

BISCAYNE *Times*

October 2018

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Volume 16 Issue 8

On the Menu: Higher Prices, Fewer Locals
In Little River, progress comes with a cost



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MIAMI SHORES Spacious 4bd/3ba MiMo residence on oversized lot on coveted Grand Concourse. Open floor plan with tons of natural light, floor to ceiling windows, high ceilings, formal dining, chef's kitchen, hardwood floors, family room overlooking the pool and garden. Reduced \$1,095,000



WILLIAMS ISLAND Nothing spared in this beautifully remodeled 3/2, 1945 sf Penthouse. Split floorplan, state of the art kitchen with Monogram appl, white marble peninsula, Italian cabinetry, white porcelain floors, recessed lighting, 10' ceilings, and much more. Marina, 27,000sf spa, tennis, restaurants. \$599,000



PENINSULA, AVENTURA Move right in to this stunning 3/3.5 fully and exquisitely furnished residence with marble and wood floors, built-ins, crown moldings, impact windows, 3200+ sf, east-west flow-through unit overlooking the Intracoastal. Private elevator. 5 star amenities. Reduced \$1,295,000



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Newer Waterfront Home - \$1.775M

2110 NE 124 St. 2009 Construction w/ 5 Bed, 4 Bath, pool & Jacuzzi, 3,927 SF, 2 car garage on 11,250 SF lot. 75' ft of dock. 24hr Guard Gated Keystone Islands!

Keystone Point Remodeled Waterfront!



13100 Coronado Terrace - \$997,000

3 bedrooms 2 bathrooms, 2,108 SF, garage. 9,375 SF lot. Completely remodeled. Move in ready. 75'ft on water with ocean access and no bridges to Bay.

Keystone Point Waterfront!



2130 NE 124 Street - \$ 929,000

3br 2ba home with 1 car garage on 11,250 SF of land & only 800 ft away from wide Bay. Large 60ft dock and 20,000 pound 4 post elevator boat lift. Ocean access in 15 mins.

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Brand New Waterfront Home !

2045 Keystone Blvd - \$2.39M

New modern style home rests on 75 ft of waterfront, no bridges to Bay & quick ocean access. appx 5,000 sf, 5br 5ba, pool, 2 car garage. New seawall and new dock.

Prestigious Island No 5 Waterfront!



13055 Arch Creek Terrace - \$1.679M

"Move In Ready Turnkey Waterfront Pool Home"
4br 3ba plus 5th room and 2 car garage, 3,045 sf, pristine pool, on 9,375 sf lot on quiet cul-de-sac street. New dock. 75'ft on deep water canal, quick ocean access no bridges to Bay!



160 ft of New Seawall !

13255 Keystone Terrace - \$1.995M

160 ft on the water! True 5br 4 1/2 ba + 2 car garage, 4,589 sf, pool, on 12,912 sf lot. In sought after Island No 5. Direct ocean access NO bridges to Bay !



13190 Keystone Terrace - \$1.299M

Contemporary Designed 4br 3ba Waterfront home with over 3,100 SF. Separate in-law qtrs, huge master suite, courtyard pool with raised jacuzzi, massive 3 car garage. 78'ft on water with quick ocean access. No bridges to Bay!



"Owner Will Finance"

12700 N Bayshore Dr - \$1.250M

"Owner Will Finance". Wide water views! Development opportunity, needs complete rehab or tear down. 3br 3ba, 2,487sf pool home on 9,375sf lot. 75' ft on deep water canal, quick ocean access no bridges to Bay!



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CONTENTS

- 20 COVER STORY**
In Little River, Progress Comes with a Cost
- 12 COMMENTARY**
Feedback: Letters to the Editor
- 14** Jack King: Tallahassee vs. Miami
- 16 OUR SPONSORS**
BizBuzz: September 2018
- 38 COMMUNITY NEWS**
North Miami Beach Election: Crazy!
- 38** Plan for NE 79th Street Could Kill Business
- 39** Toot! Toot! Toot! Enough with the Train Horns!
- 48 NEIGHBORHOOD CORRESPONDENTS**
North Miami Has Its Own Meltdown
- 50** Biscayne Park-Shores-El Portal Elections
- 52** Constitutional Amendments Are Bad Law
- 54 ART & CULTURE**
Anne Tschida on *One Night in Miami*
- 56** Melissa Wallen's Galleries + Museums
- 58** Events Calendar: Africa's King at the Arsht
- 60 POLICE REPORTS**
Derek McCann's Biscayne Crime Beat
- 62 PARK PATROL**
Janet Goodman: Haulover Park
- 59 COLUMNISTS**
Picture Story: The Flamingo Hotel
- 64** Pet Talk: Hen Power
- 65** Family Matters: How Was School Today?
- 66** Your Garden: Incompetence Kills Trees
- 67** Going Green: Weather Forecasters Axed?
- 68** Vino: Sweet-ish Wines for Halloween
- 69** Dish: Date Night
- 70 DINING GUIDE**
Restaurant Listings: 272 Biscayne Corridor Restaurants



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PUBLISHER & EDITOR

Jim Mullin
jim.mullin@biscaynetimes.com

CONTRIBUTORS

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

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

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, Kim Ogren, 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

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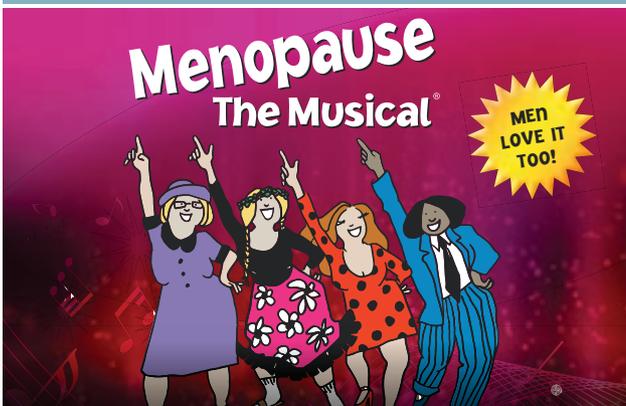
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Bruce Vilanch

The Long Run-Eagles Tribute

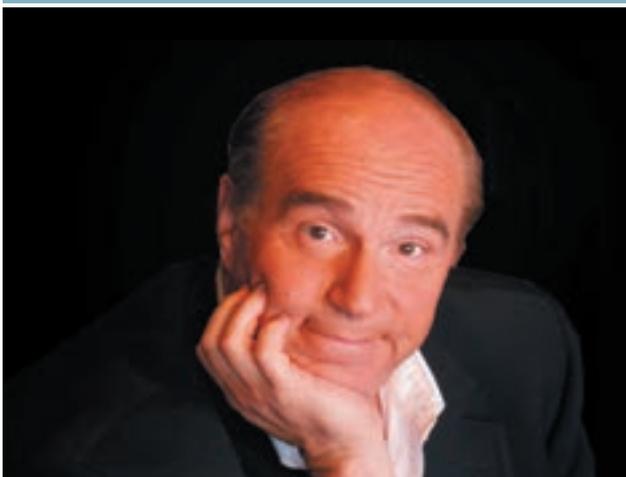
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INTRACOASTAL WATERWAY "2018 CONTEMPORARY WATERFRONT" W/60' OF NEW DOCK & SEAWALL

5BD/5BA, 5,253 Sf., Pool, 2 Car Garage, 30' High Ceilings, Control for "Smart Home" Designer Italian Kitchen & Baths, 1,000 Sf of Master Suite, Expansive Terraces, 60' of Dockage Direct to Ocean. \$4.5M

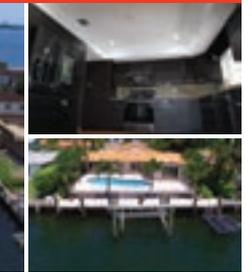


ATLANTIC ISLE 2018 NEW CONSTRUCTION

SANS SOUCI ESTATES BOATER'S DREAM HOUSE NEW SEAWALL & DOCK

4BD/3BA, pool, 2 car garage, new addition, high vaulted ceilings over 3,200 sf. 24" marble, 2016 granite kitchen and baths. hurricane impact windows in place. \$1.59M

BAY VIEWS – 75' DOCK & 27,000 LB. BOAT LIFT



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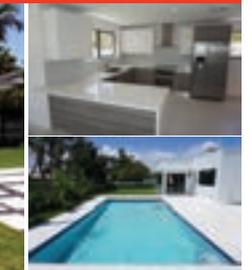
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SANS SOUCI ESTATES MEDITERANEAN MASTERPIECE!

75' DOCKAGE-NEWER BUILT "SANS SOUCI ESTATES"

5BD/3.5BA, pool, 3,817 Sf. Saturnia marble flooring, huge center island kitchen, huge "great room" with hi-vaulted skylighting, huge master bath w/steamroom & jacuzzi. "New seawall and dock", hurricane impact & more!! A steal! \$1.39M



WATERFRONT LUXURY W/75' DOCKAGE "BOATERS PARADISE" DIRECT TO OCEAN

4BD/3BA, pool, 2 car garage, island granite kitchen, new brazilian hardwood, marble baths, gorgeous tropical pool deck w/chickee hut & double jetski lift. "For rent" \$6,000/month.



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Commentary: LETTERS

Great and Classic

Gaspar Gonzalez's story about Roy Wright and classic old console stereos was a great article ("For the Love of Audio," September 2018).

And it was right on time. How can we reach Roy?

Thanks.

*Burak Imer
Aventura*

Editor's note: At age 73, Roy Wright is still going strong at Beta Electronics, his one-man business repairing audio equipment of all types.

Beta is located by I-95 at 669 NW 118th St., Miami, FL 33168. You can reach him at 305-688-2264.

From the Audio Files

Thank you for the cover story "For the Love of Audio" by Gaspar González. May Dr. Roy and his labor of love at Beta Electronics thrive for many years.

The story brought back warm memories of music's central place in my Midwest family in the late 1950s, early 1960s. This was well before standalone speakers or surround-sound systems — and I was a grade-school kid in awe of the hardwood console in our "rec room" that contained a stereo, radio... and a TV. I had permission to lift up the lid and pull back the doors, and that was it.

Twice a month or so on Sundays afternoons, we had a lady dance instructor over to the house. To records on the turntable, my brothers and I learned how to be presentable on the dance floor. During the Latin dance craze of that era, we took lessons alongside our parents and grandparents in the rumba, the samba, and the cha-cha-cha. Those were fun times.

When I read the Beta Electronics story, the first thing I did was go to YouTube, as your writer did, in search of something like our old stereo console. It was a nostalgic and entertaining search, though I came up emptyhanded. I did inherit those Latin dance LPs, though, and still have them!

Thanks for the trip down Memory Lane.

*Roberta Cousins
Miami*

Lingua Franca

Regarding Erik Bojnansky's "On Edge Over Gambling" (September 2018), as

usual it was an outstanding and informative article.

If Norman Braman and Jorge Pérez, [who object to any new gambling operations in Miami], were not so wealthy, no one would care what they said or what they wanted.

But of course \$\$\$ always talks.

*Barbara Goldwich
Miami*

Rolling the Dice

Good article by Erik Bojnansky about possible gaming in Edgewater, well reported ("On Edge Over Gambling," September 2018).

Commissioner Ken Russell is correct to say that a public hearing is in order. Neighbors deserve a chance to have their say on the matter.

*Sheldon Neumeyer
Midtown*

Pets on Planes

Janet Goodman was exactly right in her "Pets in Planes" column (September 2018). Here in Florida it's tricky traveling by air with pets. You may think your cargo-booked pet will be fine, but if your departure day turns out to be hotter than expected, the airline won't accept the animal for fear it'll die while the plane waits in line on the scorching tarmac.

And there are limits to the number of pets allowed in the cabin per flight.

I won't consider putting an animal in cargo in our climate. Too much can go wrong.

*Tony Ortega
North Bay Village*

So Much More than You Pay For

Jeff Shimonski is the best deal in your free paper, thank you. I enjoy learning how dumb it is to plant grass or to use fertilizer or cut roots, and how wise it is to compost, preserve natural soil nutrients, and plant wisely. I like his pointed sarcasm too.

I'll wager there's a lot of readers out there like me who, as he wrote recently ("Let the Sunshine In," September 2018), have no idea that our ornamental hedges are really trees. So I googled the sort-of mini-hedges I have — a few podocarpus, cocoplum, laurel — and, oh my, wow. I do have trees. And I'm going to watch them grow!

*Maria Blanco
Miami*



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2900 NE 7 Ave #402 \$1,149,000
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4700 SW 18 St \$319,000
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685 NE 61 St. \$765,000
This exquisite 4BR/3,5BA Art-Deco masterpiece, designed by Kiehnel & Elliot, and built in 1935 by Gunn & Goll, will melt your heart!



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.



6011 N Bayshore Dr #4 \$529,000
Extremely rare to market, this is 1 of only 12 townhomes located in Morningside. Built in a lushly landscaped tropical paradise.



11 Island Ave. #1412 \$1,199,000
Attention boaters - This exquisitely remodeled 1,917 sf 2/2.5 has amazing panoramic views from every room and includes a private dock!!



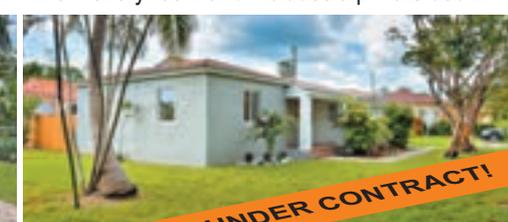
736 NE 74 St. \$555,000
Dripping in charm, this adorable Belle Meade cottage is over 1,600 sf plus a garage and 3 bonus rooms. This 2/2 has 3 family rooms!



2150 Sans Souci Blvd #B911 \$299,000
GORGEOUS UNIT! This exquisite 2BR/2BA has been remodeled w/ no expenses spared! Panoramic views from every room.



461 NE 53 St. \$749,000
This gem is a large 3/2 plus a den (4th bedroom), formal dining room plus large dinette/family room off the remodeled open kitchen.



11113 NE 10 Ave. \$425,000
ADORABLE REMODEL! This gorgeous duplex is two 2/1's with new floors, new designer kitchen, new central a/c units, new fence and updated electrical.



787 NE 87 St. \$635,000
Beyond Exquisite! This totally remodeled modern masterpiece is a 4BD/3BA, plus in-law quarters, features open euro-kitchen & more.



8400 Byron Ave #5F \$199,000
Very rare to market, this beautifully remodeled 1BR/1.5BA 876 sf unit has 2 balconies & wonderful water views of the intracoastal waterway.



830 NE 116 St. \$629,500
Rare to market, this spacious MIMO ranch is a 4BR/2BA home with over 2,100 sf of living space on a huge 12K sf lot with stunning tropical views of the large yard.



1800 NE 114 St. #2001 \$319,000
Beautiful bayview from this 1,950 sf 2BD, 3 full bathrooms condo on the 20th floor. Large remodeled kitchen with new wood cabinets & more.

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This Midterm Matters

After 20 years, it's time to undo Republican damage

By Jack King
BT Contributor

Here we go again with another election cycle. The midterms used to be thought of as mere “interim” elections and of no great importance. After all, we thought, if the ballot didn't feature a roster of candidates for president, it didn't matter too much.

Oh, how times have changed!

This year in Florida we'll be voting on a U.S. Senator and a governor, not to mention a number of important state-wide races and constitutional amendments. The November 6 election has major importance for all of us.

For many years in this state we had only one party — the Democrats. And the only elections that mattered were the primaries. Every now and then there'd be a breakthrough Republican, like Bob Martinez, who won the governorship in 1987. He lasted one term, losing re-election by a landslide.

The Republicans finally came into their own in 1999, with the election of Jeb Bush as governor, thanks in no small part to the arrival of even more carpetbaggers who, as it turned out, were nearly all Republicans. And for the past 20 years they've ruled to state.

They did a credible job under Bush, but things started going downhill with Charlie Crist, and they finally crashed and burned under Rick Scott, who might well go down as the worst governor in the history of the state. More about that later.

Scott, of course, has been term-limited and can't run again for governor. So what does a guy do who's spent the past

eight years doing nothing as governor but push his personal fortune to over \$500 million? Why not decide he'd like to be a U.S. Senator and show Floridians that he's really a pro when it comes to not doing anything.

Can you name anything Scott actually did as governor? I mean, besides that witty campaign slogan “Let's get to work!” It turns out, he wasn't talking about himself. He was talking you.

No doubt, Scott is a formidable candidate — remember, he spent some \$65 million on his second run. Will he now cross the \$100 million mark? There's a pretty good chance of it. The question is whether there's enough television air time left to buy with all his money.

His opponent is our current senator, Bill Nelson, who is up for re-election. A quiet man who works behind the scenes, Nelson seldom toots his own horn. On the other hand, he gets quite a lot accomplished.

In the governor's race, we have two new people, thank goodness: Tallahassee Mayor Andrew Gillum, who is now being called a socialist, and former U.S. Congressman Ron DeSantis from Flagler County, who's being called a racist. Oh, it's really nice when we have two gubernatorial candidates who don't know where Miami is. Wouldn't it be nicer to have a Florida governor who's from Miami After all, most Floridians do live south of Disney World.

And just so you remember, we did have a governor who was from South Florida, and he did work out quite well. That was Bob Graham, who served for two terms.



Gov. Bob Graham, Democrat and South Florida native.

Born in Coral Gables, Graham won election to the Florida Legislature after graduating from Harvard Law School. He proceeded to serve in both houses of the legislature, then won the 1978 gubernatorial election and was re-elected to the job in 1982. In the 1986 U.S. Senate race, he defeated incumbent Republican Senator Paula Hawkins, arguably the worst senator in Florida's history.

I've made this halfhearted half-funny comment before: To fix Florida, we should draw a line from Tampa to Daytona, and from Orlando to Tallahassee. Then we give the east part to Georgia, the west part to Alabama, and keep the south part for ourselves. We'd be a better state.

It's really too bad we don't have Don “the Con” Dumpster, our illustrious president, on the ballot this election cycle. I still can't believe the Dumpster is president, even though he received 2.9 million

fewer votes than Hillary Clinton.

I had to do some research on how we got in to this situation. The best I can find is that our founding fathers were particularly concerned that white people (and three-fifths-of-a-person African Americans) would not vote the “correct” way, whatever that is. So they created a system that relied on an “electoral college” to choose the president, not the popular vote.

Over the early years, the system occasionally was put in play, but not often. And used even less in recent years, when the popular vote mirrored the electoral college. Who knew that the first time it really came in to play, it was used to make sure that the losing candidate (and the biggest idiot with the least ability) would actually be the one put into office!

As I like to say when the Milorganite hits the fan, no good deed goes unpunished.

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BizBuzz

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

By Margaret Griffis
BT Contributor

These still and muggy days of early fall.... Fall? According to the National Weather Service, the start date of the dry season (i.e., fall, winter, and spring) in southeast Florida has come as late as November 5 in previous years. We seem to forget that as we tire of the sticky skin routine sometime around the autumnal equinox in late September. However, there's precious little to do about it, except pass the time under a shady tree by the water's edge.

Such a tree awaits you at **Bayside Marketplace** (401 Biscayne Blvd., 305-577-3344). The Bayside Banyan Tree stands over 75 feet tall and is estimated to be 110 years-old. Native to India and fast growing, banyans were brought to Miami in the late 1800s to fill in the canopy overhead quickly. Hurricanes and development have removed many of our older trees over the last century, but to celebrate this impressive tree's survival, as well as the ongoing renovation at the marketplace, orchids and philodendrons have been added to give the tree some pretty company. Stop by to say "hi" soon, and bring the kids. Remember trick-or-treating begins at 4:00 p.m. on Halloween.

Then take a shady route next door to the **Pérez Art Museum Miami**

(1103 Biscayne Blvd., 305-375-3000), where an exhibition of paintings by local artist Lynne Golob Gelfman just went on display.

Speaking of renovations, congratulations go out to Turnberry Isle Resort, which is wrapping up a transformative expansion in December. The new 16-story Orchid Tower offers 325 spacious guestrooms and suites, an additional 80,000 square feet of versatile event space, a 5-acre aquatic poolscape, and art deco-inspired design by Cham-palimaud. The revamp is so extensive, it earned the resort a new name: **JW Marriott Miami Turnberry Resort & Spa** (19999 W. Country Club Dr., 305-932-6200). Other renovations — which also follow last year's multi-million dollar overhaul of the **Âme Spa & Wellness Collective** — include upgrades to the main lobby, front drive, and other resort facilities. It's a great place to chill.

You can also hide from the swelter inside a dark, air-conditioned movie theater, watching the **Miami Dade College** fall precursor to the 2019 Miami Film Festival. The GEMS fest showcases several prominent films that are strong awards contenders, such *Birds of Passage*, *Border*, *Burning*, *Champions*, *Dry Martina*, and *Everybody Knows*. Other events, such as a virtual reality



exhibition and tributes to honored guests, are also scheduled. Everything takes place October 11-14 at MDC's Tower Theater (1508 SW 8th St.) Check with the highly interactive website (gems2018.miamifilmfestival.com) for information and tickets.

Readers who are here only part of the year may not have yet heard that the Saint Martha Concert Series is now **Martha/Mary Concerts** (305-458-0111, www.marthamaryconcerts.org). Or that the new season opens in a new venue, at the Corpus Christi Catholic Church (3220 NW 7th Ave.) in rapidly resurrecting Allapattah. Some concerts will be inside the church, while others will be in the neighboring and beautiful Chapel of la Merced. A "Celebration of Leonard Bernstein and George Gershwin" is set for Sunday, November

4, at 3:00 p.m. Tickets are \$15 and \$25. Ample, secure parking is free.

Lord knows the temptation to pepper a mention of a Kool & the Gang concert with song title references is strong, especially with material like "Ladies Night," "Get Down on It," and "Celebration," which are all easy to sew into any conversation. But that misses how important the Bell brothers and their musical colleagues have been to the histories of jazz, funk, pop, soul, and even rock over their 54 years of playing together. Come see them at **Hialeah Park Amphitheater** (100 E. 32 St., Hialeah, 877-840-0457) on Saturday, November 10, at 9:30 p.m. for as little as \$35 for grandstand tickets or as much as \$125 for front-and-center "gold circle" seats.

Continued on page 18

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BizBuzz

Continued from page 16

The **Aventura Arts and Cultural Center** (3385 NE 188th St., 877-311-7469) is offering *BT* readers a 20 percent discount on tickets to the hilarious and popular *Menopause: The Musical*, which comically deals with issues brought on by "the change" as described via four women at a lingerie sale. The show runs October 23-28. Don't forget to beat the heat by using code "meno20" when ordering at aventuracenter.org. Looking for more laughs? Remember that *Three Hysterical Broads... Off Their Medication* will bring Sheba Mason, Valerie Storm, and Sarah Tollemache to the same stage October 20.

Being outside only at night is a common reaction to these hot, humid days, but you don't have to skulk around in darkness. Visit **Farrey's Lighting and Bath** (1850 NE 146th St., 305-947-5451) to enhance your property with attractive outdoor lighting. In Coconut Grove? Visit Farrey's other showroom (3000 SW 28th Ln., 305-445-2244) for the same great products and service.

Quite soon, though, cooler weather and Halloween will kick off feast season, the two months we fatten ourselves up ahead of New Year's, the day when we adopt resolutions meant to trim us back down. It's also the time of year we indulge our kids by making them arts and crafts out of old leaves and flour paste. Why not blend both traditions by learning how to create beautiful Halloween cake toppers, using icing, fondant, and isomalt (instead of leaves)? This month, sugar artist Alexandra Rivas offers a four-hour decorating class at returning advertiser **Pastry Is Art** (12591 Biscayne Blvd., 305-603-9340) for \$150, materials included. Call for details.

But why stop at just one cake? **Nothing Bundt Cakes** (15400 Biscayne Blvd., Suite 112, 305-974-4536) is celebrating fall by adding pumpkin spice to its array of cakes featuring all-natural ingredients like eggs, butter, and cream cheese. Besides standard bundt cakes and towers, you can purchase individual bundtlets or bite-sized bundtinis to get that same full-size flavor in a smaller package.

Leave some room for the main course, though, from **Côté Gourmet** (9999 NE 2nd Ave., Miami Shores, 305-754-9012) where owner and chef Amina Ly serves her unique take on standard bistro fare. The Senegal-born chef was

trained in Europe and served royalty before settling in Miami. She proves that you can have high-quality meals at affordable prices. Drop by to enjoy \$15 lunch specials.

Endless stale candy and leftover turkey don't appeal to everybody this time of year, so plan on a number of quick, delicious breaks. **Piccolo's Pizza & More** (2014 NE 123 St., North Miami, 305-893-9550) returns to the *BT* this month with a 20 percent off deal that's good on orders Monday through Thursday if you mention the ad. The substantial lunchtime specials are under \$8.

Or you can reserve that tummy space for a trip to returning advertiser **Dogma Grill** (7030 Biscayne Blvd., 305-759-3433), which invites readers to drop in and enjoy not only hot dogs, sausages, and bratwursts, but also hamburgers and specialty sandwiches.

