 | info@metro1.com

\$5,900,000



222 NE 20 ST. | EDGEWATER LAND

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Peter Andolina | 305-571-9991 | info@metro1.com

PRICE UPON REQUEST



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2521 NW 3 AVE. | WYNWOOD RETAIL

Exceptional 13,000 SF corner Retail space adjacent to Wynwood Walls, across the street from Waltgrace Vintage and Zak the Baker and Goldman Garage. Ideal for Retail/Restaurant uses looking to be in the path from Wynwood Walls to the Goldman Garage.

Andres Nava | 305-571-9991 | info@metro1.com

\$60 PSF | NNN



415 NW 26 ST. | WYNWOOD RETAIL

Metro 1 Commercial is proud to present a 4,339 SF open space with an outdoor garden for lease. The Property is located in the heart of Wynwood, adjacent to NW 3 Ave and the new Goldman Garage. This space is ideal for a restaurant use seeking a SRX license.

Andres Nava | 305-571-9991 | info@metro1.com



TONY CHO, PRESIDENT/CEO | 305.571.9991 | INFO@METRO1.COM | METRO1.COM



Information deemed reliable but is not warranted.
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