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November 2018

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Volume 16 Issue 9

Times[®]

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TURNBERRY OCEAN COLONY Least expensive 2bd/2.5ba residence located on the 12th floor. It doesn't get any better! Move right in and surround yourself with spectacular ocean views from every room. Enjoy 5 star amenities in one of South Florida's most prestigious communities. Repriced \$1,845,000



BAL HARBOUR OCEANFRONT AT THE 101 3340 sf, 3/3.5 residence with sparkling Ocean & Downtown Miami views, elegant foyer, large living & entertaining space, new sleek plank flrs, new open gourmet kitchen, separate master suite with 2 master baths & 2 walk-in closets + built-ins for extra storage. Full service bldg with excellent amenities. \$1,795,000



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



MIAMI SHORES Location! Location! Location! Recently repriced. Charming & in move-in condition. 3/2.5 re-modeled while preserving many original details. 9.5' ceilings, floor to ceiling impact windows and doors. Lushly landscaped garden. Garage, large generator to support the whole house. \$997,000



BAY HARBOR ISLANDS Great opportunity to live in Bay Harbor Islands! Renovate or build your dream house on 10,313 SF lot nestled between gorgeous new multi-million dollar homes. A short distance to the beaches, shopping, fine restaurants, A+ schools. Recently reduced \$1,100,000



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, 27,000 sf spa, tennis, restaurants. \$599,000



MYSTIC POINTE, AVENTURA Country Club living with views that take your breath away. High corner 2/2, best line with a great split floor plan, lg wrap around balcony. ALL rooms have spectacular views. Great amenities including a grocery store, salon, restaurant, dry cleaner, dog park, tennis, fitness center, marina, concierge and valet. \$440,000



OCEANFRONT COMMUNITY KEY LARGO Rare 2/2 corner townhouse, 2 screened in porches w/ views of pool, lagoon & beach. Fully equipped 2 story, new sleek plank flrs, eat-in kitchen, new a/c, nicely furnished, storm shutters. 2 pools, marina, private beach, playground, tennis, saltwater lagoon, 400' jetty, chickee w/ bbq, free boat trailer storage, 24hr security. \$350,000



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2019 New 5.300 SF Waterfront Home

2019 New Waterfront Pool Home-\$2.49M
New 5,300 SF Contemporary Home with Ocean Access, no bridges to Bay. 4BR, 5BA + den/office or 5th BR, 665sf covered patio downstairs. 2 car gar. Dock up to 75' ft boat.



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 - \$ 897,000
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.

Where Buyers
and Sellers
intersect every
day



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 - \$1.799M
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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BISCAYNE *Times*

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Charles Zelden, Ph.D.



Nov 29 - Dec 2

Hedwig and the Angry Inch

A Treasury of Jewish Christmas Songs



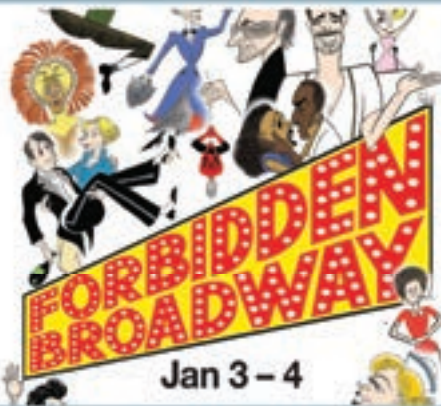
December 16

Jake Ehrenreich



Dec 29 - 30

Steve Solomon



Jan 3 - 4

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Celebrate the Life and Music of Donna Summer



January 5

Mary Gaines Bernard

MIKE SUPER
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January 12

Mike Super



January 13

Alice Ripley & Emily Skinner



Jan 23 - 24

An Acoustic Evening with Matisyahu



January 26

The Doo Wop Project

Family Fun Series



January 27

Your Alien



February

Yakov Smirnoff

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All programs, artists, dates and times are subject to change.



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4BD/4BA, pool, 2 car garage. 3,831 Sf. Remodel existing or tear down and build new. Original home has 24" stone flooring and 12ft. high ceilings. New seawall w/75' dockage & artificial graphite wood, dock & pool deck. Excellent location priced at land value. \$1.39M



"SANS SOUCI ESTATES" "BAYVIEWS, OCEAN ACCESS" "NEW WATERFRONT 2018 CONSTRUCTION" WITH EXQUISITE FINISHES!