Nutritious snacks are also available at **Legion Park Farmer's Market** (6601 NE Biscayne Blvd.), open every Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Fresh fruit can be just as sweet as candy...we keep telling our kids.

Now back to real candy! **Aventura Hospital and Medical Center** (20900 Biscayne Blvd., 305-682-7000) is hosting a Pumpkin Patch Festival on Sunday, October 28, from noon to 3:00 p.m. There will be free pumpkins (while supplies last), pumpkin decorating, a pumpkin patch, photo booth, face painting, pony rides, a children's slide, and a bounce house. There will also be a teddy bear clinic where all teddies can get a free checkup. Kids are invited to wear their costumes. Admission is free. Meanwhile, Mom can take advantage of the MammGlam event October 22-26, 4:00-7:00 p.m. Schedule a mammogram and enjoy a free massage with aromatherapy, nail polish change, and hors d'oeuvres. Most insurance plans are accepted.

No insurance? October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and **Mount Sinai Medical Center** (305-535-3434) is offering reduced-rate imaging: 2D digital screening mammograms for only \$50, and 2D diagnostic screenings or breast ultrasounds for \$100 each. You can schedule the procedures at the center's Miami Beach or Aventura locations.

If you are already counting down to New Year's resolutions and know that counting calories hasn't been enough to get your weight down, call **Jackson Health Systems** (160 NW 170th St., North Miami Beach, 305-585-TRIM)

to enroll in a weight-loss seminar that takes place Thursday, October 11, at 6:30 p.m. Why now, instead of January? Because if you qualify for surgery or other therapies, you'll need that buffer to get your doctors, insurance, and yourself authorized and prepared for treatment before then.

When most people think of allergies, they imagine a runny nose. But allergic reactions can affect all the senses, which is why **Florida Center for Allergy and Asthma Care** (877-4-ALLERGY) has 17 convenient locations where board-certified doctors can perform asthma management, ear lavage, immunotherapy, allergy testing, pulmonary function tests, dermatitis treatment, and more. Stop suffering and get relief.

In alternative medicine, *tui na* is a form of Chinese massage and acupuncture that seeks to balance the body's vital energy. It is generally used in a therapeutic sense, often in combination with other modalities, and not for pleasure and relaxation. The practice is based on time-honored Chinese medicinal theories, so getting the right therapist is crucial. Specialists at **Meridian Spa and Therapy Massage** (1131 NE 163rd St., North Miami Beach, 305-915-3318) have decades of experience in *tui na* and other massage therapies. Give them a call today to see what discounts are available.

Tai chi is another Chinese tradition, one that blends meditation and exercise into a low-impact martial art practiced by enthusiasts of all ages and in various physical conditions. The graceful movements promote mental serenity while improving balance, flexibility, muscle strength, and breathing capacity. If you're curious to try it, first-time advertiser **Pelican Harbor Tai Chi** (305-929-3780) is offering a free class to new students. Afterward, each session is only \$5. If you're already familiar with the practice, Oliver teaches in the Cheng Man-ch'ing style. Classes meet on Mondays at 9:00 a.m. and Thursdays at 6:00 p.m., and are held at the Pelican Harbor Marina (1275 NE 79th St.).

Another alternative therapy comes to you directly from nature. Marijuana has been lauded as a cure-all for many bodily problems, but cancer, glaucoma, and anxiety patients unquestionably know that the herb can reduce their symptoms. Call **Certified Associates** (44 NW 167th St., North Miami Beach, 786-900-0068) to learn how the clinic can help you with your particular needs,

including how to obtain a necessary medical marijuana card from the state.

Youth, like this summer, seems to never end. But then, suddenly, the golden years are upon us with their aches and pains. Soften the blow by planning ahead with investment advisor David Treece from **Treece Financial Group** (9999 NE 2nd Ave., Suite 203, Miami Shores, 305-751-8855). This month he's hosting two free seminars on preparing for increased health-care costs that age forces on us. The first lecture takes place on Thursday, October 11, at 6:00 p.m. at Miami Shores Brockway Memorial Library (10021 NE 2nd Ave., Miami Shores). The other is on Wednesday, October 17, at 6:30 p.m. at Lambda Living Center (7275 NE 4th Ave., #110).

Maybe it's too early in the game to talk about Medicare, and you're still figuring out where to send your first baby to school? For the younger kids, check out returning advertiser **Aventura Learning Center** (2320 NE 171st., North Miami Beach, 305-940-0475) which follows a STEM educational program. The learning center, open since 1997, provides a trilingual academic education that is fully accredited.

Are they a little older? Educators and scientists have been arguing lately about school start times for teenagers. Seems that ringing the bell later in the morning equals better grades for students, but large school districts can't easily justify changing the clock for millions of working parents. Administrators at **Cushman School** (592 NE 60th St., 305-757-1966), however, are investigating the pros and cons, and discussing them with parents. Only time will tell if Cushman will modify its hours, but learn more about the school's progressive programming during the annual open house on October 18.

Monsignor Edward Pace High School (15600 NW 32nd Ave., 305-623-PACE) is also holding an open house this month. Prospective parents can visit the campus Saturday, October 27, at 8:30 a.m. or 10:30 a.m. Although Pace is a Catholic school, students of all religions are welcome. Call for more info.

Also, remember that elections are just a few weeks away. Now is the time to study the issues and familiarize yourself with the candidates. You can start the journey by reading the ads right here in *Biscayne Times*.

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On the Menu: Higher Prices, Fewer Locals

Developers are looking at Miami's Little River neighborhood
and seeing the future: It is pricey

By Erik Bojnansky

Photos by Silvia Ros



The McKenna brothers Sean (standing) and Matt at their Imperial Moto Café.

The McKenna brothers, Matt and Sean, say business is good.

Open since October 2017, their Imperial Moto Café is a unique spot, where customers can buy an espresso, eat a tasty Danish, and order a custom-built motorcycle.

“How many motorcycle-coffee shops are out there?” asks Matt McKenna, an 18-year resident of the Bayside neighborhood in Miami’s Upper Eastside. He dreamed of the concept soon after selling his South Beach business, Redfish Media, to a telecommunications company. Matt was so confident of success that he persuaded his brother Sean, who builds custom motorcycles, to move from Boston to Miami.

“My brother loves coffee, I love coffee,” Sean tells the *BT*. “I love

motorcycles. He loves motorcycles. So he thought the two go together.”

But Matt McKenna didn’t open Imperial Moto Café in popular neighborhoods like Wynwood, Edgewater, or downtown Miami. Nor did he pick Allapattah, the industrial area west of I-95 being pounced on by developers like Robert Wennett, Mera Rubell, and Moishe Mana.

Instead, he picked a former auto repair shop at 7299 NW 2nd Ave. in Little River, between the train tracks and St. Mary’s Cathedral School, in an area filled with warehouses, aging apartment buildings, and single-family homes. It’s also within the 33150 ZIP code, where the median household income is just \$26,033 a year.

Nevertheless, both brothers say business is steadily improving.

“It’s been great,” says Sean McKenna. “Every day we get new people in here, which is nice to see. A lot of it is word of mouth.”

Still, Sean is somewhat mystified as to why his brother chose a spot in the middle of urban nowhere. “He looked at all the areas and he took a liking to this place,” Sean says. “I don’t know what exactly attracted him here. There’s nothing really here.”

Actually, there is, Matt explains: the promise of something more. “The neighborhood is changing by the minute,” he says.

Indeed, developers are flocking to Little River, a neighborhood within the

City of Miami’s officially designated Little Haiti region that’s roughly bound by NE 4th Avenue on the east, NW 7th Avenue on the west, 62nd Street on the south, and the winding Little River waterway to the north.

It’s within this area that warehouses are being converted into retail office centers, older retail plazas are being renovated, and at least one MiMo-era Little River office building has been converted into a quirky office space for startups.

There are some fairly big projects, too. At 7924 NE 2nd Ave., the skeleton of a massive seven-story building that once housed a Bank of America is being transformed after a long fallow period. A few blocks away, at 8300 NE 2nd Ave., a

Continued on page 24



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Little River

Continued from page 22

building renamed the Citadel is in the final stages of renovation. When complete, it will contain, among other businesses, the new Miami headquarters for Entercom Communications, a company that owns 235 radio stations across the United States, including seven in South Florida.

Yet these projects pale in comparison to a proposed 7.8-million-square-foot miniature city that a team of developers want to build on 17 acres of land between NE 60th Street and NE 64th Street, and NE 2nd Avenue and the FEC railroad tracks. Dubbed the Magic City Innovation District after the former Magic City Trailer Park, the project could include up to 2670 apartments in buildings up to 25 stories high, as well as retail, office, and education components. As of deadline, the project's approval by the Miami City Commission is still pending.

This new development wave has provided space for small businesses at affordable rates, yet it has also sped up the displacement of Haitian residents and small-business owners throughout the Little Haiti area, including Little River.

"Gentrification, it's right here in front of my door," says Jean Mapou, a prominent Haitian activist and longtime owner of Libreri Mapou bookstore at 5919 NE 2nd Ave., just a block away from the proposed Magic City Innovation District.

Things are moving more slowly in the west part of Little River, where Imperial Moto Café is situated.

The café is in the charcoal section of an otherwise blue building owned by Little River Miami Investments LLC. The company was started in July 2014 by developer Avra Jain. Six months later, real estate investor Matthew Vander Werff was listed as Little River Miami Investments LLC's co-manager, according to the state's Division of Corporations.

It was through that company and other business subsidiaries that Vander Werff and Jain bought warehouses, vacant parcels, single-family homes, and apartment buildings between NW 71st Street and NW 76th Street, and N. Miami Avenue and NW 3rd Avenue.

The industrial-residential area near the ornate Cathedral at St. Mary's church and school was already home to the shared art space Fountainhead Studios, a spacious Fast Twitch training center, and various storage facilities,



The Little River area (shaded) lies within Little Haiti and does not have official boundaries.

private offices, warehouse churches, and car repair shops.

But Vander Werff and Jain sought to create an arts district with more galleries, restaurants, bars, salons, and various startups. It is called Little River//Miami, the forward slashes representing the train tracks (see "Northward Ho!" May 2015).

To create their ambitious district, the pair invested approximately \$15 million

in property acquisition alone, according to online records the *BT* surveyed at the Miami-Dade Property Appraiser's website. And today, Little River Miami Investments LLC controls at least eight acres of land, much of it non-contiguous, in western Little River.

But Avra Jain is no longer part of Little River Miami Investments LLC. After she and Vander Werff tried to buy

out each other's interest in the company, Jain sued Vander Werff in April 2016, demanding he sell his shares to her. Her suit was settled two months later. Jain declined to comment for this story, citing a confidentiality agreement.

Vander Werff is now listed as the principal of Little River Miami

Continued on page 26

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Developers Avra Jain and Matthew Vander Werff in 2015, before their partnership fell apart.

Little River

Continued from page 24

Investments LLC. According to court records, he shares ownership in the company with his wife, Ashley Abess, daughter of former banker and real estate investor Leonard Abess.

Since the Jain/Vander Werff split, new businesses have opened up in Little River//Miami, including the second location of Manhattan-based Marie Robinson Hair Salon, a TenOverSix clothing boutique, and art galleries, art studios, and offices.

Aaron Mapp Collectible Furniture and Interior Design and artist Alexandre Arrechea's studio are Imperial Moto's next-door neighbors. And for the past couple of years, contractors have been laboring on Our/Miami vodka distillery, part of the Swedish Our/Vodka franchise, at 7401 NW Miami Pl.

But the anticipated opening of a pizzeria run by hipster restaurateurs and chefs from New York and Los Angeles never materialized. Nor did the creation of a craft cocktail lounge. Foot traffic in Little River//Miami is minimal.

"It's nice and quiet here," says Bill Brady, owner of Bill Brady Gallery at 90 NW 72nd St., open by appointment. Not that Brady is worried. His customers come to him. So too do the customers of all the businesses that operate in Little River//Miami.

James Meder, co-owner of Fast Twitch, says his 15,000-square-foot gym and training facility at 7400 NW Miami Ct. is doing just fine, thanks to a steady clientele that includes athletes, models, and housewives. "We'd love to see something come up in this area," he says, "but we're not going to sit back and be dependent on it."

In an e-mail reply to written questions from the *BT*, Matthew Vander Werff contends that Little River//Miami continues to evolve. "Our plan is to keep nurturing the neighborhood," he writes. "We're encouraging a mix of tenants — stores, cafés, local businesses, artists, and independent restaurants — to be a part of the neighborhood."

And more businesses are coming, he adds. "We have an exciting mix of creative people and businesses moving in. These range from a

Continued on page 28

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James Meder of Fast Twitch: “We’d love to see something come up in this area, but we’re not going to sit back and be dependent on it.”

Little River

Continued from page 26

well-known contemporary artist and a flower shop to a maker space and an urban ecology center.”

Some new arrivals own their own land. Veteran Miami artist Carlos Betancourt intends to build his studio in Little River//Miami on a 5940-square-foot lot with a small house at 115 NW 73rd St. that he and architect Alberto Latorre bought from Vander Werff and Jain back in November 2014 for \$60,000.

“We enjoy being between the residential and commercial zone of the neighborhood, as it is quietly vibrant and dynamic,” Betancourt writes in an e-mail to the *BT*, adding: “There are many families in the area as well as artists. The [St. Mary’s Cathedral] church and school around the corner add to the culture of the area, and we enjoy peeking in when there’s a wedding or Sunday service.”

Also coming to Little River//Miami territory is a trio of artists running Primary Projects in the Design District:

Books Bischof, Cristina Gonzalez, and Typoe Gran. They’re putting up a two-story building on a 5500-square-foot lot at 7410 NW Miami Ct. that Bischof and Gonzalez bought for \$124,000 in August 2015. Gonzalez offered no details on what they intend to build there. “We truly appreciate your interest but we are not ready to speak on the project at this time,” she tells the *BT*.

According to multiple sources, Dennis Scholl, CEO of the nonprofit ArtCenter/South Florida, surveyed Little River//Miami properties just three

months ago. Following the sale of the ArtCenter’s 800 Lincoln Road building in South Beach for \$88 million in October 2014, the group has been looking for a new home.

“We’re looking at many different options and haven’t made a decision as of yet,” Scholl says in an e-mail to the *BT*.

Duvertan Deus has operated the Duvertan Deus Body Shop at 51 NW 71st St. for 38 years. He says the neighborhood has become safer and cleaner

Continued on page 30

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Little River

Continued from page 28

since Vander Werff came into the area. “Before, you cannot stand here,” laughs Deus. “In two minutes, you’d get mugged. Now you are free.”

But Deus doubts that this part of Little River will take off immediately. “It’s not easy to change this area. You have to give it time, piece by piece,” he says. “Five more years, ten more years before it becomes like a Miami Beach, like a Wynwood.”

But elsewhere in Little River, investment is at fever pitch.

Little River sprouted from Lemon City, a farming settlement established roughly north of today’s 54th Street back in the late 19th century. By the early 1900s, the northern part of Lemon City became known as Little River, after the adjacent waterway. Neither Lemon City nor Little River ever incorporated, and in 1925 both were annexed by the City of Miami.

During the pre-World War II years, these communities evolved much like Miami’s neighborhoods further south — as places where people lived, shopped, and worked within relative walking distance, says Sonia Chao, an associate professor at the University of Miami’s School of Architecture.

In Little River, houses and apartments were built near warehouses and manufacturing, enabling employees to live near their jobs. That included workers at the McArthur Dairy Plant, established in 1929 at 6851 NE 2nd Ave., which is still in operation.

“You can see that there was this connection,” Chao says. “I can walk to my job at the McArthur plant, go the supermarket on NE 2nd Avenue, and then walk home, and public transportation got me to other places.”

By the 1960s, as the white middle class migrated to the suburbs, Lemon City and Little River fell into decline. Working-class immigrants moved in. By the 1970s, many of those working-class immigrants were Haitians. Middle-class Haitians soon followed, opening offices, stores, and restaurants. Among these was Viter Juste, an entrepreneur and activist who published Miami’s first Creole-language newspaper and opened its first Haitian record store, Les Cousins, in Little River at 7830 NE 2nd Ave.



Big plans for the old Bank of America Building: \$12 million in mixed-use renovations and a new name — Little River Center.

It was Juste who championed the creation of a “Little Haiti” neighborhood that included Little River (see “Names Matter,” January 2014). The place name stuck, which has frustrated

some developers in recent years who wanted to promote the older names of Lemon City and Little River for the neighborhoods in which they were investing. (Racial overtones in the debate

have added tension to the frustration.)

Haitian activists, though, won a victory of sorts in May 2016, when the

Continued on page 32

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Nick Hamann's Citadel, set to open this Thanksgiving, aims to become a "gathering place for great artisanal food, shopping, and creative workspaces."

Little River

Continued from page 30

Miami City Commission created an official Little Haiti neighborhood, a district that stretched as far south as NE 54th Street and covers most of Little River. Still, that's actually small compared to the area real estate analysts and economists call Little Haiti, which can stretch as far south as NE 36th Street, encompassing the Design District and Buena Vista.

Edward "Ned" Murray, associate director of Florida International University's Metropolitan Center, says the spark to redevelop Little River started further south, in the Wynwood area. It was there, back in 2003, that the city approved zoning that enabled New York real estate

developers to transform the Buena Vista Rail Yard into the compact, pedestrian-friendly urban area known as Midtown Miami (see "Like a Rocket," April 2012).

This fueled more investment in the rest of Wynwood, a predominately Puerto Rican enclave filled with warehouses that was quickly evolving into an arts district. "Homes in Wynwood were valued at around \$100,000. But within a few years after Midtown was built [in 2006], those same properties were selling for \$300,000 and \$400,000," Murray says.

But it wasn't just Midtown Miami that acted as a catalyst. Tony Goldman, a developer known for revitalizing Manhattan's SoHo, Philadelphia's Midtown Village, and South Beach, bought swathes of land in Wynwood in the early

2000s. By 2008, he persuaded the City of Miami to approve a café district with 25 liquor licenses within 14 square blocks.

From a warehouse area that was only active during monthly art walks, Wynwood rapidly grew into a neighborhood of bars, restaurants, stores, and offices. And north of NE 36th Street, Craig Robins singlehandedly had been steadily redeveloping the Design District since the 1990s. By 2011, he was partnering with the luxury goods company LVMH, leading the transformation of the Design District into a luxury shopping mecca.

Today Wynwood's artistic atmosphere has been replaced by mixed-use buildings. Retail prices in the once affordable arts district now range between \$40 and \$100 per square foot, according to a 2017 Cushman & Wakefield retail

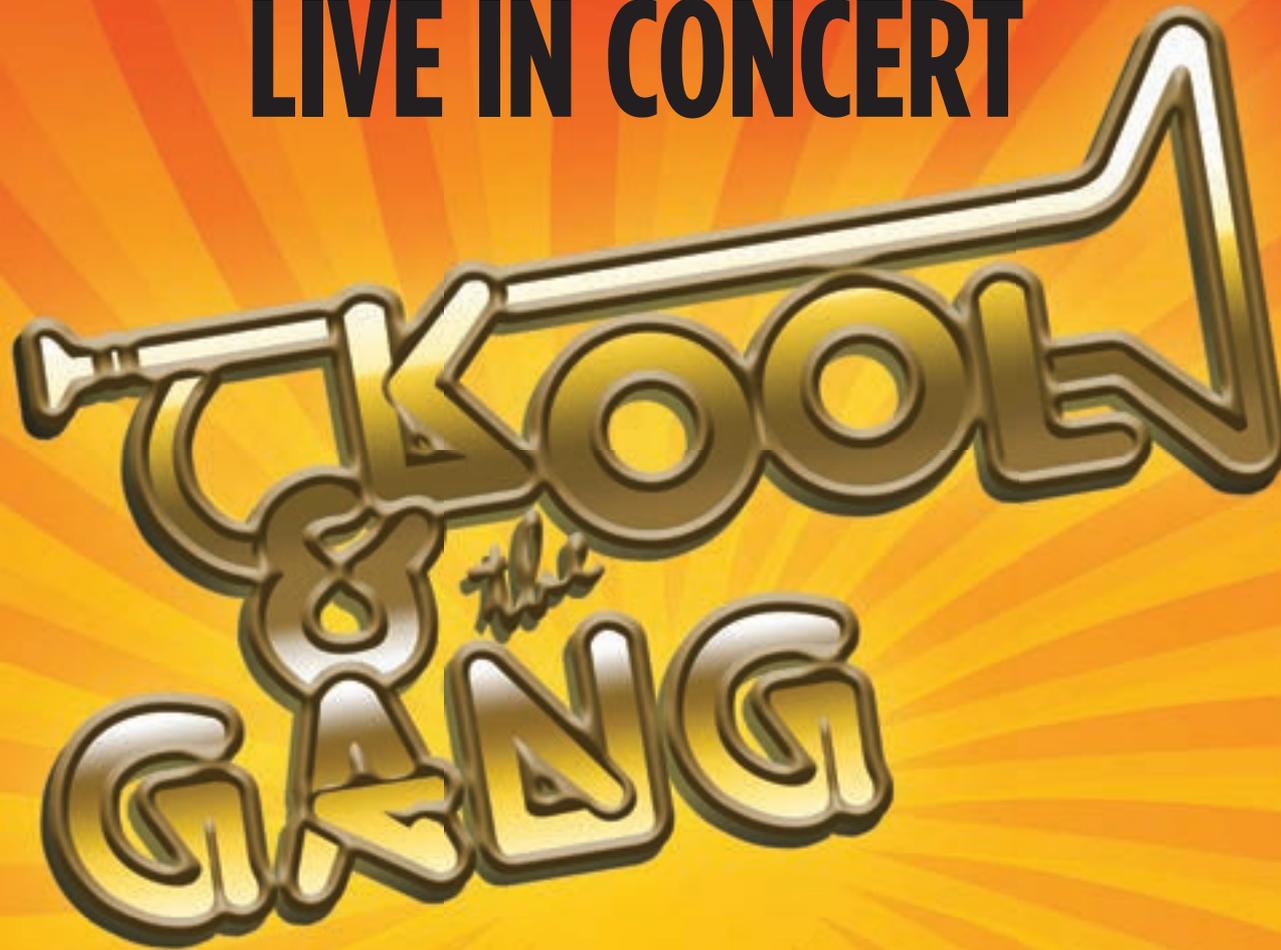
report. In the Miami Design District, retail rates range between \$60 and \$300 per square foot.

No longer able to make ends meet, some artists and small-business owners began migrating north toward Little Haiti. Others moved just west of Wynwood to Allapattah, a working-class neighborhood that includes the Jackson Hospital-anchored health district and its own warehouses, a trend that has prompted local media outlets to call the region the "new Wynwood."

Rents there for an industrial warehouse range between \$8 and \$12 per square foot, says Steve Rhodes, a developer who, since the 1990s, has renovated

Continued on page 34

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Little River

Continued from page 32

multiple properties in Miami, including in Allapattah and Little River.

Real estate investors, in search of deals more affordable than the \$1000 per square foot being charged for some Wynwood buildings, headed for Allapattah. Among them: Robert Wennett, developer of 1111 Lincoln Road in South Beach, who wants to build a 1.4-million-square-foot community near the Santa Clara Metrorail Station.

“Allapattah has a very strong future because it has the size to do massive redevelopment,” Rhodes says.

While Allapattah’s warehouses are generally large, those in Little River come in a variety of sizes. A no-frills warehouse facility also rents at the same rates as in Allapattah, at under \$12 a square foot, which is what attracted artists to Little River.

But now, thanks to upgrades made by developers, many spaces in Little River are renting per square foot in the low \$20s. That’s too high for the average artist, but just right for a company startup or a showroom, Rhodes observes.

Incidentally, it’s the greater Little Haiti region, including Little River, that was deemed South Florida’s “hottest” neighborhood by Zillow in 2017, after home prices rose 4.6 percent from the year before. Commercial properties have gone up 130 percent in the past five years, from \$78 a square foot in 2013 to \$206 a square foot in 2018, says Gerard Yetming, executive vice president of Colliers International.

Because most of Little River is east of I-95, it’s a more desirable location for developers than Allapattah, argues Seth Gadinsky, a real estate developer advising Vander Werff in Little River//Miami and converting the Rader Memorial United Methodist Church in El Portal, just north of Little River, into a retail complex. “[Allapattah] is on the other side of the highway. That’s a physical and psychological barrier. They [real estate investors] want to stay east of I-95,” Gadinsky asserts.

Chao of UM points out that developers are migrating to places with higher elevations like Little River owing to concerns over sea level rise, which, according to scientists, will eventually submerge much of South Florida.

“Developers are making different choices today than they did ten years ago,” Chao says. “You also have other stress



Daniel Macadar moved his tech business, Simple Solutions, to MADE at the Citadel: “It’s more of a local community. No one comes here, rents, and leaves. It’s not like a Wynwood or a downtown.”

factors. Because of the fact that we’re reaching our urban development boundary on the west side of the county, we’re now seeing there’s more attention and growth and infill that’s starting to occur within the city.”

Then there’s the trend of people moving away from the suburbs where Euclidean zoning divided up land use into “single-purpose” areas, forcing people to drive in order to work or shop, Chao says. In contrast, Little River’s grid encourages commercial and residential uses to be in close proximity, allowing people to walk to the corner store.

Paula Rienti, project coordinator for the Morgan Reed Group, says it’s actually the roads that drew her boss, the developer Robert Danial, to Little River. “You have main arteries crossing through it,” Rienti explains. That allows easy access to the area from those living in nearby places like El Portal, Miami Shores, the Upper Eastside, and even Miami Beach.

Danial began investing in Little River properties in 2014, when he and other investors, including

Avra Jain and Metro 1 Properties president Tony Cho, paid \$9.3 million for 3.7 acres of land and a 130,000-square-foot warehouse at the junction of the Florida East Coast railroad tracks and NE 71st Street, just west of Palm Grove. Two years later, the warehouse was converted into Rail 71, a fully leased commercial building that includes the popular vegetarian eatery Rail 71 Café, the microbeer brewery Bousa, and the fine cheese and grass-fed meat product store Gaucho Ranch.

That’s just one of the “rail” warehouse projects near the train tracks that Danial is involved with. The Morgan Reed Group is transforming another large warehouse, which Danial and New York investor Carl Schroder purchased three years ago for \$3.8 million, into another retail center called Rail Too. And the Morgan Reed Group will be redeveloping a string of warehouse properties at NE 73rd Street and NE 2nd Avenue, purchased by Danial for \$1.9 million in February 2014.

But by far the Morgan Group’s most noticeable project will be the former Bank of America building at 7924 NE

2nd Ave., a 178,000-square-foot building on a three-acre lot that Danial purchased from Jain and her partner Joe Del Vecchio for \$10 million in November 2016. A gigantic structure easily seen by anyone driving along 79th Street, Paula Rienti says \$12 million is being spent to turn it into a co-living/co-working space with flex retail on the bottom floor. Once completed, the building will be called the Little River Center.

Also in 2016 and a few blocks away, the Urban Atlantic Group headed by Nick Hamann spent \$5.2 million buying four buildings at NE 2nd Avenue and 82nd Street. The aforementioned Citadel at 8300 NE 2nd Ave. is the largest of the four structures and will include a food hall and rooftop lounge/meeting space, and is slated to open this Thanksgiving. In an e-mail to the *BT*, Hamann states that the Citadel will be a “gathering place for great artisanal food, shopping, and creative workspaces.”

Continued on page 36

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Little River

Continued from page 34

The building across the street from the Citadel is already up and running. Called MADE at the Citadel, it's funky shared-office space for freelancers, artists, and startups. Daniel Macadar says he moved his tech business, Simple Solutions, two and a half years ago from Biscayne Boulevard to MADE at the Citadel "mainly for cost reasons." He stuck around because he and his growing team of employees like the vibe.

"It's more of a local community," Macadar says. "No one comes here, rents, and leaves. It's not like a Wynwood or a downtown. It's more local."

Those locals don't necessarily reside in Little River, but other parts of the Biscayne Corridor.

Nico Julio, the manager of Sherwoods Bistro at 8281 NE 2nd Ave., notes that most of the customers who come to eat and have drinks at the extensively renovated space (it used to be a health clinic) come from El Portal, Miami Shores, Biscayne Park, and North Bay Village. "They're not predominately Haitian or Creole-speaking people," he says.

Haitians *do* frequent Haitian-owned restaurants and shops that still operate on this part of NE 2nd Avenue. But the number of those Haitian-owned businesses has recently been reduced.

Thomas Conway, a former partner in the MADE at the Citadel venture, bought two shopping centers — located at 8200 NE 2nd Ave. and 201 NE 82nd St. — for \$6.3 million this past March. After that, according to a report from WLRN-FM, Conway didn't accept the rental checks from more than a dozen Haitian-owned businesses. Instead, he gave them 30 days to relocate. In spite of protests, those businesses are all gone except for a Metro PCS phone store.

"He kicked them out. It was full of people. It had two churches. A lot of offices. Accountants. All Haitian-owned," says Leo Jean, a Little River resident who has operated a dry cleaner at 82nd Street and NE 2nd Avenue since 2002. Prior to their departure, Jean says, this part of NE 2nd Avenue attracted Haitian customers throughout the day and night. Now, Jean adds, the street is often dead by sundown. Jean also blames the loss of business on a county road construction project that has torn up the street for close to a year. "I used to make \$1500



Leo Jean on Thomas Conway's acquisition of two shopping centers: "He kicked them out. It was full of people. It had two churches. A lot of offices. All Haitian-owned."

every week," he says. As soon as they 'fixed this,' I make \$200 a week."

Conway insists he wants to bring improvements, not misery, to the NE 2nd Avenue corridor. "My intention was not to displace anybody -- rather it was to breathe fresh air and life to properties that have been neglected for some time," he tells the *BT*.

Conway says the newly renovated plazas, which he's renaming Ebb and Flow, will cater to local retailers and craftsmen. As for the Haitian businesses that once occupied those retail plazas, he says, "Anybody that was here is welcome back."

Once back, those retailers will likely be paying higher rents. While the rent within a converted warehouse can be around \$20 a square foot, the going rate for a newly renovated "straight-up" retail plaza can be as high as \$40 a square foot, says real estate consultant Seth Gadinsky.

It isn't just businesses that are being displaced. Older yet affordable apartment buildings are being purchased and demolished by investors. At the same time, Haitian homeowners in Little Haiti and Little River are being hounded by real estate agents to sell their homes,

says Marleine Bastien, executive director of Family Action Network Movement.

"They're being pressured to sell their homes," Bastien says. "The psychological war that has been unleashed against them is unfair. They should not feel that they have to sell."

All these factors are making it more expensive for current area residents to remain. According to a December 2015 FIU Metropolitan Center report on the Little Haiti region, 46 percent of the population lives below the poverty level. Additionally, those with the lowest median incomes tend to live north of 62nd Street in Little River.

Bastien fears this displacement trend will continue at an even greater rate if mega projects like the Magic City Innovation District and others are approved. "These projects will change the face of Little Haiti," she says.

Bob Zangrillo, one of the partners in the Magic City Innovation District, says his project will be implemented in phases and will provide educational facilities, jobs, and some affordable and workforce housing units. With the exception of a proposed 12-story residential/office tower at NE 59th

Street and 2nd Avenue, built by Motorsports Network owner Mike Zoi, Zangrillo says it will be years before any other high-rises are built. If, that is, the Magic City Innovation plan is approved at all.

In the meantime, Zangrillo says he and his partners have been renovating warehouses they own near the former Magic City Trailer Park, providing space for tech companies and other ventures. Three such office renovation projects will be completed in Little River at NE 64th Street and 2nd Avenue by 2019.

"What we're trying to do is renovate abandoned warehouses to adaptive reuse, to bring in innovation and jobs," Zangrillo says.

Activists, though, are demanding that future major projects like the Magic City Innovation District provide something that will allow at least some local residents who are being displaced to return, somehow.

"There's not much we can do about gentrification except we have to get involved, participate in it, and get whatever profit we can get," says Jean Mapou. "Not as individuals, but as a community."

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Free-for-all in North Miami Beach

Election pileup concludes a year of chaos

By Mark Sell
BT Contributor

In a contest for the most confusing election in Miami-Dade County, North Miami Beach deserves the blue ribbon.

This year's November 6 free-for-all municipal election boasts 16 candidates vying for six spots on the seven-member at-large commission.

Just two of the candidates — Commissioners Anthony “Tony” DeFilippo and Barbara Kramer — are elected incumbents. Two other incumbents, Fortuna Smukler and Ingrid Forbes, were appointed within the past five months. Voter registration deadline is October 9, and early voting starts October 22.

This scramble caps a year of cock-eyed events (see “City in Chaos,” August 2018). George Vallejo, the popular mayor who ran unopposed in 2015, suddenly

resigned April 10 after pleading guilty to two campaign finance misdemeanor charges over filing a false report on at least \$5000 to shell corporations. He had also acknowledged in depositions that his wife was quietly employed by the Dezer family developers and paid through a shell corporation while he was voting on Dezer-related issues.

Vallejo was sentenced to 90 days' house arrest and 18 months' probation. From his social media posts updating voters on city affairs, he may be waiting in the wings for a political comeback once his exile from public life ends in October 2019.

Commissioner Frantz Pierre, who'd been cited in May for “appalling” ethics violations by the county's Commission on Ethics and Public Trust, lost his seat July 26 after getting arrested for bribery and money laundering for allegedly shaking down Dean Tyler, the owner of Dean's Gold strip club. The alleged deal: \$20,000



BT photo by Mark Sell

With 16 candidates fighting for six slots, campaign signs have sprouted everywhere.

to Pierre in exchange for a vote to extend the club's liquor hours to 6:00 a.m.

In April, Commissioner Marlen Martell quit after she was hired as city manager of the equally chaotic North Bay Village, only to get sacked after 105 days with a \$127,000 severance.

For more than a month, the North Miami Beach City Council lacked a quorum.

City manager Ana Garcia and city attorney José Smith were forced out after an acrimonious commission meeting in

late June, over the objections of many residents and some tearful employees who praised Garcia's sometimes controversial “tough-love” management style.

Little wonder, then, that the loudest cries in this crowded field are for honest, responsive government and accountability.

Yet this is a city of paradoxes. The five years of Vallejo and Garcia have bequeathed the city a solid professional

Continued on page 40

Build It and Bulldoze It?

Shorecrest street plan could raze the NE 79th Street business district

By Erik Bojnansky
BT Senior Writer

The Florida Department of Transportation has presented plans that would widen NE 79th Street by nearly 50 feet to accommodate six lanes for vehicles and bring some traffic relief for the Miami neighborhood of Shorecrest.

But to do it, the state would have buy private land, perhaps through eminent domain if landowners refuse to sell along NE 79th Street between Biscayne Boulevard and Biscayne Bay to expand the right-of-way. That necessity is particularly acute on the north side of NE 79th Street in Shorecrest, where a burgeoning commercial district filled with stores, offices, and restaurants is located.

The plan, called the Build Alternative 3, is one of three proposals submitted by FDOT for renovations of 79th and 82nd streets in the City of Miami. It's the most expensive of the three plans, and would cost an estimated \$69 million in construction costs alone. It would also force businesses on the north side of NE 79th Street east of Biscayne to shrink or close.

Mark Ingraham, an attorney and 79th Street property owner, says such a plan would kill a commercial district that's in the midst of a renaissance.

“For the sake of the neighborhood and the sake of property values, and the sake of having a walkable street with businesses that will serve the surrounding neighborhood, making 79th Street a six-lane super-highway will be a big



FDOT's Build Alternative 3, shown here, is the most expensive of three plans, would cost an estimated \$69 million, and would force businesses on the north side of NE 79th Street east of Biscayne to shrink or close.

mistake,” he says. “It'll have a negative impact on the residential neighborhood surrounding the area.”

Nevertheless, the Build Alternative 3 was the plan preferred by Shorecrest residents when the three alternatives were first unveiled at an August 28 neighborhood forum.

“At our last meeting, I asked residents to raise their hands,” says Daisy Torres, president of the Shorecrest

Homeowners Association, “and the majority asked for this option, even though in other meetings I've attended, commercial interests were opposed to it.”

Torres isn't sure that many of her neighbors grasp the cost or actual impact it'll have on businesses along 79th Street. “I actually explained that to them because I was surprised,” she says. “I said, ‘Are

Continued on page 41

Horns and a Dilemma

Train blasts continue to rile Brightline's neighbors



BT photo by Caitlin Granfield

Mark Robson and his nemesis: "It is really up to the people who are affected by the noise to do something."

By Francisco Alvarado
BT Contributor

The horn on the Brightline train lets out a jarring brass belch as it crosses the intersection near Ives Dairy Road and Biscayne Boulevard. The time: 2:30 a.m. on a recent Tuesday.

Mark Robson is jolted from his sleep by the blast.

"Here is the perfect example of why I'm so frustrated," says Robson, an activist in the Ojus neighborhood of unincorporated north Miami-Dade. "The silver lining of all these intersection closings during Brightline's construction was that we would at least get some peace and quiet when all these improvements were completed."

Based on numerous conversations and e-mails he's had with Brightline officials,

Robson says he expected the fast-moving trains to adhere to a federal no-horn policy when the company began running its service in Miami-Dade this past May. Five months later, he and thousands of county residents along the Biscayne Corridor near Brightline's tracks are still waiting for that implementation of the policy.

Specifically, Robson and his neighbors at the Skylake and Highland Lake condominium complex have been waiting on Miami-Dade County to apply for a "Quiet Zone" exemption from the federal Train Horn Rule that would prohibit the use of horns from NE 79th Street to NE 215th Street.

For that to happen, Brightline had to finish adding safety equipment and infrastructure improvements to every street intersection its trains cross. And even though company officials insist those

improvements have been completed, it will be at least another month before Miami-Dade can begin the application process for the quiet zone.

"Once all the crossings pass inspection, then the county will be able to submit the paperwork to the Florida Railroad Administration for the establishment of the quiet zone," says Karla Damien, spokeswoman for the Miami-Dade Transportation and Public Works Department. "There's one crossing that's currently in the vicinity of an active construction project, which Miami-Dade County will need to re-inspect once construction has concluded. Construction is scheduled to end in November."

The delay in implementing the quiet zone has exasperated northeast Miami-Dade residents beyond

Robson's neighborhood, according to Frank Rollason, a resident of Miami's Belle Meade neighborhood. Rollason played a key role in getting the City of Miami and Florida East Coast Industries (FECI), Brightline's owner, to obtain federal approval for a quiet zone between NE 71st Street and PortMiami for freight trains.

"People I know in Miami Shores and El Portal complain all the time about it," Rollason says. "Nobody's happy about the noise. It's more frequent and it's an issue, no doubt about it. I didn't think it would take this long."

Rollason, who was named assistant director of the Miami-Dade County Emergency Management Department in June, says he brought up the quiet

Continued on page 43

North Miami Beach

Continued from page 38

staff; a healthy balance sheet with \$25 million in operating reserves; a tax base of \$2.9 billion, up 17.6 percent in the last year; and a falling property tax rate of \$6.30 per \$1000 assessed valuation.

At the same time, many residents and some candidates attack the city as a place for sale to the highest bidder, a culture of payoffs and corruption, and a future of choking traffic. Pro-development candidates argue that a higher tax base means lower taxes and better services.

No candidate forums are scheduled as of deadline, and voters may need to Google the names and check out campaign treasurers' reports on citynmb.com to learn more about the candidates, who's backing whom, and to check for neighborhood candidate forums.

Some readers are turning to blogger and former North Miami Beach activist Stephanie Kienzle — a Vallejo friend and ally — of the peppery voteropinion.com blog.

The city's endorsement of high-rise construction is not universally embraced, but developments are set for the next five years, barring a real estate meltdown, as new zoning baked into the city's code in 2015 takes rapid effect.

The twin Marina Palms 24-story towers at Biscayne and 172nd Street opened last year, and the twin 32-story Harbour condo towers are almost ready for occupancy, just south of East Greynolds Park and north of 163rd Street.

At the old Kmart tract on the southeast corner of 167th Street and NE 8th Avenue, a Lowe's anchor is going up, buttressed by a new Publix and Marshalls. The vast 2.5-million-square-foot New North Town Center was approved in July. It will be a mixed-use, Midtown-style "micro-city" with 1650 units, 435,000 square feet of office and retail, a 175-room hotel, and a school, all on a triangular 18-acre brownfield site across from TECO Peoples Gas at 15530 W. Dixie Hwy.

In addition, plans are on the books for the massive Uptown Biscayne project north of 163rd Street and, further down the road, a Dezer group mixed-use development on the site of Intracoastal Mall near the entrance to Eastern Shores, where many commissioners live.

"The city recognizes that development pressure has increased all over the county," says Justin Proffitt, city planning and zoning manager.



The 24-story Marina Palms project on Maule Lake was the first of its kind in NMB, and split commissioners: proponents and opponents.



City planners Justin Proffitt and Richard Lorber are working to plan for development nearer rail lines.

"If we're going to have development in the city, let's do it the smarter way, rather than in a manner that increases traffic and suburbanization," says Richard Lorber, director of community development.

More high-end building augurs demographic change for a diverse city with a median household income of \$38,000, a poverty rate of 22 percent, and a population that is 43 percent black, 36 percent Hispanic, 19 percent non-Hispanic white, and 3 percent Asian.

Against that backdrop, here's the lineup, with candidates in the seven groups that appear on the ballot.

Group 1: Mayor

Although North Miami Beach has a weak mayor/strong manager government, the mayor can exert power to set agendas. The three candidates for this open seat are Group 2's incumbent Commissioner Anthony "Tony" DeFilippo, union steward Robert Dempster, and former mayor Raymond Marin. Longtime commissioner Beth Siegel, appointed mayor last May to replace Vallejo, has withdrawn from the race.

DeFilippo, a commissioner since 2011 and third-generation North Miami resident, has the strongest war chest, reporting more than \$58,000 in contributions with \$34,000 in expenses. He

has received plenty of \$1000 contributions from developers, law firms, and Waste Management, which picks up the city's trash, and CH2M Hill, which has managed the water utility since last year, in addition to smaller contributions from residents.

Developers and utilities have placed their bets on other candidates, too, including appointed incumbent Commissioner Fortuna Smukler in Group 4; elected incumbent Commissioner Barbara Kramer in Group 6; and candidate Michael Joseph, an attorney in his third race for commission, in Group 7.

DeFilippo is an ally of Vallejo and Garcia, who actually donated \$250 to DeFilippo's campaign. Under the Vallejo-Garcia regime, the city devised and implemented a strategic plan, revamped zoning to allow more high-density commercial development along the FEC-Biscayne and 163rd Street corridors, stabilized the city's finances, privatized trash pickup, and outsourced management of the city's water utility over strong objections from unions.

DeFilippo is running on a mutually endorsing "ticket" with these commission candidates: Uleta Park activist Ketley Joachim in Group 2, who actually received a \$1000 contribution from DeFilippo, Dianne Raulson in Group 4, and Alter Gambarte in Group 5. Their signs are often clumped together.

Continued on page 42

North Miami Beach

Continued from page 40

DeFilippo and Joachim, who has received substantial contributions from the Haitian-American community, each bought \$1000 of airtime in late July on Creole radio (North Miami Beach is roughly 22 percent Haitian American), effectively buying sponsorship/endorsements from producer/hosts who control the content, and beating other candidates to the punch.

Other candidates called foul after discovering this common business model for ethnic radio. (Many Spanish-language South Florida AM stations have operated under similar models, particularly in previous decades.)

Dempster, union steward with the Communications Workers of America, is campaigning on a progressive platform in this nonpartisan election. A longtime activist and member of the Miami-Dade Democratic Executive Committee and People's Progressive Caucus, he helped lead bitter union opposition to the 2017 privatization of management of the city's water utility, which serves 200,000 people in five municipalities.

Returning utility management to public ownership — an expensive proposition, as other municipalities are discovering — is not on his platform.

Dempster's campaign emphasizes improving public safety, promoting green space and conservation, developing a Chinatown along the 163rd-167th Street corridor, and restoring "integrity to the City of North Miami Beach's City Commission." He reports \$8649 in contributions, none of it from developers or utilities doing business with the city.

Marin, mayor from 2005-2009, pledges to return to a time when the city was "respected, productive, and an innovative leader for others," lowering taxes, "controlling our own facilities, not outsourcing them," and "hiring city residents for city businesses." An accountant, he reported more than \$23,250 in contributions, roughly \$6000 of which is his own money, and substantial contributions from attorneys and retail interests, with no contributions from developers or utilities.

Marin is running alongside attorney and former Commissioner David Templer, a personal injury attorney who's running a particularly fiery campaign in Group 5, and former Commissioner Jay Chernoff, a real estate agent running in Group 2. Both served with Marin.



The 32-story Harbour condo towers, just south of East Greynolds Park, are almost ready for occupancy.



The planned Uptown Biscayne is a massive project at the intersection of Biscayne Boulevard and 163rd Street.

Group 2: Commissioner

In this wide-open race, Ketley Joachim and Jay Chernoff are squared off against Paule Villard, a retired City of Miami police sergeant and 30-year resident. Villard reported \$25,852 in contributions, more than \$22,000 of which she loaned to her own campaign. Chernoff reported \$3050 in contributions to Joachim's more than \$20,000.

Group 4: Commissioner

Fortuna Smukler, appointed to the council in May 2018, is up against Dianne Raulson, a development director and

government public relations consultant. Smukler, who started the Eastern Shores Crime Watch program, has a long record on committees and boards in the city, and is an ally of incumbent Commissioner Barbara Kramer. Raulson reported \$6700 in contributions to Smukler's \$22,714.

Group 5: Commissioner

This vacant slot is the free-for-all among free-for-alls, with four candidates vying for the seat left open in July by Frantz Pierre: life insurance agent McKenzie Fleurimond, construction permit consultant Alter Gambarte, schoolteacher

Margaret "Margie" Love, running for her fourth time on a campaign for accountability and honest government, and David Templer of the particularly fiery anti-corruption campaign, posting on Facebook about "zoning for sale," "variances for sale," and e-mails about opponents. The seat has been occupied since August by Planning and Zoning Chairman Evan S. Piper, who is not running.

Gambarte is running on a smart-growth platform similar to DeFilippo's, and received \$200 from ousted city manager Ana Garcia. Fleurimond reported \$450 in contributions, Gambarte \$5750, Love \$3420, and Templer \$9508.

Group 6: Commissioner

Barbara Kramer, commissioner since 2009 and owner of Ford Window Treatments, is the only elected incumbent other than DeFilippo among the 16 candidates. Her challenger is Henry Dube, a real estate agent based in Sunny Isles Beach. Kramer reported contributions of \$20,865, including \$2000 from super-lobbyist Ron Book, to Dube's \$3800 in contributions. A former opponent of high-rise development, Kramer has come around to seeing its merits — developers are among her contributors — although she still can push back.

"I was against Marina Palms," she says. "Then I saw what it takes to turn a city around, and building exploded again. If your area code is 305 and you're not joining in, you're just going to sink. You'll have to develop. But we can't have complete gentrification, either. People cannot afford to move into the places we're building."

Group 7: Commissioner

Incumbent Ingrid Forbes, a food scientist and civic leader appointed to the council in June, faces a challenge from civil rights, immigration, and land use attorney Michael Joseph, an active community board member running for the third time. Forbes reported \$6005 in contributions. Joseph has accumulated the second-largest war chest among all the candidates, with \$37,059 in contributions, much from developers, law firms, utilities, and business entities registered at his law firm's address.

Joseph's platform stresses improved social services, expanded trolley service, improved community policing, and — for all commissioners, committee members, and staff — mandated ethics training.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com



BT photo by Erik Bojnansky

At the September 12 meeting, FDOT officials and consultants presented maps and answered 79th Street questions from dozens of interested residents.

NE 79th Street

Continued from page 38

you sure? Because this is going to have a big impact.' Either they didn't understand or they didn't care."

Still, Torres concedes that Build Alternative 3 would address many of the traffic headaches that Shorecrest residents experience. "To me, this is pie in the sky," she says. "This is a great solution long term — if we could please everyone. But it's not a *real* solution."

Since the 1970s, 79th Street between I-95 and Biscayne Bay has had three vehicular lanes heading east toward the beaches and one lane heading west. Over on 82nd Street, which slices through Shorecrest, there are two lanes heading west. It's a configuration that has frustrated Shorecrest dwellers for decades. Those complaints intensified following the completion of an \$8.1 million renovation project that further narrowed 79th Street's single westbound lane, encouraging more cars traveling from the beaches to use 82nd Street. As a result, Shorecresters tell the *BT*, 82nd Street and other streets in Shorecrest are gridlocked by commuters during peak hours. During lull traffic times, cars and motorcycles travel along 82nd Street at high speed. (See "Into the Narrows," October 2016.)

Build Alternative 3 would transform NE 82nd Street into a slower road with one lane heading east and one lane heading west, plus add new island medians along Bayshore Drive. Alternative 3 would also widen 79th Street to 118 feet east of I-95, allowing three lanes of traffic heading east and three lanes heading west, as well as parallel parking

and island medians at certain spots. The east- and westbound lanes closest to the sidewalks would be dedicated for bicycles and buses, and separated from the other lanes by a six-inch barrier.

But to make that widening possible, the city needs to acquire private land to create more right-of-way. West of I-95, the land taken would occur on the south side of 79th Street, according to a FDOT map of Build Alternative 3. East of I-95, the seizures would be on the north side.

Gabriel Perez, a Stantec consultant involved in the project, says Build Alternative 3 would likely require 48 feet of right-of-way to be seized east of Biscayne Boulevard on the north side, "although there are some widths that can be played with."

In some spots that would only mean a loss of parking. However, some buildings on the north side — including Royal Bavarian Schnitzel Haus, Gastropub 79, Tip Freeman's Paintings & Art Gallery, and Mina's Mediterraneo — are situated right up against the sidewalk.

In contrast, Build Alternative 1 would only cost \$36.5 million and require more modest taking of privately owned curbs in various spots. Under that plan, 82nd Street would also become a two-way road, but without medians, and 79th Street would have two lanes heading east and two lanes heading west without dedicated bus lanes.

The cheapest concept, Build Alternative 2, would cost just \$20.6 million and primarily widens sidewalks and adds bike lanes, says Auraliz Benitez, an FDOT project coordinator. Under that

Continued on page 46



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Brightline must balance safety and silence: Between July 2017 and April 2018, Brightline trains hit eight people, killing six.

Horns

Continued from page 39

zone when he spoke with Brightline executives in early September about the capability of its trains for hurricane evacuations. “They felt [the quiet zone] wouldn’t be in place until the end of the year,” he says. “There was still some work that had to be done at the intersections.”

The mandated safety improvements include the installation of four-quadrant gates that completely block the roadway at railroad crossings. Miami-Dade has tapped \$1.5 million in federal grants to install new equipment and infrastructure, such as medians, new railroad signals, and 50 signposts alerting train conductors that they’re entering a quiet zone. FECI claims it has invested around \$60 million on safety measures for cross streets between Miami and West Palm Beach.

Ensuring the safety of motorists and pedestrians has become a thorny issue for Brightline, and has taken precedence over the quiet zone. Between July 2017 and April 2018, Brightline trains hit eight people, killing six, during test runs and regular trips. Five of the deaths were in Palm Beach County.

Since then, there have been three more accidents, two involving cars that were mangled by oncoming trains.

No one was injured in those incidents, although an individual walking along the tracks September 18 in West Palm Beach was grazed by a train and sustained minor injuries.

In an e-mail statement, Brightline spokeswoman Ali Soule writes, “Brightline’s top priority is safety. We continue our outreach and are focused on educating the public about how to stay safe around railroad tracks.”

Robson says he’s certainly sensitive to safety issues, but he also blames company officials for failing to keep their word on the timetable for implementing the quiet zone. He also notes that he has previously suggested Brightline and Miami-Dade at least apply for a partial quiet zone running from 10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m., which the federal government also allows.

“A single death would outweigh the competing community desire for quiet, but I am only seeking a partial quiet zone,” Robson says. “The fact they can’t even get that done is pretty disappointing. There are a lot of residential developments along the tracks. I can’t imagine people are excited about these trains passing at all hours.”

What’s more, he adds, the quiet zone between NE 71st Street and PortMiami appears to be loosely applied to

Continued on page 44

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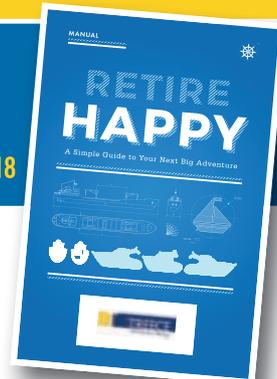
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Horns

Continued from page 43

Brightline. “I noticed some of the ‘no horns’ signs are down in that area,” he says. “When Brightline started running its service, they took those signs down.”

Indeed, Brightline trains blast the horns at the intersection of NE 54th Street and NE 4th Court, near the *BT* office, on a regular basis.

Soule declined to comment on the criticisms. Instead, she referred the *BT* to a June 7 letter Brightline executive vice president Adrian Share sent to officials with the Miami-Dade Transportation Planning Organization and the Miami-Dade Transportation and Public Works Department overseeing the quiet zone implementation.

In the letter, Share explains that Brightline has completed the construction of the quiet zone safety measures between 215th Street and 79th Street, as well as building additional safety measures for the quiet zone between 71st Street and PortMiami. He notes that the county is responsible for taking the next steps, which include



BT photo by Caitlin Granfield

Robson says he expected the trains would adhere to a federal no-horn policy when they began running in Miami-Dade this past May.

filing a notice of establishment, or NOE, with the Federal Railroad Administration, and verifying that infrastructure improvements are in place with a field visit.

“Once Brightline and the Florida East Coast Railway receive the NOE, they will unbag the ‘no train horns’ signs and issue the appropriate internal operating bulletins,” Share writes in the letter.

“Quiet zones are quality-of-life improvements that can only be applied for by the cities or counties with jurisdiction over the adjacent railway.”

Transportation Department spokeswoman Damien says inspections of the safety measures at the railroad crossings were conducted in July 2018 as scheduled.

However, Robson says Soule told him months ago that the quiet zone would be implemented once train service began in Miami-Dade in May. He showed *BT* subsequent e-mail exchanges between himself and Soule in which she explains that delays in the construction of the safety measures pushed back the schedule.

“I wish she would have sent me Share’s memo in June and I would have moved on to county people,” Robson says. “It is really up to the people who are affected by the noise to do something. Hopefully, in two months, the quiet zone will be in place just in time, when the weather gets nicer and people open their windows.”

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com



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NE 79th Street

Continued from page 41

plan, the current number of traffic lanes on 79th Street and 82nd Street are maintained, and there are no right-of-way impacts to private property owners.

Depictions of all three plans were displayed on easels at an informal community gathering at the Legion Park Community Center on September 12, attended by dozens of people.

Standing at the ready to explain each plan and listen to input were FDOT engineers and consultants. All three plans were compiled after input from residents and business owners near 79th Street, Benitez says, and a formal meeting on the three plans won't be held until the spring of 2019.

Yasmine Kotb, owner of Mina's Mediterraneo restaurant, says Build Alternative 1 is by far the best plan for residents and businesses. "This is what is going to take it to the next level," she says.

As for Build Alternative 3, Kotb thinks it's too expensive and destructive. "There's no way they can do 3 without taking away all the buildings on the street," she says. "I don't think it's a real alternative because



Daisy Torres, president of the Shorecrest Homeowners Association, on Build Alternative 3: "To me, this is pie in the sky. This is a great solution long term — if we could please everyone. But it's not a real solution."

I don't think it's possible. There's no way they can expand the street that much."

Actually, from time to time FDOT does buy up private land with homes and businesses through eminent domain to widen streets and highways, says Javier

Bustamante, an FDOT assistant right-of-way manager. He mentions the expansion of the SR 826 in which 22 houses between Coral Way and Bird Road were seized under eminent domain and demolished back in 2006. According to a

BT photo by Erik Bojnansky

Miami Herald article from that year, the state paid \$5 million for the 22 houses.

More recently, in 2012, dozens of businesses in Hollywood were bought or seized via eminent domain to obtain the 40 feet needed to widen Route 441 as part of a \$273 million project, according to the *Herald*.

In most cases, FDOT only buys what it needs and allows the property owner to keep the rest of the property. "I've seen buildings cut and rebuilt, and different buildings being created," Bustamante says.

But Kolt argues that Build Alternative 3 would not only devastate the 79th Street business district, where she owns four properties, including Mina's, but would also harm Shorecrest property values.

"We're trying to create a business district," she says. "Should you bulldoze all the businesses and maybe call it I-79?"

If the state has the "trillions of dollars to buy all our properties," she says, she's willing to hear offers.

"Would I like to retire from the restaurant business? Absolutely!" she declares. "Have you ever worked in the restaurant business? It's brutal."

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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Another Fine Mess

North Miami passes a budget, but where exactly is the money?

By **Mark Sell**
BT Contributor

North Miami's fiscal reckoning may have arrived, with a warning letter from a fired budget director's employment lawyer accusing the city of playing shell games with public money to hide growing budget deficits.

City manager Larry Spring, deputy city manager Arthur "Duke" Sorey Jr., and the city face a potential whistleblower lawsuit pertaining to a \$20 million budget gap over two years. The letter was triggered by the September 20 firing of assistant budget director Terry Henley, who his lawyer says refused "hush money" to go quietly.

Henley's lawyer, William Amlong of Fort Lauderdale, wrote city attorney Jeff Cazeau on September 21, alleging that Spring and Sorey had pushed through "what looks like a \$70 million balanced budget, but one that really conceals \$7 million to \$20 million in deficits."

His letter says Henley was fired "after he vehemently objected to the cowboy-style budgeting approach embraced by Messrs. Spring and Sorey."

The city council passed the 2018-19 budget on September 17. At 9:30 a.m. September 18, according to the letter, Sorey gave Henley the option to go quietly with six weeks' severance. Henley visited Amlong and returned to his city hall office September 20, refused Sorey's offer, and was fired for "incompetence," after five years of increasing responsibilities. His computer was locked (Amlong's letter warns the city not to touch his data), and seven police officers escorted him out.

"What they need to do is unfire Terry Henley and visit the budget with real numbers," Amlong tells the *BT*. "This will be a whistleblower suit if they don't put him back. I should hope that the city, which is already in debt, doesn't incur a whole lot more attorney's fees to keep this guy out of work."



Ousted City of North Miami assistant budget director and whistleblower Terry Henley.

Spring fought back hard September 24 in a letter to the city council, saying repeated audits revealed "ZERO findings of malfeasance on my part or that of my staff," welcoming an external audit, and harshly attacking Henley's job performance.

In April, Amlong's firm secured a \$931,587 whistleblower verdict against the City of Miami on behalf of Victor

Igwe, the city's former top auditor. Igwe alleged he was ousted in retaliation for uncovering shady financial maneuvers and for cooperating with a Securities and Exchange Commission investigation into a 2009 \$153 million bond issue. Subsequent charges led to a fiscal meltdown. (Spring, who was not charged in the matter, was Miami's chief financial

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officer from 2007 to 2011.) The city settled with the SEC for \$1 million.

Amlong's September 21 letter claims that Spring and Sorey hid deficits over Henley's objections by shifting moneys from restricted funds, such as water plants and storm water, into the general fund to plug gaps.

Writes Amlong: "While this kind of spending is reckless, it is also invisible."

With the budget director's position vacant, Henley reported directly to Sorey, and Amlong says that Henley "wisely" declined two offers of promotion to the job in order to keep his civil service protections.

Commissioner Scott Galvin, in an e-mail, says, "Henley's accusations are serious and I will treat them that way. I support bringing in an independent auditor to verify the budget as we know it. Certainly, Spring has the right to counter Henley, and Henley has the right to plead his case to the Personnel Board."

Copies of Amlong's letter and accompanying documents spread across town shortly after the letter was sent, were posted on Facebook, and galvanized residents.

Will the issue come directly before the State of Florida, which in April

returned a tough audit of the city's operations from 2012 to 2014?

Will the governor appoint an oversight board? If not, who can the city trust to revisit the budget? Will hiring freezes, service cuts, and layoffs follow?

The *BT* shared the letter's contents and supplemental material with Merrett R. Stierheim, long cited as Florida's dean of public administrators with nearly 60 years of public service.

"The governor ought to act now," Stierheim tells the *BT*, emphasizing that he has no wish to get involved. The city must declare a fiscal emergency, which would empower Gov. Rick Scott to appoint an oversight committee. The timing is troublesome, as Scott is in a tight race to unseat Democratic Sen. Bill Nelson on November 6.

"It isn't a pretty picture at all — with many similarities to Opa-locka and the City of Miami," says Stierheim.

Stierheim — until recently the "go-to" source to fix demoralized or dysfunctional governments, including the Miami-Dade School Board and Miami-Dade County — helmed an oversight committee to turn around the

City of Miami in 1996, which unlocked a \$68-million shortfall and created a rescue plan after "two straight months of 16-hour days." In March 2017, he stepped down from a pro bono oversight board for Opa-locka, citing systemic dysfunction in the city.

According to Amlong's letter, North Miami's budget "overestimates income and underestimates both 2017 and 2018 expenses" by \$20 million, including:

- \$11 million in a general funds deficit, some of it filled by pulling \$3 million from the city's unallocated reserve, or savings account, reducing it to \$7 million;
- \$7 million in monies spent on Hurricane Irma repairs that FEMA has yet to reimburse but weren't deducted from the city's reserves (if so, that would bring the city's reserves to zero);
- \$2 million received from Costco in connection with its 99-year North Miami SoLeMia lease, which, "(contrary to what Mr. Spring told the City Council Monday), was used to balance the city's 2017-18 budget," Amlong writes. (Costco is preparing to move from its current location in mid-November.)

The letter claims that Henley had been clashing with Spring and Sorey over the past two years, resisting pressure to hide budget gaps by making the numbers look better than they are.

The pattern carried over to the present budget year to cover widening deficits. Finally, on September 12, shortly before the final budget hearing, Sorey issued a reprimand to Henley for "inability to adjust budgeted items downward based on the current fiscal year usage, as well as a lack of leadership."

"Mr. Sorey made it clear to Mr. Henley that he is not worried about any personal repercussions for the financial debacle into which he and Mr. Spring are steering the city," Amlong's letter states, adding that Sorey "felt sorry for Mr. Henley because he was going to be 'the fall guy on this one.'"

Stierheim urges a close look at the last two years of North Miami's external audits, particularly "material defects" and "audit exceptions."

"That is the first step I would take to correct North Miami's problem, or at least get a handle on it," he concludes.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com



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Time to Reboot for November Elections

School pay initiative should be top priority

By **John Ise**
BT Contributor

There's a great scene in one of the early episodes of *The Simpsons* where Kent Brockman, the strait-laced newscaster, reports from Congress, which is debating a bill to save hometown Springfield from a hurtling meteorite.

The Speaker of the House calls the question to evacuate Springfield but is interrupted at the last minute by a pencil-necked politico who tacks on a rider to the bill to add "\$30 million in support for the perverted arts." The Save Springfield/Perverved Arts bill is unanimously voted down, leading an exasperated Brockman to exclaim, "I've said it once and I'll say it again, democracy...it simply does not work."

Reflecting on the elections of the ethically suspect state Sen. Daphne Campbell, Rep. Roy Hardemon, and even "the Donald," I once thought Brockman might be on to something.

Thankfully, democracy, unlike autocracy, can self-correct and usually save itself from its own bad decisions. Faith in my fellow citizen was partially restored with the primary defeats of Campbell and

Hardemon by the impressive duo of Jason Pizzo and Dotie Joseph.

Next month we re-engage with the civic duty of voting our destiny. The November elections will give us a new commission in Biscayne Park, a new council in El Portal, a new state legislature, new governor, a congressional delegation, and a slew of amendments to the state constitution.

The highly educated, sophisticated, and, let's face it, good-looking readers of *Biscayne Times* already know plenty about the candidates for governor and U.S. Congress. But can you name the candidates for state commissioner of agriculture or attorney general? How many amendments to the state constitution are we voting on, and what do they propose (hint, there are 12, and some do multiple things — one, for example, prohibits offshore oil drilling and indoor vaping).

Frankly, it's all a bit confounding, but let's keep it local.

El Portal, the tiny 0.42-square-mile village of 2300, will be electing a new village council. Of the five seats up for grabs, we have a whopping total of six candidates. That's right, four of the five seats are

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uncontested, leaving the El Portal electorate to decide solely on council seat No. 1 between incumbent Dreher Werner and neighborhood activist Ibis Garcia.

Councilman Werner, as chair of the Public Works Committee, touts his efforts to shift approximately 95 homes on the village's western periphery from septic to sewer, as well as maintain the small-town charm of the village. Garcia seeks to call attention to the contamination of the Little River canal and emphasize services to the village's west side, perceived as neglected.

Biscayne Park, on the other hand, will be selecting from five candidates for three at-large seats on the village commission. Manuel Espinoza, incumbent William Tudor, Daniel Samora, Jared Susi, and Laura "Betsy" Wise have thrown their respective hats into the ring. Say what you will about Biscayne Park politics, elections are consistently and robustly contested, albeit occasionally brass-knuckled and, dare I say it, at times surreal.

Arguably the most accessible candidate of the bunch has been Jared Susi, a village resident since 2012. Susi seeks an emphasis on strategic planning, financial discipline, and maintaining the character and charm of the village. Tudor, a resident since 2003, wants to focus on street and median infrastructure, traffic calming, and revenue diversification, and is open to revisiting the contentious idea of growing the village's meager \$2.4 million budget (and village boundaries) through annexation. Espinoza has a singular focus on village finances, seeking further efficiencies.

Samora emphasizes his background of running a small business in making a case for fiscal discipline, re-evaluating village code enforcement, and adamantly opposing annexation. Wise, a relative newcomer, offers herself as a calming bridgebuilder in a village where political engagement can be likened at times to being beaten with a barbed-wire baseball bat.

Beyond municipal elections, the most important vote that many of us aren't aware of is the ballot measure known as Secure Our Future, put forward by Miami-Dade Public Schools (punch #362). The levy on property would raise \$232 million annually, at a cost of approximately \$0.39 per day to the typical homeowner, with those added monies being dedicated to teacher compensation (a boost in the neighborhood of double digits, to be negotiated by the school district and the teachers) and added school security.

The median teacher compensation for a teacher in the Miami-Dade public system hovers around \$50,000. When this is juxtaposed with the median home price of \$450,000, it's easy to see why many teachers leave for greener career choices. The rental market paints an equally grim picture, with the fair-market rents for a local two-bedroom unit running easily over \$1200 a month. Little wonder then that superintendent Alberto Carvalho has examined the possibility of the district building housing for teachers on school property.

Secure Our Future asks us the question of whether or not we see teaching as a respected profession, of vital importance to the community. If you have a modicum of professional success in your life, beyond your parents and close friends, to whom do you attribute that? Chances are, somewhere along the way, a teacher played a central role in shaping your success.

But compared with other careers, teaching scores poorly in compensation and consistently high in burnout. Teachers nationwide still abandon the profession at a high rate; half quit within the first five years.

Brad Sultz is a Miami Shores resident and public schoolteacher at the highly regarded iPrep Academy. He knows that many teachers have left for no other reason than low salaries and Miami's high cost of living.

"If you're young and starting out, you can't afford to be a teacher in Miami-Dade County," Sultz says. "My son has started the school year without two of his core teachers, and they can't find quality people to replace these teachers because the salaries being offered are below standard." Remember, iPrep is a coveted school for parents and teachers alike!

Arguably, there is no occupation more important than teaching. Yet too many of us sniff at the occupation and may even wonder why someone of high talent would "settle" for something compensated so poorly. But there is something fundamentally amiss when someone of high talent like Sultz says, "I've been teaching for 23 years, with a master's degree. I'm nationally board-certified... a former district teacher-of-the-year finalist and runner-up, and I'm disheartened."

It's high time to put our money where our mouth is and support compensating our public schoolteachers with a living wage. Democracy is a kind of mirror for society to hold up and reflect its values and priorities.

Prove Kent Brockman wrong and make democracy work.

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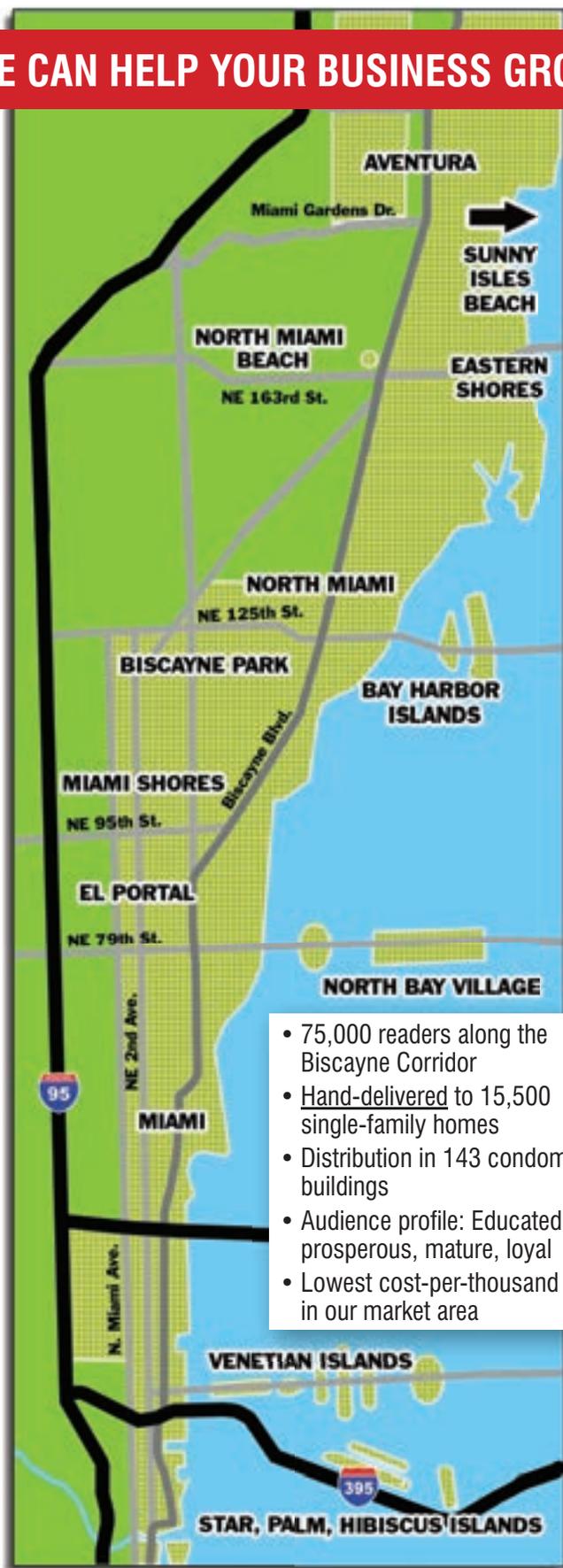
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Don't Reap Like a Sow

Constitutional amendments are not for self-enrichment

By Jay Beskin
BT Contributor

Are constitutional amendments a good way to pass laws? On the federal level, the amendment process has become virtually obsolete. Back when, as Billy Joel sings, "I wore a younger man's clothes," we thought of constitutional amendments as real and doable. We even saw a few of them ratified.

In 1961 the 23rd Amendment provided the right of Washington, D.C., to be represented in the Electoral College in proportion to its population, even though it is not a state and does not have a voting member of the House or Senate.

In 1964 the 24th Amendment forbade states from imposing any tax on voting, so that no one would ever miss the chance to vote because he or she could not afford to pay a fee.

In 1967 the 25th Amendment provided a means for a president to be removed from office if the vice president, along with a majority of cabinet secretaries, declare him or her to be incapable of performing the duties of office for reasons of physical or mental illness.

In 1971 the 26th Amendment lowered the voting age in federal elections from 21 to 18.

Finally, in 1992 the 27th Amendment prevented a sitting Congress from voting itself a pay raise; any raise members approve takes effect only after the next election.

That makes five successful ratifications of constitutional amendments in 31 years, each requiring a minimum of 38 states out of 50 (three-quarters of the states) to go along. This certainly gave the impression that such amendments were realistic achievements. The Equal Rights Amendment, which was promoted on the basis that it would better protect the rights of women, got as far as 35 states, but fell a bit short in the end.

Now, just one generation later, there are no constitutional amendments at all being actively pursued. Or even suggested, for that matter. The prevailing attitude treats the amendment process as a mountain too high to climb in this current political climate.

But that's not so at the state level. Florida has its own constitution, and

we voters just love amending the heck out of it. Instead of going to the legislature to pass laws, instead of going to the courts to interpret laws, Florida voters prefer to bypass all that heavy lifting and put constitutional amendments on the ballot. The all-time classic here was an amendment in 2002 preventing pig farmers from housing pregnant sows in gestation crates. As Dave Barry likes to say: I promise I am not making this up!

We also had the high-speed train debacle, when Florida voters in 2000 passed a constitutional amendment requiring the state to build “a high speed ground transportation system consisting of a monorail, fixed guideway or magnetic levitation system capable of speeds in excess of 120 miles per hour.” The amendment included no price limit. By 2004 folks caught on that this was a dumb idea and repealed the amendment.

In short, the legislative and judicial branches are far better suited to policy-making than the constitution, which is best reserved for broad principles of citizenship and government.

All of this serves as an introduction to the latest abuse of the constitutional amendment process in Florida, this time purportedly to provide tax relief for property owners. In a state without an income tax, our property taxes are a critical source of revenue, one we are loath to take a hatchet to.

On the other hand, the good news is that our number of housing units continues to increase significantly. Every time a 100-unit building goes up in Surfside or Sunny Isles, those are 100 new taxable units, all on one piece of property.

Homeowners by and large don't mind paying, especially since the property tax is saving them from the obligation of an income tax. But it does become difficult when properties suddenly shoot up in value during real estate bubbles. This causes middle-class homeowners to be jolted by sizable increases in their tax burden. And for people living paycheck to paycheck, and mortgage payment to mortgage payment, finding their tax assessment hiked by a few thousand dollars from one fiscal year to the next can be overwhelming.

In response to that, Amendment 1 was added to the ballot this year for the November 6 election. It raises the homestead exemption to \$75,000 (from

\$50,000) of the first \$125,000 in value of a person's dwelling. That should give a bit more of breathing room to the people on the lowest rungs of home ownership who are desperately trying to cling to that perch. It is hard to oppose a provision of this sort — although it seems ridiculous to pass this as an amendment, instead of through the legislative process.

Where I really find myself in opposition is Amendment 2. This amendment is not limited to homesteads of individuals. It also includes all sorts of high-end properties, many owned by conglomerates and large business entities. The amendment seeks to enshrine into constitutional impregnability the notion that no annual tax hike can exceed ten percent. If the value of a building appreciates from \$1 million to \$2 million in one year, the appraisal at which it is taxed can only rise from \$1 to \$1.10.

Actually, that rule is already in place — and it has been for some years — but the law that instituted it is due to expire in 2019. If this amendment passes, it not only will resuscitate the law before it breathes its last breath, it will grant it eternal life.

Now, parts of this may not be a bad idea. If a bill was introduced in the regular old way, there would be means of limiting it to protect more vulnerable landowners struggling to climb the ladder. Equitable standards and exclusions could be enacted.

Instead, we are back in constitutional territory. Our state constitution was designed to protect our rights as citizens, and to constrain the power of the state from abridging our freedoms and seizing our property. When a constitution stops a police officer from randomly pushing us around by force of uniform and weapon, it is doing its job.

And when it draws lines beyond which the state cannot exercise its eminent domain, it is doing its job. But when it starts getting involved in telling us how to raise our pigs, it is wrong — even when it is right.

And worse still, when we use the power of the constitution to line our own pockets, we ourselves are acting like... er, those aforementioned barnyard denizens.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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Oh, What a Night

A boxer, singer, athlete, and minister meet at Hampton House

By Anne Tschida
BT Arts Editor

Cassius Clay really shouldn't have been in the boxing ring with Sonny Liston back in February 1964 in Miami Beach.

Liston was the world heavyweight champion, considered one of the most formidable boxers of all time. Clay, "the Louisville Lip," was thought to be mostly trash talk and sweet moves.

The match attracted worldwide attention, and some would say the fight entered the annals of history as one of the top sporting events of the 20th century.

The 22-year-old Clay won.

There are many stories of Clay training on Miami Beach and having to cross the causeway at night because

Miami Beach, a segregated and unwelcoming city for blacks, had no hotels for African Americans.

But this night turned out to be special, and not just because of Clay's victory. He left Miami Beach to join some companions at the jumping Hampton House motel and music venue in Brownsville; those companions were Malcolm X, the R&B singer Sam Cooke, and the football great Jim Brown.

No one knows exactly what was discussed, but not long after, Cassius Clay would change his name to Cassius X (he'd quietly joined the Nation of Islam earlier). Also that year, Cooke would release "A Change Is Gonna Come," which would become an anthem of the civil rights era. Brown was becoming known off the football field as a



Photo courtesy of Hampton House

Malcolm X photographing Cassius Clay at the Hampton House.

champion for black equality and justice. Along with Malcolm X, all four men would be known forever in the ring of social activism.

It's a story that playwright (and television writer) Kemp Powers could not resist, and he debuted the one-act *One Night in Miami* in Los Angeles in 2013.

Michel Hausmann, the artistic director of Miami New Drama, one of our region's newest theater companies, knew this was the play to open his second full season with at Miami Beach's Colony Theatre, where New Drama is the resident company. The Colony also sits only blocks from the site of the 1964 fight.

To add to the historical significance, the October 4 kickoff will be at the newly restored Hampton House.

Miami native Carl Cofield, part of the inaugural class of the New World School of the Arts and graduate of University of Miami, is the play's director. He also directed the play's world premiere in L.A. and is currently the

associate artistic director of the Classical Theatre of Harlem.

Kieron J. Anthony, the actor playing Cassius Clay, also has Miami roots; he was a sprinter in his native Trinidad and Tobago before coming to run for University of Miami, where he studied biology. Today he's a full-time actor and teacher.

Esau Pritchett, as Jim Brown, is well known for his television appearances, including roles in *Orange Is the New Black* and *Chicago PD*. Leon Thomas, who plays Sam Cooke, is a singer and actor with Broadway credits in *The Lion King* and *The Color Purple*, among others, and starred on TV's *Victorious* alongside Ariana Grande.

It's a high-powered cast, says Hausmann, worthy of continuing the story that still does not have an ending. "These are issues that are still national and local," he says. While Miami Beach is no longer officially segregated, "today we have Colin Kaepernick," the San Francisco 49ers quarterback who took a knee during the national anthem and



Photo Associated Press

February 25, 1964, Miami Beach Convention Center: Cassius Clay pounds Sonny Liston.

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sparked another sports-led activist movement.

“The conversation is not yet finished; these issues are still not in the open — this is the type of play that can continue the dialogue,” he says.

No one knows for sure what the four talked about that evening almost 55 years ago, so Kemp Powers took what he calls some poetic license in shaping what happened.

Because we *do* know what transpired next, as Cassius X turned into Muhammad Ali and then into one of the most famous Americans of all time.

Malcolm X would break away from both the Nation of Islam and Martin Luther King’s strict adherence to nonviolence to become a charismatic leader. He was assassinated in 1965.

And the soul classics of Cooke, including “A Change Is Gonna Come,” would enter the pages of the Great American Songbook (he too was killed, in late 1964).

There is no band or piped-in soundtrack for *One Night in Miami*, according Hausmann, although Leon Thomas picks up a guitar periodically and strums songs of Cooke.

The sets, including the exterior and interior, are reproductions of what Hampton House looked like in the early 1960s. And it wasn’t just this night in February 1964, that made history at the motel. Martin Luther King Jr. was known to prefer a particular room when he was in town — and took a liking to the pool. Jackie Robinson would camp there during his stints in Miami for golf, and Sammie Davis Jr. would frequent the place. Muhammad Ali was a regular there, and the motel was known *the*



Martin Luther King Jr. at Hampton House, April 12, 1966.



Photo courtesy of Hampton House

social hot spot for African Americans in the South.

But like the neighborhood around it, Hampton House, at 4240 NW 27th Ave., fell onto hard times. By the 1980s and 1990s, celebrity patrons gave way to the homeless and addicts, and the motel was slated for demolition. It was given a reprieve with community and government support, and in 2001 the Save the Hampton House Project was born; the structure was designated a historic site and granted nonprofit status. Restoration is still under way for some of the motel rooms, but a beautiful new lobby and music hall have been resurrected.

Maybe most important, jazz and blues evenings have been reinstated; this summer Jesse Jones Jr. and Melton Mustafa were featured performers, and later in October, the Aldo Salvent Quartet is scheduled to host an evening of John Coltrane’s music. For those familiar with the local music scene, this might come as a surprise — these nights are packed.

Back at the Colony Theatre, after opening *One Night in Miami* in later October, Hausmann and New Drama plan to unveil a commissioned new play in March based on the film *Cocaine Cowboys* and infamous tale of Miami in the 1980s.

“This is us,” says Hausmann of what he wants New Drama to convey to Miami. “We want to be a voice of Miami, of its diversity, and what makes it unique.” He also wants to develop a nontraditional playgoing audience, “a new constituency that wants to come hear these stories.”

“One Night in Miami” opens October 27 at the Colony Theatre; miaminewdrama.org.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com



Kieron J. Anthony as Cassius Clay, Esau Pritchett as Jim Brown, Leon Thomas as Sam Cooke, director Carl Cofield.

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www.centralfine.com
Through October 2:
"20 20" by Carlos Sandoval De Leon

DAVID CASTILLO GALLERY

420 Lincoln Rd., Miami Beach
305-573-8110
www.davidcastillogallery.com
Through November 17:
"Sundown" by Xaviera Simmons

DOT FIFTYONE GALLERY

7275 NE 4th Ave. Unit 101, Miami
305-573-9994
www.dotfiftyone.com
Through November 25:
"Proximities" by Graciela Hasper

EMERSON DORSCH

5900 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-576-1278
www.emersondorsch.com
Through October 22:
"Adios Melancholy: and the Parrot of Life" by Magnus Sigurdarson



Philip Guston, *Afloat, 1975*, oil on canvas, at NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale.

FREDRIC SNITZER GALLERY

1540 NE Miami Ct., Miami
305-448-8976
www.snitzer.com
Through September 8:
"Summer Hots" with various artists
Through October 20:
Tomas Vu

GARY NADER ART CENTER

62 NE 27th St., Miami
305-576-0256
www.garynader.com
Ongoing:
"Master's New Acquisitions" with various artists

LAUNDROMAT ART SPACE

5900 NE 2nd Ave., Miami
303-960-7810
www.laundromatartspace.com
October 6 through 31:
"Interspace" with Joerg Dressler, Julie Davidow, Marina Gonella, and Juan Henriquez

LOCUST PROJECTS

3852 N. Miami Ave., Miami
305-576-8570
www.locustprojects.org
Contact gallery for exhibition information

MINDY SOLOMON GALLERY

8397 NE 2nd Ave., Miami
786-953-6917
www.mindysolomon.com
Through October 13:

"Linearity" with Ernesto Garcia Sanchez

NINA JOHNSON GALLERY

6315 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-571-2288
www.ninajohnson.com
October 6 through 24:
"Funnel of Love" by Peter Shire
Reception October 6, 7 to 9 p.m.

PAN AMERICAN ART PROJECTS

274 NE 67th St., Miami
305-751-2550
www.panamericanart.com
Through November 3:
"Structural Narratives" by Gustavo Acosta

PRIMARY

15 NE 39th St., Miami
954-296-1675
www.primaryprojectspace.com
Contact gallery for exhibition information

ROBERT FONTAINE GALLERY

2121 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-397-8530
www.robertfontainegallery.com
Contact gallery for exhibition information

TILE BLUSH

8375 NE 2nd Ave., Miami
office@tileblush.com
www.tileblush.com
Through October 7:
"Group Show" with Cassandra Davis, Dave Kudzma,

Melissa Leandro, Josériberto Perez, John Tennison, and Omar Velazquez.
October 1 through 31:
Jason Galbut

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12425 NE 13th Ave. Suite 4, North Miami
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UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI GALLERY

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

WALTMAN ORTEGA FINE ART

2300-B N. Miami Ave., Miami
305-576-5335
www.waltmanortega.com
Through October 31:
"Masterpiece" with various artists

WYNWOOD WALLS

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

MUSEUM & COLLECTION EXHIBITS

ARTCENTER'S PROJECT 924

924 Lincoln Rd., 2nd Floor, Miami Beach
305-674-8278
www.artcentersf.org
October 10 through December 16:
"Parallels And Peripheries" with Bethany Collins, Lizania Cruz, Genevieve Gaignard, Susan Lee-Chun, Joiri Minaya, Jamilah Sabur, Saya Woolfalk, and Kennedy Yanko. Curated by Larry Ossei-Mensah
Reception October 10, 6 to 9 p.m.

THE BASS MUSEUM OF ART

2100 Collins Ave., Miami Beach
305-673-7530
www.thebass.org
October 13 through March 10:
"Art with a View" by Paola Pivi
October 13 through April 21:
"Tune Yer Head" by Aaron Curry
Through October 21:
"Deceptive Constructions" by Karen Rifas

THE BASS: WINDOWS @ WALGREENS

7340 Collins Ave., Miami Beach
Ongoing:
"HOW TO: Forget More of These Kinds of Things About You Every Day" by Geovanna Gonzalez

DE LA CRUZ COLLECTION

23 NE 41st St., Miami
305-576-6112
www.delacruzcollection.org
Through November 15:

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Art, Miami

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Oct 2018

Sondra
Perry



Karen Rifas, 13.39.10, 2017, acrylic on paper, at the Bass Museum of Art.

Melissa's Pick

Known for her minimal cord installations and monochromatic line drawings, Miami-based artist Karen Rifas brandishes a new, refreshing element throughout her current exhibition at the Bass: color. Comprising two and three-dimensional works that playfully alter viewers' perceptions of space, *Deceptive Constructions* collects recent works highlighting the artist's longtime fascination with geometric abstraction and a newfound infatuation with jewel tones. These works oscillate between modes of flatness and depth that give color room to clash and settle, imbuing the overall presentation with an architectural logic referencing early 20th-century art schools such as the Bauhaus, while acknowledging canonical contributions from artists such as Josef Albers. Rifas's colorful works move from wall to floor and back again, invoking a clever yet artful virtuality that is best experienced with eyes wide open. — *Melissa Wallen*

"Affinities and Distraction" by William J. Glackens and Pierre-Auguste Renoir
Through June 30:
"Remember to React: 60 Years of Collecting" with various artists
Through October 14:
"Midnight in Paris and New York: Scenes from the 1890s-1930s, Williams Glackens and His Contemporaries" with various artists

PÉREZ ART MUSEUM MIAMI

1103 Biscayne Blvd., Miami
305-375-3000
www.pamm.org

Through October 7:

"now's the time: narratives of southern alchemy" by William Cordova

Through October 28:

"Photography, Politics, and the Ethical Image" by Sid Grossman

"Quarta-Feira de Cinzas/Epilogue" by Rivane Neuenschwander

Through April 21:

"Grids: A Selection of Paintings" by Lynne Golob Gelfman

"Love Is the Message, the Message Is Death" by Arthur Jafa

Through January 1:

"Invasive Species" by Felice Grodin

THE MARGULIES COLLECTION

591 NW 27th St., Miami
305-576-1051
www.margulieswarehouse.com

Ongoing:

"Pop Art" with various artists

Anselm Kiefer

"The Margulies Permanent Collection" with John Chamberlain, Amar Kanwar, Willem de Kooning, Olafur Eliasson, Michael Heizer, Donald Judd, Jannis Kounellis, Richard Serra, and Tony Smith

THE RUBELL FAMILY COLLECTION

95 NW 29th St., Miami
305-573-6090

www.rfc.museum

Contact gallery for exhibition information

THE NATIONAL YOUNGARTS FOUNDATION

2100 Biscayne Blvd., Miami
305-377-1140

www.youngarts.org

Contact gallery for exhibition information

THE WOLFSONIAN-FIU

1001 Washington Ave., Miami Beach
305-535-2622

www.wolfsonian.org

October 19 through 27:

"Deco: Luxury to Mass Market" with various artists

Ongoing:

"Art and Design in the Modern Age: Selections from the Wolfsonian Collection" with various artists

Compiled by *Melissa Wallen*

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

"Force and Form" with various artists

FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY FROST ART MUSEUM

10975 SW 17th St., Miami
305-348-2890

www.frost.fiu.edu

October 13 through January 13:

"Relational Undercurrents: Contemporary Art of the Caribbean Archipelago" with various artists

Ongoing:

"Connectivity: Selections from the Collection of the Frost Art Museum" with various artists

Through December 9:

"The Writing on the Wall" with Hank Willis Thomas and Dr. Baz Dreisinger

INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ART, MIAMI

61 NE 41st St., Miami

305-901-5272

www.icamiami.org

Through October 14:

Diamond Stingily

Through November 4:

"Typhoon coming on" by Sondra Perry

Through November 25:

Francis Alijs

JEWISH MUSEUM OF SOUTH FLORIDA, FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

301 Washington Ave., Miami Beach
305-672-5044

www.jmof.fiu.edu

October 3 through February 3:

"Walking Canvases" by Daniel Chimowitz

Through October 1:

"The Sexuality Spectrum" with Judy Chicago, Joan Snyder, Arthur Tress, Archie Rand, Albert Winn, Trix Rosen, Joan Roth, and Mark Podwal

Through October 7:

"Tennessee Williams: Playwright and Painter"

Ongoing:

"Mosaic: Jewish Life in Florida" with various artists

LITTLE HAITI CULTURAL COMPLEX

212-260 NE 59th Terr., Miami

305-960-2969

www.littlehaiticulturalcenter.com

Contact gallery for exhibition information

LOWE ART MUSEUM, UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

1301 Stanford Dr., Coral Gables

305-284-3535

www.lowe.miami.edu

October 18 through January 20:

"American Portraits" by Yousuf Karsh

October 25 through January 27:

My Page is Glass by Giampaolo Seguso

October 25 through January 27:

"Dialogues: Studio Glass from the Florence and Robert Werner Collection" with various artists

THE MUSEUM OF ART + DESIGN AT MIAMI-DADE COLLEGE (MOAD MDC)

Freedom Tower

600 Biscayne Blvd., Miami

305-237-7700

www.mdcmoad.org

Through January 20:

"More Sweetly Play the Dance" by William Kentridge

MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART NORTH MIAMI

770 NE 125th St., North Miami

305-893-6211

www.mocanomi.org

November 27 through April 7:

"Africobra" with various artists

Through November 4:

"Tracing the Red Thread" by Mira Lehr

NSU ART MUSEUM FORT LAUDERDALE

1 E. Las Olas Blvd., Fort Lauderdale

954-525-5500

www.nsuartmuseum.org

October 21 through May 19:

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Bourgeois



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A Brazilian Genius and His Lyrical Guitar

Yamandu Costa is a virtuoso of the seven-string Brazilian classical guitar. A composer and stylist as well, the Latin Grammy nominee twice over (2010, 2014) has recorded 13 CDs and three DVDs, and toured worldwide to acclaim, playing not just the classical guitar works with symphony orchestras but also bossa nova, milonga, tango, samba, and chamamé folk style. A wonder to behold, he'll be performing at the Aventura Arts and Cultural Center on **Sunday, October 14**, at 7:00 p.m. Tickets: \$30-\$35. www.aventuracenter.org.

Midweek Freebies in Soundscape Park

Soundscape Cinema Series opens a season of free midweek, family-friendly, after-work (or after-dinner) movies shown in surround sound on the 7000-square-foot projection wall of the New World Center in Soundscape Park (400 17th St., Miami Beach). Films start at 8:00 p.m., with the first one a screening of 1984's fantasy *The NeverEnding Story* on **Wednesday, October 3**, followed each Wednesday this month by *Isle of Dogs*, *The Red Shoes*, *A Quiet Place*, and, on **Halloween, October 31**, a restored *Night of the Living Dead*, which came to life 50 years ago. www.nws.edu.

Major Laughs from Micro Performances

El Centro Cultural Español and **Microtheater Miami** continue their "Catch Me on Social Media, Put a Like on It!" season with showtimes **Thursdays through Sundays, October 4-7 and 11-14**. Performances run from 8:00 p.m. to midnight and consist of 15-minute plays, all showing concurrently and eight times per night, with programming in English and Spanish. What's more, they're performed inside shipping containers for 15 spectators and cost just \$6 per play. While you wait, enjoy the patio bar and food trucks, and contemplate what social media has done to *your* life. There are three playlets in English and six in Spanish, though we'll

bet that the humor transcends language. See one, see all on a night of theater shorts, at the CCE (1490 Biscayne Blvd.). Parking is available on NE 2nd Avenue between 14th and 15th streets, with a \$5 validation at the ticket booth. www.microtheatermiami.com.

The Experimental Keyboardist

Italian avant-garde pianist **Roberto Cacciapaglia** comes to Miami for Italian Hit Week and a performance **Saturday, October 6**, 8:00 p.m. (doors open at 7:00) at the North Beach Bandshell (7275 Collins Ave., Miami Beach). One of Italy's most inventive composer/musicians, Cacciapaglia blends synthesizers and conventional instruments, and experiments with both electronic and classical genres. His objective, he has said, is to take the piano, that most fundamental of instruments, and use technology to release its "harmonic, non-audible...invisible sounds, to make them audible and perceivable." His career includes a mastery of 12-tone compositions, quadraphonic albums, and numerous collaborations and performances worldwide. The concert is free but requires an RSVP to www.rhythmfoundation.com.

Ghoulies That Go Bump in the Night

Brave enough to take a **nighttime ghost tour** through Arch Creek Park? Professional storyteller Melinda Munger leads three hikes **Wednesdays, October 10 and 31**, and **Friday, October 26**, 7:30-9:30 p.m.

through the woods to fill you in on the area's haunted history. Meet at the nature center inside the park (1855 NE 135th St.), dress for hiking, and bring your flashlight and insect repellent. Not recommended for children under 9. Registration required. <https://rms.miamidade.gov>.

City Cemetery Spooks and Sagas

So popular is the annual **Ghosts of Miami City Cemetery** that HistoryMiami offers two outings this year, both on **Friday, October 26**, at 5:30 and 8:00 p.m. Historian Paul George leads the tombstone tours and regales with hair-raising snippets of local history. For some online context, revisit the *BT*'s June cover story on the place, "Rest in Pieces." Costumes are welcome; reservations required. Tickets: members \$20, non-members \$30, children 12 and under: \$10. www.historymiami.org.

Wynwood's HallowMania

It's billed as Miami's biggest Halloween free block party, also known as **HalloWYN at MANA Wynwood**, but you can expect to engage in a fair amount of "booze, food, music, and shopping." Come in your most outrageous costume **Wednesday, October 31**, 7:00 p.m. to 3:00 a.m., and enjoy food trucks, costume contests, an artisans market, and plenty of "live art" and music. Located at the Mana Production Lots (i.e.,



In a Musical Firmament of His Own

Africa's most celebrated musician, **Yousou N'Dour**, seems to have a charmed life. In his 30-year career, he's worked as Senegal's tourism minister, been a UNICEF ambassador, acted in film, composed music and lyrics, and owned a newspaper, radio station, and television station. Yet it's his voice, described by *Rolling Stone* as "so extraordinary that the history of Africa seems locked inside it," that makes reviewers reach for superlatives. His band, Super Étoile, has been hailed as the greatest in the world. He brings the group to the Arsht Center's Knight Concert Hall (1300 Biscayne Blvd.) on **Friday, October 26**, for an 8:00 p.m. show, with tickets priced from \$40 to \$85. www.arshtcenter.org.

the food truck lots, 2250 NW 2nd Ave.). RSVP online for a free drink ticket. <https://hallowynblockparty.com/>

Now for the Real Deal

For a serious take on the power of ritual: reserve your place for a two-hour **Little Haiti Vodou Tour** early next month. You'll disregard Hollywood distortions of Haiti's vodou culture in favor of actual lore and legends, not to mention vodou's history in the Americas, from its arrival with slaves in the 17th century to its survival under their forced conversions, the Haiti rebellions, and the religion as practiced today. You'll hear about vodou saints and holidays, priestess/practitioners, and ceremonies and temples, and visit a botanica, where you may find just the amulet you need. Reservations are a must for this tour, slated for two **Saturdays, November 3 and 10**, 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. each day, leaving from the Caribbean marketplace (5925 NE 2nd Ave.). Tickets: \$35-\$90; details: www.littlehaiticulturalcenter.com.

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



Macbeth Becomes Mendoza

The actors of Los Colochos Teatro from Mexico City have been touring worldwide with *Mendoza*, an adaptation of *Macbeth* dropped into revolutionary Mexico with the same allure of power and its tragic consequences. The play comes to Miami **Thursday and Friday, October 11-12**, 8:30 each night at the On.Stage Black Box Theater at Miami-Dade County Auditorium (2901 W. Flagler St.). Performed in Spanish with English supertitles, *Mendoza* employs six actors and three actresses, all onstage for the full 90-minute production. Tickets: \$30 adults, \$25 seniors and students. www.ticketmaster.com and at the auditorium box office, 305-547-5414. <http://fundarte.us>.

The Flamingo, Luxury Resort on the Bay

A view of our past from the archives of HistoryMiami

By Paul George
BT Contributor

The future Miami Beach was an unnamed barrier island bereft of people in the early 1900s, when Carl Fisher, a brash millionaire from Indianapolis, set his sights on it.

Fisher acquired large swaths of land on both sides of the island, then a veritable jungle, from John Collins, who owned most of the future Miami Beach. Fisher's holdings correspond to a portion of today's South Beach, and beyond.

Soon Fisher began to "carve a city from a jungle." He envisioned a rich resort community, as well as one with a substantial year-round population. He anointed the bay side of the island as the venue for hotels and athletic fields, while

the ocean side would be the preserve of wealthy. To link the east and west portions of the island, Fisher planned a grand promenade, to be called Lincoln Road, along which would stand expensive stores and other amenities.

Fisher's vision for the Biscayne Bay side of his holdings got under way with the construction in 1920 of the magnificent Flamingo Hotel overlooking Biscayne Bay on Bay Road near 15th Street. The island's first "totally planned resort hotel," the Flamingo would rise to 11 stories, positioning it as the fledgling community's tallest building. The hostelry was topped with a glass dome illuminated at night in red, green, and gold. The Flamingo contained 200 rooms and cost nearly \$2 million to build.



Photo courtesy of HistoryMiami. Claude Matlack Collection, Matlack 15-8.

A tea dance at the Flamingo Hotel, 1921.

The hotel also offered a yacht anchorage, Oriental tea garden, tennis courts, luxurious private cottages, shops, a men's club, broker's office, and barns for 40 Guernsey cows who supplied guests with fresh milk.

Fisher chose the name "Flamingo" while on a cruise to Andros Island in the Bahamas after seeing a pink cloud of flamingos above him. So taken was he with their beauty that he decided to name his

hotel for them. In the next installment of "Picture Story" we'll discuss the Flamingo's opening and the years that followed.

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.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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Biscayne Crime Beat

Compiled by Derek McCann

That Fellow Passenger?

5900 Block of NE 5th Avenue

A call to police revealed that two victims lived together in this house. An intruder had entered the house by breaking the lock on a side door. Once inside, he ransacked parts of it, causing some damage, though it was deemed minimal. What he did do was steal a Mac Book Pro, Apple Air Pods (so he can use the Mac Book without distraction), and a passport. This happened within a three-hour window, from late morning to early afternoon. There are no witnesses, but you may see this guy on an international flight very soon.

Two Out of Three Ain't Bad

NE 27th Street and Biscayne Boulevard

A security guard at a construction site was making his rounds when he saw

two individuals carrying bags and walking down a ramp. They left the construction site, causing the brave security guard to run after them. If one wants to get ahead in life, one must go the extra mile — or in this case, chase down the slimebags for a hundred yards or so. Carrying large bags slowed the thieves down, so they dropped two bags of tools but kept one more bag and managed to get away. The security guard was able to bring the two bags back and then call the police. No arrests have been made.

Hopeful No One Would Bother

7000 Block of N. Miami Avenue

Victim has gone to the Dominican Republic for several weeks. His father



came by his home one evening and found it had been pretty much turned upside-down. Some of the missing items include a 47-inch television, a Glock, a Dell laptop, plus eight pairs of shoes and ten hats. This victim is some kind of style aficionado. So is

the burglar, apparently. The back door was missing a frame where the lock goes, so there was no security and the door had been unlocked for those weeks the man had been in the DR. Police suggested he secure his door for the future.

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Thirsty Tip Thief

900 Block of Biscayne Boulevard
Wait staff have to put up with a lot, so please make sure you tip them well — it makes for good karma, too. A man walked into a restaurant and asked for a glass of water. As he was being assisted, he reached into the tip jar, grabbed the money, and ran out of the place. It happened so fast. Sadly, no arrests have been made.

This Would Ruin a Good Dessert

400 Block of Biscayne Boulevard
While eating dinner out with her family, a woman placed her bag on one of the empty chairs. By the time dessert came, it was gone! She went to the manager and he provided video of someone taking the bag and leaving the restaurant. Within an hour, the thief had run up \$4200 on a Bank of America credit card and \$57 on taxi service. Aside from watching the video, no one saw anything, and the low-life seems to have gotten away with it.

Parking Scofflaw's Poor Getaway

400 Block of Biscayne Boulevard

As they were leaving a parking garage, one vehicle was tailgating another. That is vintage Miami driving, but there was more going on here. As the front car paid and left, the tailgater ran right on through the toll gate without paying. He also crashed into the sidewalk, causing pedestrians to run away in horror. This was all to avoid a five-dollar fare. Take note, Miamians, there are safer ways to be a sleazy cheapskate.

The Dressing Room Caper

7200 Block of Biscayne Boulevard
Miami is in many ways the envy of the world, with shopping being a part of what makes it all great. A man was looking for clothes for a presentation he was going to make. As he was changing, he left his bag with his wallet on a chair outside the changing room. His friend was there to watch, but said friend was by now walking around the store. Once the man left the store, he received fraud alerts on his phone from his credit union, Nordstrom, and Publix. He then realized his wallet was gone. Witnesses said that two "possible" transvestites had been in the area and likely took the wallet. There is video.

No Rest for the Weary

1500 Block of N. Miami Avenue
A man was using the restroom and had put his purse next to him. Report clearly says "purse," not "man purse," which shows progress in police gender understanding. Semantics aside, the person in the stall next door removed the purse. As victim zipped up and exited the stall, he saw a man running toward the exit door. Men must learn not only how to wear it, but how to protect it. We are, however, still early in man-purse history.

A Real Game Killer

1700 Block of N. Bayshore Drive
A man put his backpack under a bench as he went to play basketball. During a break in the action, he went to retrieve the bag and saw it had been opened. His phone and wallet were both missing. Not noted if the game continued with our victim, but it surely would have been a grudge match for the ages, as everyone is a suspect.

Doesn't Pay to Flash Your Goods

34 NE 11th St.

Man was at a club and started a conversation with a young woman. His friend was with him, and at one point, he took out his phone and showed his friend a picture. He then put the phone in his right-front pocket. As he got up to leave, the woman he was talking to brushed up against him. This brush was her taking the phone that our victim had nicely advertised. Thankfully for victim, he did not flash anything else.

I'll Just Take This

3400 Block of N. Miami Avenue
A man on a mission dressed in camouflage pants and a striped polo shirt entered a Marshalls discount department store and went straight to the men's department, where he tried on several items. He grabbed a backpack and put the clothes he liked inside it. He walked past all the points of sale without attempting a complete his "purchase." Total value of merchandise was \$49, not exactly fancy stuff here. Thief got on his bike and pedaled off.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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APPROVED SHIPPER

On the east side of Collins Avenue by Baker's Haulover Cut is the Bark Park, the only area in Haulover where dogs are allowed off leash. It consists of two chain-link fenced yards, one for dogs under 35 pounds and one for dogs over 35 pounds. The small-dog park is one of the most spacious in the county at approximately 1.8 acres. Shade trees are everywhere here, and a concrete foot path leads to a water fountain and a pet waste station. I counted six picnic tables, all placed in the shade. The only flaw was its wonky gate and latch.

The large-dog park is approximately 3.8 acres but doesn't have the trees necessary to keep cool half the year. It does have three picnic tables, a bench, a water fountain, and a pet waste station with bags. There was no unattended poop on the ground — remarkable for an active dog park.

A short distance away is the ever-popular Dog Beach, located between lifeguard towers #2 and #3. Dogs are supposed to be leashed in this area, but there was hardly a tether used on the 25 dogs romping in the sand and surf during the *BT*'s visit. Dog Beach is now open daily from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Dogs aren't allowed anywhere else in Haulover besides Dog Beach and Bark Park. One cool amenity is the dog wash, where owners can hose off sand from their furry companions before getting back into their vehicles.

Bike rentals are available outside the dog park, which is only several yards from the new hybrid skate park and pump track that officially opened August 7. This free 7500-square-foot paved wonderland for bicyclists, in-line skaters, skateboarders, and kick scooter enthusiasts has been a long-awaited amenity since the closing several years ago of the skate park at Peacock Park in Coconut Grove.

One dad with two young sons lives nearby and tells the *BT* that they come to the skate park for four hours on weekends. "It's great outdoor family



At Dog Beach (8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. daily), canines are supposed to be leashed, but what fun is that?



Opened August 7, the skate park is a wonderland for bicyclists, in-line skaters, and skateboarders.

fun. We see the same faces here each week and make new friends."

Walkers can go north along the beach or along Atlantic Way, which runs parallel to the beach. Several bathroom buildings dot the route, as do sea turtle nests. From May 1 to October 31, these nests are managed and monitored by Miami-Dade Parks' Sea Turtle Conservation Program.

One mile north, almost back to where our journey began, you will come

upon the nude beach — or as the county prefers to call it, Clothing Optional Beach or Naturist Beach. It's located between lifeguard towers #12 and #16. The county website describes it as "a family-friendly portion of the beach." But if you're old-fashioned like me, take your kids to the other two-thirds of this remarkable beachfront, one of two public beaches run by the county.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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Beach Fun and Fishing Boats

Haulover Park is for water lovers

By **Janet Goodman**
BT Contributor

Between Bal Harbour and Sunny Isles Beach is Miami-Dade County's longest stretch of undeveloped beachfront property: Haulover Park.

At 177 acres within its 1.4-mile north-to-south expanse — the Intra-coastal Waterway and Biscayne Bay run along its western perimeter, while the Atlantic Ocean and beach lie to the east — this park is filled with amenities aplenty to satisfy numerous weekend visitors, and they're spread out enough so that it never feels crowded.

The initial parkland was acquired in 1935; later the beachfront was purchased in 1940 with a \$2 million municipal bond that also bought what would become Crandon Park in Key Biscayne. Haulover Park officially opened in late 1948.

The BT drove in from the north on 163rd Street in North Miami Beach, from Biscayne Boulevard to Collins Avenue (A1A), which runs right through the length of the park. Visitors also have the option of entering on the south end of the park at Bal Harbour.

On the Intracoastal side of Collins Avenue, the first thing you'll come to

is the Haulover Marine Center, which is the largest dry boat storage facility in Miami. The center advertises that it has capacity for 508 boats and is built to withstand a Category 5 hurricane. Outdoor dry-dock space is also available near the restaurant Las Delicias Colombianas. Public boat launch ramps have convenient boat trailer parking lots and street access, and Baker's Haulover Cut leading to the ocean is only a mile away.

More parking lots with hundreds of spaces are available up and down the park, mostly along the bay side. On a busy, beautiful Sunday afternoon in early September, there were still ample spaces for the taking. Weekday parking rates are \$5 for cars, except in the North Lot and Lot #1, which are \$6, and \$15 for buses and RVs. Weekends and holiday rates go up to \$7 for cars.

The picnic areas are also spread out through the vast park. Picnic shelters with several tables, garbage bins, and grills are by reservation only. Two medium-size shelters are located on the bay side, and two more are located on the east side of Collins Avenue. Rental rates are \$157 plus tax for medium shelters, \$224 plus tax for large shelters. Call 305-947-3525 for reservations.



BT photos by Janet Goodman

The beach side of Haulover Park: More than a mile of pristine sand and sea.



Haulover is home to about a dozen charter boats — reserve a fishing trip and park for free.

Travel south on A1A to get to the newly renovated Bill Bird Marina building, which has a rental room with a 52-person capacity. Rental rates are seasonal, from \$401 plus tax from November to March and \$347 from March to November. Located south of the building are 152 boat slips, with a dozen charter fishing boats. Parking here is free with a paid fishing trip reservation.

Not into fishing or boating? On the southern tip of Haulover Park is Skyward Kites, with a large selection of colorful kites, wind spinners, and windsocks that can be flown on a breezy open field located near Skyward's solar-powered trailer, which keeps Good Humor ice cream and soft drinks cold.



Solar-powered Skyward Kites offers colorful kites, wind spinners, and windsocks.

Bill Bird Marina is also the site of Food Trucks Tuesdays from 5:00 to 10:00 p.m., featuring music entertainment and free parking.

HAULOVER PARK



Park Rating



10800 Collins Ave.
Miami, FL 33154
305-947-3525
Hours: Sunrise to sunset
Picnic tables: Yes
Barbecues: Yes
Picnic pavilions: Yes
Playground: No
Dog park: Yes
Night lighting: Yes
Beach: Yes
Skate park: Yes

Hen Power

Chickens are therapeutic at senior communities

By Janet Goodman
BT Contributor

An innovative program encourages social interaction and reduces isolation among the elderly.

The HenPower project offers a new approach to improving senior living. It has been helping residents in selected senior care facilities to raise hens, design chicken coops, and educate schoolchildren about animals.

Most animal-assisted intervention programs involve companion animals (dogs, cats, or rabbits) visiting facilities. This project offers a different kind of pet therapy, one that allows residents to become more involved in the animals' lives.

The pilot program was launched in 2012 by Equal Arts, a British creative aging non-profit. With 1000 British pounds (about \$16,000), HenPower was a trial program in a dementia-care setting in Gateshead, near Newcastle. The participating residents, called "hensioners," provided day-to-day care of the hens, their eggs, and chicks, and recorded oral histories of their experience and designed cards, calendars, and other hen-inspired artwork.

The project encouraged residents to engage with the animals and with other participants, with the aim to prevent loneliness and isolation, two common afflictions of those in senior and dementia care. Hens were catalysts for all kinds of activity. Increased creativity, health, and outdoor physical activity were benefits of the pilot program.

Jos Forester-Melville, HenPower's program manager, tells *New York* magazine in a recent interview that the project

"is not animal-assisted therapy, but the building of human bonds, making friends through hens and creativity. We write songs and poems about our feathered friends; we design sculptures and collages." Hens serve as artist models during creative sessions led by volunteer artists and musicians. Older people go through a lot of loss. But one thing that lasts, even in dementia patients, is their creativity.

Some of the hensioners participate in Hen Road Shows, where they take hens out to other care facilities, schools, and health conferences.

A 12-month study of the pilot program was conducted by Northumbria University; its published report in 2014 found that HenPower improved the health and well-being of the small group of older people involved, reduced depression and loneliness, and decreased the need for anti-psychotic medications.

In a *BT* e-mail exchange, Forester-Melville writes that since 2012, HenPower applied for National Lottery funding of one million pounds and has rolled out the project to 60 care facilities and schools in the United Kingdom, three senior care communities in Holland, two in Taiwan, and twenty in Australia.

In New South Wales, Australia, HenPower was adapted from the British project and run by the Whiddon Group, which introduced HenPower in four of its residential aged care homes. There were early indications of increased quality of life scores among participating residents.

As reported by the Australian publication *Mindfood*: "This six-month trial beginning in December 2015 has shown



Photo by HenPower

numerous health and well-being benefits, significant reduction of depression, reduction of loneliness, and the empowerment of older people to build positive relationships."

The trial's final report reveals three important benefits for the residents who participated in the HenPower project: empowerment, connection, and health and well-being. Today HenPower is at most of Whiddon's 19 residential aged care homes.

Shared ownership of the chickens and responsibility for their care give the seniors daily, purposeful routines, good distraction from boredom, and feelings of independence.

According to Jeremy Watson-Hunt, a Whiddon activities director, HenPower benefits those with dementia symptoms. "It gives them a sense of purpose. They've got someone to talk to, to hold, and to care for, and it does make a big difference," he says. Strong bonds are formed between the residents and individual chickens. Touching the animals gives relief from stress, and their care promotes increased outdoor activity for the seniors.

Karn Nelson, executive general manager of strategy and research with the Whiddon Group, says that HenPower "has given the residents a whole new focus. These are people who would normally be

sitting in their rooms alone and they would be very difficult to get out of their rooms." Not only are they now getting out of their rooms and outside to the coops, but they are doing outreach at local schools with goodwill ambassador chickens.

In one HenPower video, a hensioner notes, "It's definitely brought the community closer together."

Another hensioner confesses, "I used to stay in bed and say to myself, 'What do I have to get up for?' If you're feeling a bit down in the dumps, you can always come around the coops and have a talk with the hens. It sounds daft, but they listen."

The Equal Arts charity has plans to expand the HenPower project to 24 additional care settings in the U.K. and has received an extra 244,000 pounds of government funding to do just that.

"Our project isn't yet in the United States," Forester-Melville tells the *BT*, "but we'd be keen to set one up. We provide an international license that offers access to our model and resources, and 24/7 online support."

What's Miami waiting for? For information: www.equalarts.org.uk.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com



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The Art of Engagement

For Freedoms hopes to heighten public discourse through nuance

By **Stuart Sheldon**
BT Contributor

I just shared a weekend with my wife and two young sons in a cloud forest, far, far away from the Upper Eastside of Miami. We marveled at three-toed sloths chomping leaves and eyelash vipers sunning on ferns. Early morning brought a symphony of birdsong, and dusk silhouetted toucans, parrots, and countless intrepid creatures surveying their dominions from the high branches. It all affirmed something utterly fundamental, bordering on ridiculously obvious. *We are alive!*

There exist two distinct aspects to this exhilarating state of being. One light. One dark. My artist's heart feels them both at once. While my beloveds rode their first horses through the tropical streams, milked their first cows, and snuggled baby pigs, I considered the growing numbers in our country who will never have this bone-deep joy in their lives. Those who instead face the unimaginable. Those for whom America's rising environment of acceptable, murderous violence has taken their child or someone else they adore. Or who are driven by fear to build arsenals at home.

Bear with me before you dismiss this column as a political rant, because it's actually an integral part of an art activation I'm creating right now. One in which you are part. Given that a critical election is just weeks away, I feel obliged to use

this platform to express a non-partisan wish for our country — that we become more joyous, more reverent, less militant, less violent. What is life if we must worry about our kids being shot — or worse, if they begin to worry about being shot?

My oldest son was about to enter first grade on that day a few years ago when 20 six- and seven-year-olds were massacred in their first-grade chairs at Sandy Hook. I still can't process this reality — a man walking up and down those little aisles shooting each doe-eyed child head-on with an AR-15.

I believed this would be a turning point for our country. Shockingly, things have only gotten worse. But this is bigger than a gun conversation. It's emblematic of our country's devolution from high collective principles, a sense of a greater good, love-thy-neighbor, and golden rules to those of us-versus-them and selfish life-or-death instant gratification.

My art practice has two faces. One celebrates beauty and joy, the laughter of children, the glory of wisdom, the splendor of nature. The other aims to fix what is wrong with the world. It's this latter motivation that underlies my latest art project, a 48-foot-wide billboard on I-95 that is part of the 50 States Initiative, a project launched in June by For Freedoms, a platform for civic engagement, discourse, and direct action for U.S. artists. For Freedoms calls the 50 States Initiative "the largest creative collaboration in the history of the United States."



Photo by @gavindmckenzie

Along I-95 northbound near 143rd Street.

For Freedoms itself was established in 2016 by two artists, Hank Willis Thomas and Eric Gottesman, with the goal of using art "to deepen public discussions of civic issues and core values, and to clarify that citizenship in American society is deepened by participation, not by ideology."

Since then, For Freedoms (the name is taken from the famous 1941 "Four Freedoms" speech of Franklin Delano Roosevelt) has grown into a network of hundreds of artists, galleries, libraries, museums, and universities working toward "greater participation in the arts and in civil society," according to its website. The result includes partnerships for art exhibits; town halls (without the politicians); and art making and public art installations.

The 50 State Initiative includes the installation of artists' billboards in all 50 states, Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico. They started going up across the country in September, and will continue in advance of the midterm elections. The intention is that if artists' voices replace advertising, public discourse can become more nuanced, less polarized.

You may have seen my digital billboard, pictured here, while driving northbound on

I-95, just south of NW 143rd Street. It represents the latest in my series of site-specific and video installations titled *How Was School Today?* aimed at gun sense issues.

Clearly, these are complicated topics, and while we've never been more divided as a nation, I believe we can find a connection at the level of our children being murdered. And in this lamentable connection, we can join together to bring society back to a place where our kids are just kids who worry about the big game and final exams and having crushes. And who never again even think about dying in school. Let's break the false logic chain that more guns are needed because so many guns exist.

Please join this art project...for our kids. Share this column and visit Forfreedoms.org and Gunsensevoter.org, a nonpartisan, state-by-state profile of each candidate who believes in sensible gun legislation.

Stuart Sheldon is an artist, author, and Miami native. Follow him on Facebook and Instagram @stuart_sheldon.

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That Healthy-Looking Tree Is Dying

Incompetent maintenance can be a killer

By Jeff Shimonski
BT Contributor

I've assessed the health and stability of thousands of trees over the years. I've benefited from a career in the horticulture industry because knowing a tree's characteristics or species profile often gives me visual clues when I'm looking at it from a distance. I can tell when something's off. The color of the foliage may not be right for the time of year or the tree has accumulated small dead-branch ends on one of its sides.

Many of my projects have taken me onto college and university campuses, or to the properties of private schools. They might even be campuses I'm visiting for reasons other than work. But one glaring reality really stands out for me: some of the most egregious tree abuse — and in some cases, the worst tree maintenance to be found — can be seen on the campuses of learning institutions.

One incident really stands out. A number of years ago I'd just completed my site work evaluating the trees for a new development on the property of a "high-end" private school. I was walking back to my car and discussing the project with a manager of the school.

Then a tree off in the distance caught my eye and I said to the manager that it would be a good idea for me to inspect that tree based on what I was seeing. I explained my concerns and suggested we walk over and have a look together.

There was a noticeable reluctance since school was in session and the area around the tree was in a fenced-in playground.

There were little kids inside the play area and I couldn't disturb them, so I didn't enter. Instead, I viewed the tree from about 20 feet away and was appalled by what I saw. I pointed out that improper pruning cuts over time had caused extensive decay in the tree's branches and trunk. The manager insisted, however, that the tree must be in good condition since its foliage looked great and the canopy was full and providing shade to the children inside the playground.

The manager was trying to end the visit and get me to leave, so I said I knew it wasn't within the scope of my work, but that he needed to close that playground and get a proper tree risk assessment as soon as possible by a competent professional. That tree had to be removed! There were little children playing underneath the canopy of a sick tree five or six days a week.

The manager didn't want to hear it. All I could think of was a favorite comment from the TV medical doctor Greg House when he'd call someone an idiot. The phrase just popped into my head.

Well, they reluctantly did have me assess the tree and write a report, and the tree was finally removed. Yet I was shocked that such an expensive institution would have such crappy



BT photo by Jeff Shimonski

Cut roots and bad pruning hasten tree failure.

tree maintenance, and it could be seen throughout the campus.

I've since learned that crappy tree maintenance is the norm for many educational facilities. Last month I was evaluating trees on another campus when a teacher noticed me at work and came out to ask me what I was doing. I explained that I was inspecting trees and that I had permission to be onsite.

I then asked the teacher if biology was taught in the school. The answer was that they only had grades K-8. I wasn't quite sure what was implied but explained that all the trees along the area where the cars were parked had had all their roots cut off on one side, right up to the trunk, and that these trees were likely to fail in a strong or perhaps not too strong wind.

A number of the trees were already showing signs of damage; there was a dearth of any healthy-looking foliage in the canopy. I asked if anyone in the school had noticed the root damage, since they parked their cars there every

day during the school term.

Perhaps I was a bit brusque since the teacher stalked off. I was left wondering about the serious void in students' education if biology, critical thinking, and risk assessment aren't taught, or even remotely understood by the management team in an educational institution.

I remember growing up here in Miami when we students would always gravitate to campus trees for their shade. I guess at the schools I attended all those trees now are gone, probably due to potential liability issues. What a shame. A little critical thinking might equate crappy and low-cost tree maintenance to probable tree failure.

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.

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Death by a Thousand Cuts

If the Weather Service goes private, who can we trust?

By Kim Ogren
BT Contributor

Imagine you've received a memo from your boss stating that 250 of your co-workers are getting laid off. That's the Trump administration's proposal for NOAA's National Weather Service for FY19, which begins October 1. Congress has yet to take up the matter, but when it does, positions primarily responsible for generating, analyzing, and delivering weather forecasts are on the chopping block.

Marshall Shepherd, a professor of geography and atmospheric sciences at the University of Georgia, writes in *Forbes* that these cuts are dangerous. They would harm our ability to make decisions on everything from transportation to oil and gas infrastructure investments, from agriculture and air traffic control to military and school bus deployments. If the National Weather Service forecasters go, who will we depend on?

The people who report the weather have always been rock stars to me. I graduated from the University of Florida with a degree in geography and took climatology, meteorology, and "physical hazards" courses. My professor wrote the book on El Niño. Really. It's called *El Niño in History: Storming through the Ages*. César Caviedes was a passionate professor who took his students on wild rides. With a heavy German-Chilean-French accent, sweat dripping from his brow, and arms waving like a conductor's, he described

in detail atmospheric and oceanic systems that spanned the globe.

In the early 1980s, the Weather Channel (TWC) shone a spotlight on weather professionals as broadcast journalists. Its first major slogan was: "You need us for everything you do."

I was a huge fan of TWC's Dave Schwartz's smarts, wit, and comedic timing. He reminded me of David Letterman, who famously got his own start as a TV weatherman. More recently, TWC's Stephanie Abrams, with meteorology degrees from UF and FSU, has received praise for correcting — during live hurricane coverage — her colleagues' tendency toward hyperbole.

Your favorite local TV weatherperson is likely the only person at the station with a science degree, and likely in meteorology. This journalist also reigns over coveted airtime — the weather draws more viewers than any other newscast segment.

Weather reporters are deemed so influential that more than a decade ago, the National Environmental Education Foundation began training them how to extend their airtime by integrating environmental and climate information to improve viewers' understanding.

Bryan Norcross, host of a new podcast produced by WPLG, catapulted local trusted weathermen from rock stars to superheroes during Hurricane Andrew in 1992. And NBC 6's chief meteorologist, John Morales, whose list of academic and service accolades runs long, is active on Twitter, manages the only local live radar, and was named

2018's "Best of in Arts and Entertainment" by *New Times*.

Weather and climate are colliding in unpredictable ways. Until we understand exactly how, we're calling these collisions "severe weather events." And we'll continue watching weather news, but not for its infotainment value. Instead, it'll be a matter of full-blown economic and personal life or death.

Which leads me to this question: At what point have we asked enough of our TV weather reporters? Their skill and knowledge must include access to data, analysis, translation, narration, and agile storytelling. And it all begins with a high-functioning National Weather Service as a reliable source.

In October 2017, the National Weather Service Employees Organization released a statement warning that the agency is "for the first time in its history teetering on the brink of failure." Reductions in staffing had left scientists stressed, overworked, and frustrated.

What happens to the transparency, integrity, passion, and focus on the public interest if the drivers of weather information become private? That's a possibility and not the first time efforts have been launched to prevent the National Weather Service from competing with for-profit entities like AccuWeather. Just three months into his term, President Trump signed legislation that would, in part, encourage the private sector to provide weather analysis and consulting services for NOAA to purchase.

The December 2017 issue of *Nature* offers five priorities for weather



John Morales of NBC 6 is passionate about public interest.

research: Deliver science for service; seam together planet-wide weather models that connect land, air, and sea; improve infrastructure of organizations to increase user access to data; nurture a diverse workforce; and share ideas through new networks.

These priorities form a framework for addressing concerns raised by the proposed budget cuts, and Miami is uniquely positioned to take the lead on this effort. I call on those of you engaged in climate change to work with the Miami Foundation to apply for a Community Information Needs grant from the Knight Foundation. Start by convening Florida's superhero meteorologists at the FIU campus. Invite Professor Shepherd, who's a three-time FSU grad and who, according to his website, "redefines the intersection of academia, science, and societal relevance." Who and where better than us and here, to launch this ground game around weather research and journalism?

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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Red, white, and you: Agreeable wine for \$15 or less

By **Jacqueline Coleman**
BT Contributor

What's not to love about October? It's when football season shakes out to be either just what we expected or totally wacky, but either way, we're into the heart of it. The semester's halfway through, and kids are picking out pumpkins and deciding on costumes. Then there are lucky people everywhere but here emerging refreshed after summer's oppressive heat to don colorful scarves, leggings, and boots. What a wonderful time of year!

Perhaps October's biggest event is the one that happens on the last day of the month. Trick-or-treaters give parents everywhere real-life frights as they dart in and out of houses (and traffic), looking for their favorite sweets. With all the commotion that night and in the weeks leading up to Halloween, I think it's safe to say we'll all need a glass of wine.

The beauty of wine is that not only are there different grape varieties to choose from, but there can also be a diverse range of styles for each grape, from bone dry to super sweet. This October it's not just the kids who get to enjoy something sugary — parents can indulge a bit, too. From semi-sweet to full-blown dessert in a glass, join me as we discover these sweeter wine treats.

I'll start with the driest wine of the bunch to ease you into the residual sugar, especially for those who aren't

used to drinking off-dry wines. The **2016 Domaine Zinck Gewurtraminer** from Alsace is a treat. An excellent food-pairing wine, it is slightly mineral on the nose and fragrant with light flowers, and still maintains decent body. I found that the acidity in this wine holds the balance throughout your palate, and exotic fruit flavors guide you to a lovely off-dry finish.

For something a little different, try the **2016 Biltmore Estates Riesling**, from its winery in Asheville, North Carolina. Smooth and light, it offers a strong dried apricot on the nose and a hint of honey on the palate. It's also a tad bolder than your typical German Riesling, but that's to be expected from an American wine. I'd take this crisp and semi-sweet treat with me this Halloween.

Admittedly, I'm not a regular sweet wine drinker, but I've decided that the **Castello del Poggio Moscato** is my favorite bottle of this grape. With a little bit of fizz, Castello del Poggio welcomes you to Moscato with a beautiful honey-suckle nose. Delicate white flowers and audacious peach flavors mingle with the honey on your tongue for a truly enjoyable drinking experience.

Who said we must put away the rosé for the year? Try the **Bell'Agio Rosé Dolce** for a pink sweet. Big red strawberries and raspberries hit you in a good way. I found this wine to be *très* sweet but balanced and incredibly pleasant. It would be hard not to pour a second glass

of this Lambrusco rosé from Italy, which is a great fall wine addition for us in South Florida, where it's still hot.

Red wine drinkers aren't left out with the **Rivata Casa Rossa**. A sweet red wine, this slightly effervescent red cherry fruit bomb shows up smooth on the palate. It is not your typical full-bodied red, so I would recommend trying this wine with a light lunch salad accompanied with strawberries or a soft white cheese for a fruity complement.

Now we get to the drinkable desserts. I really enjoyed the next two wines on their own or with a bit of blue cheese following a meal. They are the two dessert wines that follow. Both are sold as splits (half-bottles), so calculate that into your pricing. The **2016 Château Miselle Sauternes** from Bordeaux is an excellent value for the cost. Full-bodied and bursting with sweet apricot and honey thickness, this economical Sauternes coats your palate in its dewy gold color.

Though I enjoyed the Sauternes, I have to say that the dessert wine prize



The **Château Miselle Sauternes split** and the **Rivata Casa Rossa** are both \$11.99 and the **Vistamar Late Harvest Moscato split** is \$9.49 at the **North Miami Total Wine & More** (14750 Biscayne Blvd., 305-354-3270). **Whole Foods Market** in North Miami (305-892-5505) carries the **Castello del Poggio Moscato** for \$14.99. **Publix at Biscayne and 18th** has the **Bell'Agio Rosé Dolce** for \$13.29 (305-358-3433). The **Domaine Zinck Portrait Gewurztraminer** is \$13.99, and the **Biltmore Estate Riesling** is \$9.99 at the **North Miami Beach ABC Fine Wine and Spirits** (14025 Biscayne Blvd., 305-944-6525).

goes to the **2016 Vistamar Moscato** out of the Limari Valley in Chile. This is a late-harvest Moscato that wows with big intensity in a little bottle. With citrus-honey, dried apricot, and peach on the nose, I liked the range of flavors in this sticky-sweet libation. Balanced and bold, it holds up just fine with a savory cheese complement or an equally sweet treat.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com



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Dinners for a Laidback Date Night

Food news we know you can use

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

For many couples, dining out is an experience. You dress to the nines and enjoy a night out on the town — just the two of you. But sometimes, dressing up or spending hours getting ready can feel like a drag. You just want to sit down and eat.

On those occasions, a casual meal hits the spot. And Miami has no shortage of laidback locales for a relaxing evening. A prime example: **Stanzione 87** (87 SW 8th St., 786-360-1852) in Brickell. The unassuming pizza joint is overshadowed by nearby Brickell City Centre, but sharp-sighted diners are in for a treat. Neapolitan pizzas come out in mere minutes, and there's an abundance of red and white pie options, including the new *mais* — a decadent prosciutto, corn, and four-cheese cream creation. Because of Stanzione's convenient location, it's easy to catch a movie or go for a scenic stroll after dinner.

In the Design District, another low-key spot in a luxury location has been making waves: **St. Roch Market** (140 NE 39th St., Suite 241, 786-542-8977). The food hall caters to all palates with a bevy of vendors that offer up tacos, pasta, sushi, and practically everything in between. Our recommendations for a memorable date: sushi rolls at **Itamae** and classic New Orleans cocktails at **The Mayhaw**,

the market's signature bar that's known for its crafty concoctions. For dessert, we suggest you take the escalator down to **Mad Lab Creamery** (140 NE 39th St., Suite 137, 305-639-8178), where you can create colorful ice-cream combos that would blow even Willy Wonka's mind.

Who knew an old hooker motel would eventually house one of Miami's comfort food greats? At **Blue Collar** (6730 Biscayne Blvd., 305-756-0366) in the Upper Eastside, casual is their middle name. Items like pork and beans, four-cheese mac and cheese, and chicken parm will easily put you and your better half into a food coma; the unpretentious eatery isn't shy about its large, carb-heavy plates. A reasonably priced wine and beer list seals the deal when it comes to keeping the evening's conversation flowing.

Aventura Mall's new wing continues to bolster the city's culinary reputation with new additions. Must be contagious. Across the street from the mall: **800° Woodfired Kitchen** (2956 NE 199th St., Suite C-3, 305-902-4363), the eatery from Miami Heat stars Dwyane Wade and Udonis that we previewed last month. The menu here is concise and mostly composed of rotisserie offerings — get the prime rib — and pizzas that are perfect for sharing and getting up close with your partner. There's even a burger named after Wade himself with truffle cheese, bacon, and roasted garlic aioli; make sure to split it.



BT photo by Dianne Rubin

Comfort food heaven: Blue Collar's chicken parm.

OPENINGS

While the celebrity-backed 800° Woodfired Kitchen is arguably the most newsworthy restaurant to pop up lately, other notable openings should not be overlooked.

Vista (5020 NE 2nd Ave., 305-405-7547), from the team behind downtown's **Fratelli Milano**, has come out of the gate swinging with all-day brunch, lunch, and rooftop menus. This Italian restaurant, just north of the Design District, puts less emphasis on pasta and more emphasis on proteins like rib-eye steak, wagyu sirloin bavette, and local snapper. Vegetables also earn a big placement on the menu: Organic kale and Sicilian fennel are flavorful starters that deserve your attention. There's even a kid's menu with fish tenders and sliders to keep your little ones busy in case you can't escape them.

Bodega Taqueria y Tequila (2250 NW 2nd Ave.), the popular Miami Beach taco joint, has made the trek over the causeway. Its new food truck has found a home at Wynwood Marketplace, a weekly pop-up space that features a fun lineup of live

entertainment and food vendors. Like its brick-and-mortar location, the Bodega food truck will feature crowd favorites like tacos al pastor, chicken burritos, and Nutella churros. What doesn't it have? Alcohol.

CLOSINGS

Say goodbye to one of Brickell's best happy hours: **Doraku Izakaya and Sushi** is no more. Mary Brickell Village's post-work hotspot has shuttered without a peep. Those seeking Doraku's discounted drinks and bites will now have to make their way to Miami Beach and visit the Lincoln Road outpost. Up in North Miami, **Hot Mama Kitchen** and **Campania Coal Fired Pizza** have also ceased operations.

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 causa 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 Genovesi'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 showstopping 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 NU Kitchen in downtown Miami, but his latest venture is poised to steal the spotlight. Located just a stone's throw from NU Kitchen, Arson remedies diets of that restaurant's shortcomings — a tight space and limited menu — to craft a distinct yet familiar experience that will appeal to NU fans and first-timers alike. The Jospir charcoal oven makes meats like the Patagonian lamb chops and Angus grass-fed skirt steak come out perfect; one bite of 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 this French bakery/café's exquisite macarons (not clunky coconut macarons, 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 D.J.s. 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)

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 sleeper 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 rijstafel, a mix-and-match collection of small dishes and condiments to be enjoyed 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's, and beignets, you're going to be very disappointed. The restaurant has 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 Boerrie 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)

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; greed-inducing "bags of gold," deep-fried wonton bagnar'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)

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

NEW THIS MONTH

MIAMI

BRICKELL / DOWNTOWN

ADDiKT 485 Brickell Ave., 305-503-0373

So long, 15th and Vine. The now-shuttered W Miami restaurant has been replaced by a more playful, approachable spot: ADDiKT. While the dishes have cheeky names like "Banh-Who? Banh-Me" (a Vietnamese pork belly sandwich) and "Juan in a Million" (shrimp tacos), this is some serious international cuisine. The view alone is worth the visit — any seat offers a breathtaking look at Brickell. Breakfast, brunch, lunch, and dinner. No matter the meal, the creative menu will keep you on your toes. \$\$-\$\$\$ (MFP)

MIDTOWN / WYNWOOD / DESIGN DISTRICT

No. 3 Social Club 50 NW 24th St., 305-748-4540

Rooftop restaurants and bars are common in Downtown Miami and other neighborhoods with a skyline. But elsewhere, it's slim pickings. Thankfully, that hasn't stopped No. 3 Social Club in Wynwood from letting patrons enjoy craft cocktails and shareable plates under the stars. Items like BBQ mushroom lettuce wraps, lamb sliders, and conch fritters are the perfect complements to boozy libations like the

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., 305-695-8989

Adding unique literary/culinary arts components to the Arsh Center, this casual indoor/outdoor café, directed by Chef Allen Sussner (arguably Miami's earliest and most dedicated local-ingredients booster), serves fresh and fun farm-to-table fare all day, everyday — unlike the Arsh's upscale Braval, open only for pre-performance dinners. Especially delightful vegetarian/vegan dishes range from snacks like cornmeal-battered "urban pickles" with dill tzatziki 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 Cimborsol 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; buttersautéed ant eggs. For the less adventurous, fried calamari with a Jamaican-inspired hibiscus reduction or dobladitas de jalbaas 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 A. ve., 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-hip 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)

mezcal-loaded Cactus Flower. Miami nights can get hot, so cool off and dehydrate responsibly with an alcoholic rosé popsicle. \$\$-\$\$\$ (MFP)

NORTH MIAMI BEACH

Jelly Bakery 17010 W. Dixie Hwy., Suite H, 305-760-2149

Despite the name, Jelly Bakery is more than just sweets. Savory fare gets an equal share of the limelight here with breakfast items like a spinach and brie English muffin, ham and cheese omelet, and Venezuelan perico-style scrambled eggs. On the other side of the flavor spectrum are options like French toast, waffles, and pan-cakes. Regardless of what you order, a Jelly Coffee is warranted — the mix of espresso, milk, and Nutella is addicting. \$ (MFP)

AVENTURA

Amaze 19129 Biscayne Blvd., 786-279-2260

You come to Amaze for one thing only: an arepa. At this fast-casual establishment, the popular Venezuelan/Colombian corn-meal pockets can be customized with different proteins and other fillings. Those new to arepas should try a classic Mechado Mix (shredded beef, black beans, baked plantains, and shredded white cheese), which serves as a satisfying introduction. Other more out-of-the-box selections include the Shaggy (pulled beef and gouda) and the Beauty Queen (avocado chicken salad). Order them all if you want; they're only \$6-\$9 each. \$ (MFP)

Crazy About You 1155 Brickell Bay Dr. #101, 305-377-4442

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

Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

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? Pricey, but portions are mammoth. And the champagne-cream-sauced housemade ravioli with black truffles? Worth every penny. \$\$\$\$\$ (PRB)

Jon Smith Subs 161 SE 1st St., 305-403-9493

In downtown Miami, lunchtime spots need to be quick, efficient, and delicious to survive. Jon Smith Subs meets those criteria. The store offers fast, friendly service and ample portions that can double as dinner. You'll find the usual steak and chicken subs here, but Jon Smith's more unique flavors are where the shop truly shines. Items like the Cuban (a Cuban sandwich in a sub) and a "Reuben on Cuban" lets guests know that the eatery embraces its Miami audience. \$ (MFP)

Katsuya 8 SE 8th St., 305-859-0200

Fans of Miami Beach's Katsuya no longer have to cross the bridge to get their sushi fix. Located at the SLS Lux in Brickell, this latest branch of the popular Asian restaurant features many of its sister location's favorites, along with new soon-to-be favorites like A5 fried rice with wagyu beef and tea-smoked duck confit leeks. Although the design of this Brickell branch may be minimalist, the food is not – it speaks volumes, and you'll want definitely want to listen. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$\$ (MFP)

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 ambience enhanced only by Southeast Asian fusion of tuna porterhouse, lobster onion rings, skewers of miso black cod, and wasabi shrimp. \$\$\$\$\$ (MB)

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 satiate 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)

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 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 Hapon (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 Babi 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 fileted 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 medium to large plates. Sample Mediterranean fare à la carte from Meraki's souvlaki (skewer) bar, or share a polikites (family meal). Specials are also served daily, further expanding 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 jusé, but this time with seats! What to eat? Ceviches, nachos. But grilled or raw fish/seafood tacos and burritos, in fresh tortillas, might be even more tempting. Pristine stone-crab claws from co-owner Roger Duarte's George Stone Crab add to the choices. \$\$ (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 bentos 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 sea-sonal 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-bom 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 croûton. 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

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contemporary Argentine fare will be a revelation. Classic parrilla-grilled steaks are here for traditionalists, but the menu is dominated by creative Nuevo Latino items like a new-style ceviche de chernia (lightly lime-marinated grouper with jalapeños, basil, and the refreshing sweet counterpoint of watermelon), or crab ravioli with creamy saffron sauce. Especially notable are the entrée salads. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

Novikov 300 S. Biscayne Blvd., 305-489-1000

When we first heard of Novikov, we thought the upscale downtown Miami restaurant was all about Russian food. We were wrong. Although the restaurant gets its name from Russian restaurateur Arkady Novikov, the menu is composed of Chinese and Japanese favorites. Everything is shareable, and most patrons should find satiety with two to three dishes each. If you only order two dishes, the rainbow naruto roll and duck salad are must-tries — especially the latter, with its deliciously crispy skin. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (MFP)

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)

Obra Kitchen Table 1331 Brickell Bay Dr., 305-846-9363

Latin restaurants are a dime a dozen, but few challenge your palate like Obra Kitchen Table. At this Brickell hotspot inside the Jade, chef Carlos Garcia and his team craft an assortment of Venezuelan delights that also incorporate global influences. The result: unique bites like grouper confit with fried arepa, yuca and bacon millefeuille, and octopus bucatini carbonara unlike anything you've tasted. Sit at the 25-seat bar for a more intimate dining experience, where you'll see these creations come to life. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (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 foccchi purses filled with fresh pear and gorgonzola. And Sunday's \$15.95 brunch buffet (\$9.95 for kids) — featuring an omelet station, waffles, smoked salmon and bagels, salads, and more — remains one of our town's most civilized all-you-can-eat deals. \$\$ (PRB)

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

If you can overlook a name as unlightening as most in-jokes (it evidently refers to a favorite character of owner Claudio Nunes's kids — we assume the Pokemon Psyduck), you'll experience pretty perfect pizza. Sadly, not all brick ovens turn out perfectly char-blistered crusts, crisp outside and airy/chewy inside, but that's what you'll consistently find here and a newer take-out/delivery-only Midtown branch. And unlike many artisan pizzerias, Pieducks doesn't get cheesy with cheese quantity (though we like that extra cheese is an option). Elaborate salads complete the menu. \$\$ (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" 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 *parrilleros* 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 parrilla, an essential component to grilling meat like a true *gaucho*. 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 parrilla. Bring a liberal side of patience with you while dining room service sorts itself out. \$\$\$ (AM)

Raja's Indian Cuisine 33 NE 2nd Ave., 305-539-9551

Despite its small size and décor best described as "none," this place is an institution thanks to south Indian specialties rarely found in Miami's basically north Indian restaurants. The steam-tabled curries are fine (and nicely priced), but be sure to try the custom-made dosai (facy 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)

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 trendy menu, with simply but skillfully prepared wood-oven-cooked fish and clay-pot, shellfish casseroles. Standouts include luxuriant lobster thermador, as well as it is pricey. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$ (PRB)

Sokai Sushi Bar 350 S. Miami Ave., Unit #CU-B, 786-667-3061

When it comes to Peruvian-Japanese fusion, Sokai Sushi Bar pulls out all the stops. This Brickell outpost is the brand's fourth location, and it features many of the same delicious bites that fans have come to know and love. That includes delightful pork belly buns, tuna pizza (it tastes better than it sounds), and a bevvy of signature sushi. Don't sleep on the Asia roll: The salmon, cream cheese, and truffle oil creation is packed to the brim with flavor. \$\$\$ (MFP)

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

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Italian food (Alfano hails from Pompeii), it's fitting that the menu is dominated by authentically straightforward yet sophisticated Italian entries. 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 house-made 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 Neapolitan-style pizza isn't the rarity it was here a decade ago, this 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)

The Taco Stand 313 NW 25th St., 786-580-4948

We know what you're thinking: "Oh great, another taco shop in Wynwood." The neighborhood is certainly not lacking in options, but this San Diego transplant is sure to give its neighbors some healthy competition. Those familiar with the brand know that the seafood offerings like the Baja taco (battered fish) and spicy shrimp taco are winners; just one bite is all the proof you need. Another must: a mountain of carne asada and fries, which can feed a group of four. \$ (MFP)

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 finocchio (a regional fennel salami); an authentic-tasting "fiorentina" porterhouse, with smoked potato purée plus more traditional vegetables. A budget-conscious boon: changing three-course lunches and early-bird dinners. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$ (PRB)

Truluck's Seafood, Steak, and Crabhouse 777 Brickell Ave., 305-579-0035

Compared to other restaurants with such an upscale power-lunch/dinner setting, most prices are quite affordable here, especially if you stick to the Miami Spice-priced date-dinner menu, or happy hour, when seafood items like crab-cake "sliders" are half price. Most impressive, though, are seasonal stone crabs (from Truluck's own fisheries, and way less expensive than Joe's) and other seafood that, during several visits, never tasted less than impeccably fresh, plus that greatest of Miami restaurant rarities: informed and gracious service. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$ (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 cruozos shine: hamachi "sashimi" slices flash-marinated in a subtle citrus/pudzu emulsion and enlivened by jalapeño relish; a sprout-topped, smoothly sauced tuna tartare with lemon and horseradish flavors substituting for dichéd sarsame. 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)

Vista 5020 NE 2nd Ave., 305-405-7547

The husband-and-wife team behind Italian restaurant Fratelli Milano has struck gold again. Vista, the latest venture from Roberto Bearzi and Fiorella Bianco, builds on the best parts of the downtown Miami favorite and infuses them with a Latin flair. There's a bigger emphasis on seafood at Vista, so expect to find a variety of crudos, fresh fish, and other selections that will perk up your palate. Pastas haven't gone anywhere: gnocchi, rigatoni, risotto, and more are available to scratch that itch. \$\$\$ (MFP)

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. Personality, 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 Junete 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 mi. 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 Jospier oven that turn out an array of items like fried 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 mofu (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 entrées, 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)

Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

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

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

Caféina 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 discernible binder. At one South Beach Wine & Food Festival, Martha Stewart proclaimed it the best she'd ever had. Our own prime pick: melt-in-your-mouth ginger sea bass antichuchos, 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 wreck-fish, 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 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)

Cerveceria 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 slogs. \$\$ (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)

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/huitlachi 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 mayo 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)

Dom Black 315 NW 25th St., 305-320-2310

Good, hearty burgers are a rare find in Wynwood. Enter Dom Black. The unassuming establishment serves up savory fare that's low in price and high in quality. The menu — which consists mostly of burgers and meat-heavy apps — may look basic at first, but just wait until that first bite. The two-patty Dom Double with crunchy onions, bacon, and egg is a beast. If you're on a diet, this place isn't for you. \$\$-\$\$ (MFP)

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)

Eat Greek 3530 Biscayne Blvd., 305-456-2799

Sometimes, you're in a hurry and can't enjoy a sit-down meal. Other times, all you want is to sit down, relax, and enjoy some good grub. Eat Greek is perfect for either situation. Here, those in a rush can pick up a lamb gyro pita wrap or falafel platter for the road. Or if you have the time, grab a seat and indulge in pork chops, grilled salmon, and other large plates. There's no wrong decision here. \$\$-\$\$ (MFP)

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)

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, GKB and its chef, Rafael Pérez, add global flavors like gamey Cornish hen, lamb, and foie gras to Peruvian classics like ceviches, tiraditos, and antichuchos. Refreshing cocktails like the Chicano — 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 Piza Volante) are many key components from Michael's Genuine Food & Drink two blocks east — local/sustainable produce and artisan products; wood-oven cooking; homemade everything (including the ketchup accompanying crisp-outside, custardy-inside polenta fries, a circa 1995 Michael Schwartz signature snack from Nemo). Beautifully blistered, ultra-thin-crust pizzas range from classic Margheritas to pies with house-smoked bacon, trugole (a subtly flavorful — fruity, not funky — Alpine cheese), and other unique toppings. Rounding things out: simple but ingenious salads, ultimate zeppoles, and Florida craft beers. \$\$ (PRB)

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

No need to trek to South Beach for what many consider Miami's best classic Puerto Rican mofongo (fried green plantains mashed with fresh garlic, olive oil, and pork cracklings, surrounded by chicken or shrimp in zesty criollo sauce). This new location is bigger and better than the original, plus the mofongo is served every day, not just on weekends. But don't ignore the meal-size salads or high-quality sandwiches, including a pressed tripeleta containing roast pork, bacon, Black Forest ham, provolone, and caramelized onions. \$\$ (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 Nature Conservancy — Kush pushes the concept farther: that farm-to-table dishes (some from LoKal, others created new) and craft beers aren't mere craft; they're art. Which you'll find on the walls. On tables you'll find, among other things, the Kush & Hash burger: Florida-raised beef, ground-in-house, served with hash (the edible, not smokable, kind), bacon, fried egg, and housemade ketchup on a waffle bun, with a side of maple syrup. Edgy enough for ya? \$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

KYU 251 NW 25th St., 786-577-0150

The Asian-inspired restaurant wholly encompasses the creative vibe of the neighborhood with a raw space outfitted in murals by 2Aias, micro green centerpieces, and lots of concrete features as well as a balanced menu of wood-fired items and refreshing ingredients. Roasted cauliflower comes with goat cheese salad and

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Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

shishito-herb vinaigrette; tuna tataki takes a spicy turn with fire-roasted peppers, fermented chili, and citrus; and white ponzu, green chili, and herbs accompany sliced Hamachi. There's also sweet soy and garlic short ribs, Korean fried chicken, and Thai fried rice in a stone pot. Open for brunch on Sundays. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (MB)

Lagniappe 3425 NE 2nd Ave., 305-576-0108

In New Orleans, "lagniappe" means "a little extra," like the 13th doughnut in a baker's dozen. And that's what you get at this combination wine and cheese bar/backyard BBQ/entertainment venue. Choose artisan cheeses and charcuterie from the fridges, hand them over when you pay (very little), and they'll be plated with extras: olives, bread, changing luscious condiments. Or grab fish, chicken, veggies, or steak (with salad or combread) from the hidden yard's grill. Relax in the comfie mismatched furniture, over extensive wine/beer choices and laidback live music. No cover, no attitude. \$\$ (PRB)

Latteria Italiana 33103 NE 1st Ave. #101, 786-577-4362

Retro, charming décor meets authentic Italian food from the foodie region of Emilia-Romagna. The small menu of piadine (Italian flatbreads) and classic entrées like lasagna sticks to its roots. But homemade gelato, in flavors like Straciatella, Ferrero Rocher, and Salt & Pepper Pistachio, which includes whole pieces of pistachio, will make you want to skip straight to dessert. Niceties include a rotating inventory of imported Italian treats like cheese, pasta, and cookies. \$\$\$ (MB)

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

Out of the ashes of Dizingoff 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)

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

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

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)

Mason 3470 N. Miami Ave., 786-618-5150

Midtown Miami's Mason has helped end our search for great diner food. The restaurant, which is located inside the former Gigi space, is the creation of Beaker & Gray's Brian Nasajon. The chef has put together a delightful all-day menu full of modern twists on classic comfort food. On the menu are specials like oxtail pot pie and frank and beans that will make you feel right at home. Not in the mood for savory? Make room for challah French toast and Belgian waffles. \$\$\$ (MFP)

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 "piadinas," 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-crusted 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)

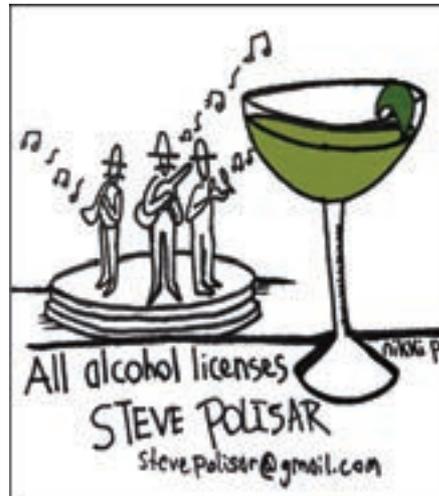
Mike's at Venetia 555 NE 15th St., 9th floor, 305-573-5731

This family-owned Irish pub, on the pool deck of the Venetia condo, for more

than 15 years has been a popular lunch and dinner hang-out for local journalists and others who appreciate honest cheap eats and drinks. Regulars know daily specials are the way to go. Depending on the day, fish, churrasco, or roast turkey with all the trimmings are all prepared fresh. Big burgers and steak dinners are always good. A limited late-night menu provides pizza, wings, ribs, and salad till 3:00 a.m. \$\$\$ (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)



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-crust 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 auspicious 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-cafeinated 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)



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Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

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 pretentious, in a still largely ungentrified area of cutting-edge artsy yet still working-class Wynwood. But modular movable walls to accommodate changing installations, and its own name make it clear the art component is a serious working gallery. Hardworking chef/owner Rocco Carulli demonstrates a locals orientation with a menu highlighted by skillfully crafted, hearty entrées (Brazilian seafood moqueta stew, coffee/chili-rubbed short ribs, sweet pea falafel) available in affordable half-portion: small plates of big food for starving artists. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (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 serviceable. 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 crilla 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 wrangle 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

2923 Biscayne Blvd., 305-400-8245

The first stateside offshoot of a popular Venezuelan mini chain, this "urban Mexican grill" serves health-conscious, made-fresh-daily fare similar in concept

to some fast-casual competitors. But there are indeed differences here, notably pan-Latin options: black beans as well as red; thin, delightfully crunchy tostones (available as a side or as the base for a uniquely tasty take on normal nachos). Other pluses include weekday happy hours with two-for-one beers — and free parking. \$\$\$ (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)

Sette Osteria

2103 NW 2nd Ave., 305-576-8282

Eagle-eyed visitors will find an unassuming Italian restaurant at the southern end of Wynwood: Sette Osteria. The Washington, D.C., transplant is located away from the hustle and bustle of the neighborhood, but it's only a matter of time before word gets out about this culinary gem. Earthy tones and an open kitchen welcome diners, who will fall in love with signature dishes like seafood linguine and veal scallopini. A bevy of Italian wines await to quench your thirst as well. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (MFP)

Skorpios

3252 NE 1st Ave. #107, 786-329-5905

Italian food is out, and eastern Mediterranean food is in. The former Bocce space in Midtown Miami now belongs to Skorpios, an upscale Greek eatery with a party vibe. The European-inspired décor makes this restaurant a looker, and its food is no slouch either. Mezes like roasted eggplant salad and hummus with oven baked lamb are tasty plates to share over good conversation and wine. Hungry patrons seeking a full belly can dig into larger plates like seafood casserole and porterhouse steak. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (MFP)

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)

Sugarcane Raw Bar Grill

3250 NE 1st Ave., 786-369-0353

This chic indoor/outdoor space is an offspring of Lincoln Road's SushiSamba Dromo and a sibling of Sugarcane lounges in NYC and Las Vegas, but more informal than the former and more food-oriented than the latter, as three kitchens — normal, raw bar, and robata charcoal grill — make clear. Chef Timon Balloo's LatAsian small plates range from subtle orange/fennel-marinated salmon crudo to intensely smoky-rich short ribs. At the daily happy hour, select dishes (like steamed pork buns with apple kimchi) are discounted. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (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 spring) 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)

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 Aperoio 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)

Tony Chan's Water Club

1717 N. Bayshore Dr., 305-374-8888

The décor at this upscale place, located in the Grand, looks too glitzy to serve anything but politely Americanized Chinese food. But the American dumbing-down is minimal. Many dishes are far more authentic and skillfully prepared than those found elsewhere in Miami, like delicate but flavorful yu pan quail. Moist sea bass fillet has a beautifully balanced topping of scallion, ginger, cilantro, and subtly sweet/salty sauce. And Peking duck is served as three traditional courses: crêpe-wrapped crispy skin, meat satiated 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 Awe, and other acclaimed artists makes it one of the most striking restaurant spaces anywhere. As for food, the original menu has been replaced with Spanish/Latin/Mediterranean-inspired favorites from chef Miguel Aguilar (formerly of Alma de Cuba): gazpacho or black bean soups; shredded chicken ropa vieja empanadas with cilantro crema; grilled octopus skewers with tapenade; plus fingerling potato-chorizo hash and other seasonal farm-to-table veg dishes. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (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)

Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

Upper Eastside

Andiamo **5600 Biscayne Blvd., 305-762-5751**

With brick-oven pizzerias popping up all over town the past few years, it's difficult to remember the dark days when this part of Mark Soyka's 55th Street Station complex was mainland Miami's sole source of open-flame-cooked pies. But the pizzas still hold up against the newbie pack, especially since exec chef Frank Crupi has added 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 it 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-centrifuged 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 taromosalata carp roe spread, amazingly succulent grilled fresh sardines, her mom's lemon cake, more), plus more broadly Mediterranean creations like an Italian-inspired grana padano 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., 305-757-3668**

"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)

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 pastels 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 pump-house building just north of his 55th Street Station property. The subtly anachronistic décor casts an ambiance 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/charrospinked roast noodle with Chinese broccoli, and intense pork fat-enriched broth. Other unique specialties include spicy house-cured pork/crispy rice sausages, soy and whiskey-marinated steak/jerky, swoonfully sinful pork belly with basil sauce, and citrus/curryinged 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)

Dogg's Arepa Bar **2881 Biscayne Blvd., 786-558-9538**

MiMo residents, rejoice: Dogg'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 Vilamedil 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 tiramisu for a sweet ending. \$\$\$ (MFP)

Florito **5555 NE 2nd Ave., 305-754-2899**

While owners Max and Cristian Alvarez's description of their eatery as "a little Argentinian 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-seasoned lechon confit (with pumpkin mash, pickled cabbage salad, and Dijon mojo) or sopa de calabaza, derived from Argentina's peasant stew loco, 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 ravioli; Roc Kat's tropical ice creams; chef/restaurateur Ken Lyon's prepared foods, including daily-changing dinners for two; Zak the Baker's crusty sourdough breads, plus sandwiches on same. Best kept secret: While there's no official café component, comfy counter seats enable on-premises breakfasting, lunching, and coffee/pastry breaks. \$\$\$ (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 foot-cooling 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)

Ironside 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 Neapolitan pizzolo; 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 pizza rolls); an unusual carciofi salad with pine nuts and mint silvers. \$\$ (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 fritattas. 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 comfiest gastropub's interactive literary ambiance (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 Argentinian 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**

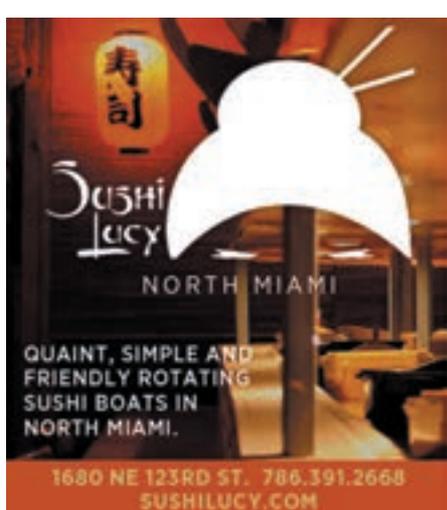
Unlike most restaurants labeled "Mediterranean," this one, decorated with restrained modern elegance, really does have dishes from countries surrounding all sides of the sea (though not necessarily from the countries' seaside regions, as boeuf Bourguignon attests). Our favorites, like owner Yasmine Kott, 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/jalepeño/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 café's easily overlooked strip-mall location, or its informal interior, fool you. The warm welcome is authentically Italian, as are cleverly crafted antipasti, simple but full-flavored pastas, and homemade pastries (from rosemary breadsticks to fruit-topped dessert tortas) that will transport your taste buds to Tuscany. And the housemade mozzarella or burrata cheeses — truly milk elevated to royalty — will transport you to heaven. A small market area provides Italian staples, plus superb salumi and the magnificent mozz, to go. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (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-locé 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 blackeyed 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 veggie pie, 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 piquillo sauce, parsnip, and squid ink, and Pinch Salad with brassica greens, shaved veggies, rucola 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 brisket 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 ambiance. 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 garlicwurst) with homemade mustard and catsup; savory yet near-greaseless potato pancakes; and, naturally, schnitzels, a choice of delicate pounded pork, chicken, or veal patties served with a half-dozen different sauces. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

Sandwich Where? **36 NE 54th St., 786-419-2772**

Don't let the cute name fool you. Sandwich Where? takes its name-sake item seriously. The homey shop offers tasty sandwiches at affordable prices — a lunch special with half a hoagie, chips, and a drink will set you back roughly \$6. That's a bargain, as are their regular sandwich offerings like prosciutto mozzarella, turkey and brie, and soppressata. Pair one with a delectable smoothie like the Tevez (pineapple, orange, and raspberry), and you have yourself a great lunch. \$ (MFP)

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 (siracha 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 ragout, 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 was), 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 1993, 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) roes, and special sauces. Thai dishes come with a choice of more than a dozen sauces, ranging from traditional red or green curries to the inventive, such as an unconventional honey sauce. \$\$\$ (PRB)

Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

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 sharable-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 Junetag 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 loading its wood-oven pizza above all. The al fumo—a mix of mozzarella, provolone cheese, smoked bacon, and bell peppers—and its cheesy brethren come out fast and ready for their Instagram close-up. 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 terror 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 altopiano Quattro, on Lincoln Road, twin brother chefs Nicola and Fabrizio Carro decided to work for themselves, hands on renovating the former space of MiMo District pioneer Uva 69. Cuisine here is similarly authentic, with creative twists. But there are important differences: emphasis on local, rather than mostly imported, ingredients; inspiration from all Italian regions; and best, astonishing affordability. Housemade spinach/ricotta gnudi baked in an ocean of burrata is a delight, but it's hard to go wrong here. \$\$-\$\$\$ (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 Hiyakawa 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 that Dashi guests will immediately recognize. Feeling adventurous? Take a look at the board specials — you won't regret it. \$\$ (MFP)

NORTH BAY VILLAGE

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

At first glance, the menu at North Bay Village's 222 Taco may look like that of your standard taco joint. But a deeper dive into the selections reveals more than just tacos, quesadillas, and other traditional fare. "Coco-Ceviche" and Mexican pizza are just a few tasty ways that 222 Taco is making a name for itself. Larger parties can opt for a one-pound al pastor taco platter and other affordable family-style options. Fun fact: They also serve breakfast. \$\$-\$\$\$ (MFP)

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 entrees like the duck tacos and short rib pot pie are just as filling. Here, your diet starts tomorrow. \$\$ (MFP)

Oggi's Caffè 1666 79th St. Causeway, 305-866-1238

This cozy, romantic spot started back in 1989 as a pasta factory (supplying numerous high-profile restaurants) as well as a neighborhood eatery. And the wide range of budget-friendly, homemade pastas, made daily, remains the main draw for its large and loyal clientele. Choices range from homey, meaty lasagna to 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 just 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 Aroub Abderrahim, who opened South Beach's original PizzaFiore way back in 1996, this café serves the kind of nostalgic, medium-thin crust, oozing-with-goey-cheese pizzas reminiscent of our childhood pies in northern NJ Sopranos' territory, except now there are options for today's toppings — sundried tomatoes, buffalo mozzarella, etc. But there's also a full menu of Italian-American classics, including anti-pasto 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 fro-u-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, pillowy bagels? Forget it. Have a nice onion pocket. There's also a full menu of authentic Jewish deli specialties, including especially delicious, custom-cut — not pre-sliced — nova or lox. Super size sandwiches easily serve two, and they'll even improvise a real NJ Sloppy Joe (two meats, Swiss, coleslaw, and Russian dressing on rye) if you ask nice. \$\$ (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 time, with banana-walnut pancakes especially popular. But what's most important is that this is one of the area's few sources of the real, New York-style water bagel: crunchy outside, challengingly chewy inside. \$ (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 décor and surrounding sun-bleached 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)

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 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 Soreau has made it near impossible to resist the pastries, all baked onsite 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-crustured fresh-baked baguette) are art in their own right. Inventive, substantial salads, sides, daily soups, and homemade sweets (including mouthwateringly buttery croissants) complete the menu. \$\$-\$\$\$ (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: cochinita pibil? Chéen's authentically succulent version of the pickle-onion-topped marinated pork dish is earthy aromatic from achiote, tangy from bitter oranges, and meltingly tender from slow cooking in a banana leaf wrap. To accompany, try a lime/soy/chili-spiced michelada, also authentically Mexican, and possibly the best thing that ever happened to dark beer. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (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

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Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

pumpkin soup, zingy Thai curried veggie soup, an elegantly layered, molded tuna/avocado/quinoa “cupcake,” a real Bunot cake – vegan (no dairy) but remarkably tasty. \$\$ (PRB)

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 onebite 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: friée 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 pizzaiolo. 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)

Pincrest Bakery 13488 Biscayne Blvd., 305-912-4200

Pincrest 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 larb salad. Portions are unusually generous. \$\$ (PRB)

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)

Steve’s Pizza 12101 Biscayne Blvd., 305-891-0202

At the end of a debauched night of excess, some paperthin designer pizza with wisps of smoked salmon (or similar fluff) doesn’t do the trick. Open til 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, meat-balls, 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)

Tatere 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. Salltenas, 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)

Urbano Steak House 2114 NE 123rd St., 786-637-7711

If you’re vegetarian, Urbano Steak House is not for you; the “Let’s Eat Meat” sign inside this Argentinian establishment is a dead giveaway. Once you sit down, you’ll see a variety of different cuts on the menu along with native staples like empanadas and sweetbreads. There are non-carnivore options, but you’re not here for a salad. Instead, get the “parillada” – the gigantic meat platter comes with steak, short rib, blood sausage, and an assortment of other proteins. Good luck finishing it by yourself. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (MFP)

Whole Foods Market 12150 Biscayne Blvd., 305-892-5500

(See Brickell / Downtown listing.)

Vicky Bakery 1973 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 daterworthy cute spot features “Modern Indian” cuisine – both North Indian-type traditional favorites interposed without the oiliness and heavy sauces typical of westernized curried dishes, plus refined reinventions using authentic (though heat-adjustable) 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-cruste 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 lunch-room/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-Cocobox 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 short ribs 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., 786-959-6894

Embracing a decidedly contemporary take on traditional Peruvian dishes, Ají Carbón serves up tacu tacu, 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)

The Alchemist 17830 W. Dixie Hwy., 786-916-3560

It’s impossible to walk into The Alchemist without smiling. The café is

gorgeous, with plenty of indoor and outdoor seating for all, including pets. Inside, the coffee shop lives up to its name with cool containers and quirky art that befit a mad scientist’s office. Open-face sandwiches and pizzettas make up most of the menu, which also includes risotto, escargot, and other fun items not typically found at your usual java joint. Plus, there’s beer and wine for unwinding. \$\$\$ (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 Felthauer, for 28 years executive chef at Continental fine-dining spot La Paloma. Additions to the predominantly seafood menu include chateaubriand or rack of lamb for two, both carved, with old-school spectacle, tableside. Owner Michael Choido has also renovated the interior dining room, and added the Yellowfin Lounge, which features an extensive selection of artisan beers. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (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 dishes) 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-cruste fish fingers with orange-ginger sauce, jumbo wings of many flavors. Imagine a sports-oriented Cescake 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 dingleware make eating clean seem like an infinitely more attractive proposal. Expect standard 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, it’s 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 crispy prawns, Empire’s Special Duck, cold sesame noodles, or similar pleasantly spicy specialties, and you’ll be a happy camper, especially if you’re an ex-New Yorker. \$\$ (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 spot. 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 futomaki, and a few unexpected treats like a spicy Crunch & Caliente maki), available à la carte or in value-priced individual and party combo platters. But there are also bento boxes featuring tempura, yakitori skewers, teriyaki, stir-fried veggies, and udon noodles. Another branch is now open in Miami’s Upper Eastside. \$ (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 veggie 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)

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 Kafe 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), 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 Agustina 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 tosta, braised pork belly buns, and grilled octopus. Drink selections include a Tokyo Bloody Mary, mimosas, and a delightfully surprising 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 Mercado Green, aimed at healthy eaters, vegetarians, and vegans – the citrusy quinoa is a musttry. 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)

Nothing Bundt Cakes 15400 Biscayne Blvd., Suite #112, 305-974-4536

Nothing Bundt Cakes is saying something with their satisfying sweets. The bakery behemoth’s new location inventura offers Nothing’s signature item in a wide range of sizes and flavors. Want to indulge without hating yourself later? A bite-size red velvet or pecan praline bundtini is the way to go. Otherwise, dig into a mini confetti bundtler or go all out with a bundtlet tower or a tiered cake. If you have a particular bundt cake in mind, they likely have it. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (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 well-massaman curry, Chilean sea bass curry, and sizzling filet mignon with basil sauce. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

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 knock-out margaritas will. Food ranges from Tex-Mex burritos and a party-size fajita platter to authentic Mexican moles and hard-to-find traditional preparations like albondigas – 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 sugar 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 taste-tested a "Philly cheese steak" sandwich on the toughest 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 neta – mixed with scallions and dressed with habi-forming honey-miso mustard sauce. Other favorites include goma ae (twisted spinach, chilled and dressed in sesame sauce), garlic stem and beef (mid 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 fun, too. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$ (PRB)

Biella Ristorante

17082 Collins Ave., 305-974-0174

Romantic dates and family outings are just a few of the situations where a visit to Biella Ristorante is a good idea. This Sunny Isles Beach restaurant welcomes patrons with a vast menu of high-quality Italian favorites. Harissa tuna tartare and beef carpaccio are notable starters that prepare the palate for an onslaught of fun flavors. Entrées like Biella's pear ravioli and black truffle risotto are full of said flavors, and a dessert menu featuring tiramisù, gelato, and more ensures a memorable evening. \$\$-\$\$\$ (MFP)

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, chery-pickled 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 Manty dumplings, and any one of the many kebabs. Service is also friendly and above average. \$\$-\$\$\$ (AM)

Il Mulino New York

17875 Collins Ave., 305-466-9191

If too much is not enough for you, this majority upscale Italian-American place,

an offshoot of the famed NYC original, is your restaurant. For starters, diners receive enough freebie food – fried zucchini coins, salami, bruschetta with varying toppings, a wedge of quality parmigiano, garlic bread – that ordering off the menu seems superfluous. But mushroom ravioli 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)

Kyoto Nikkei Cuisine

18146 Collins Ave., 305-466-6775

Fusion cuisine can be hit or miss, but the combination of Peruvian and Japanese flavors is usually a good time. Kyoto Nikkei Cuisine takes these two cultures and puts the best parts of each on your plate. Sushi rolls are a given here – as is ceviche – and both deserve room at your table. What caught us off guard, though, were the wallet-friendly specials. The strip mall location is deceptive: Kyoto is worth a look. \$\$-\$\$\$ (MFP)

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 malawach (paratha-type flatbread sandwiches, savory or sweet), and shaksuka (nicknamed "eggs in purgatory"; the spicy eggplant version will explain all). \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

Saffron Indian Cuisine

18090 Collins Ave. #T-22, 305-899-5554

Saffron Indian Cuisine makes us happy. Miami is lacking in Indian food,

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and this Sunny Isles Beach addition helps fill that void. The restaurant replaces another Indian eatery – Copper Chimney – and fans of that place will find plenty to love here. Garlic naan and veggie samosas are musts as snacks, but don't overdo it. The lamb tikka masala and kebabs deserve a spot on your order as well. \$-\$\$ (MFP)

Sumo Sushi Bar & Grill

17630 Collins Ave., 305-682-1243

Sushi June will have been served in Sunny Isles before this longtime neighborhood favorite opened, but Sumo was the neighborhood's first sushi bar to double as a popular lounge/hangout as well as restaurant. Ladies' nights are legend. While Thai and Chinese dishes are available, as well as purist nigiri, few can resist the truly sunowrestler-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 scallopstudded "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 panetta; 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., 305-635-2625

When people rave about New York pizzas' superiority, they don't just mean thin crusts. They mean the kind of airy, abundantly bun-bubbled, 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 milkshakes. \$-\$\$ (MFP)

Bagel Cove Restaurant & Deli

19003 Biscayne Blvd., 305-935-4029

One word: bagels. 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 bagels in a couple of hours. Since you're up early anyway, sample elaborately garnished breakfast specials, including unusually flavorful home-made 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 trout; these come in chiffe 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 non-carnivores to assemble a happy meal. But don't neglect the steak – flavorful dry-aged Angus, 100-percent Wagyu American "Kobe," swoon-worthy grade A5 Japanese Kobe, and butter-poached prime rib, all cooked to perfection. \$\$\$\$ (PRB)

To describe this casually complex restaurant (located in Gulfstream racetrack's shopping/entertainment complex) as "a new breed of sports bar," as its own ad 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 vegonly 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)

Le Pain Quotidien

19565 Biscayne Blvd., 786-629-5056

At Le Pain Quotidien, diners get the best of both worlds. Those on the run can grab LPQ's ready-to-go croissants, scones, and soups, while guests who'd rather sit back can enjoy hot dishes like croque monsieurs and crispy quinoa cakes at their leisure. Regardless, both types of diners should make it a point to order the bakery's signature drinks, which range from healthy to downright decadent. The Belgian mocha – available hot or iced – is the perfect post-dinner treat. \$-\$\$ (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 customised from whole slabs. And bagels are hand-rolled, chewy champions, not those machine-made puffy poseurs. As complimentary pastry bites suggest, and the massive size of the succulent, sufficiently fatty pastami 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 gloppily sauced, Americanized-Cantonese chop suys here. Cooking is properly light-handed, and seafood specialties shine (try the spicy/crispy salt and pepper shrimp). For adventurers, there's a cold jellyfish starter. Even timid taste buds can't resist tender fried shrimp balls described this way: "With crispy adorable fringy outfit." \$\$-\$\$\$ (MFP)

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 rawfish 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 Stammin' 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 Pubbely 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 crab 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-BURGR

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 RokBrg "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; soured Duroc pork belly) as well as chefie 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 tar-tufo 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)

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-cage Dog, the brand's take on a Chicago hot dog. Frozen oysters flavng 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)

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, crisped like jalea but sauced/garnished in ceviche's more complex style; sampler platters feature several choices, and serve a small army. Also a stand-out 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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