7 BD/7.5 BA, 6,253 Sf, 2 or 4 Car Gar. "30' High Ceilings" All Concrete Floors! Heated Pool W/Jacuzzi Waterfall, 1x4 Porcelain Plank Floors & Glass Tile Baths Baths, Sub-Zero & Wolf Appl's, Quartz Top, Kit. Impact Glass. 75' Of Dockage and 14K Boatlift! 24HR Guardgated 3.4M



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

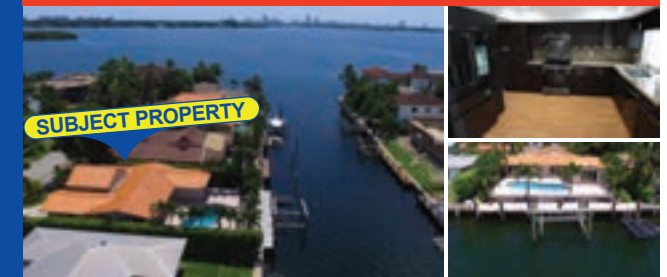


ATLANTIC ISLE 2018 NEW CONSTRUCTION

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

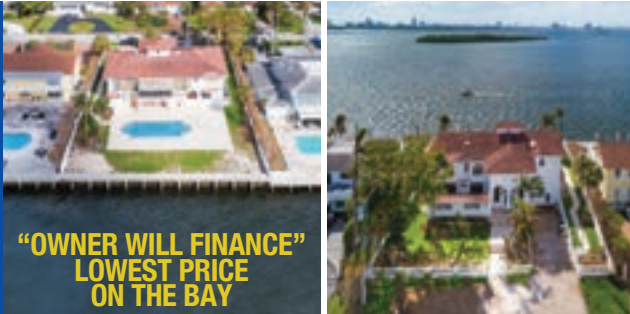
4BD/3BA, pool, 2 car garage, new addition, high vaulted ceilings over 3,200 sf. 24" marble, 2016 granite kitchen and baths. hurricane impact windows in place. \$1.59M

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



WIDE, WIDE BAYFRONT! "SANS SOUCI ESTATES" DOWNTOWN VIEWS!

5BD/6BA, Pool, 6 Car Carport or 4 Car Garage 8600 Sf. 30' High Ceilings, 3 Floors, 2 Story Plus Grandfathered in Basement. 3 story Elevator. 102' of New Seawall, Home is priced at "Land Value" with an 8,600 Sf. "Shell" as Home needs extensive remodeling Comes with City Approved Architectural Plans for a completely redesigned 10,500 Sf. Contemporary Home 3.49M



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KEYSTONE POINT N. MIAMI NON-WATERFRONT 24 HR. GUARD GATED

OWNER WILL FINANCE

4BD/3 BA, New 2018, Pool, 24" Porcelain Flooring, 24HR GATED, Professionally Decorated, Custom Hi-tech Italian Kitchen. Modern Glass Tile Baths. Hi-ceilings. \$985K

2018 "NEW CONTEMPORARY" OVERSIZED LOT!



NEWER 2005 CONSTRUCTION, EXQUISITE DECORATOR FINISHES, SOLID BUILT BY OWNER!

6BD/5BA+2 half baths, 2-car garage, 5,194 Sf., impact windows & doors. "Cestron Smart Home" Soaring 25' High ceilings, 24" Marble floors. Huge center island natural gas "chefs kosher" kitchen. Unique "Downstairs Master Suite" W/Huge Master Bath-Body Spray Steam Shower and Jacuzzi Tub. 75' of Dockage Direct Ocean Access Bayviews from Dock. Plus a 24 hour guard-gated community! \$2.49M



SANS SOUCI ESTATES MEDITERANEAN MASTER

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



MODERN SINGLE STORY "CONTEMPORARY"

5 BD/4.5 BA 4,253 Sf, 2 Car Gar. "12' High Ceilings" All Concrete Floors! Heated Pool w/Jacuzzi Waterfall, 1'x4' Porcelain Plank Floors & Glass Tile Baths, Subzero & Wolf Appl's, Quartz Top, Kit., Impact Glass. 75' of dockage! 2.1MIL

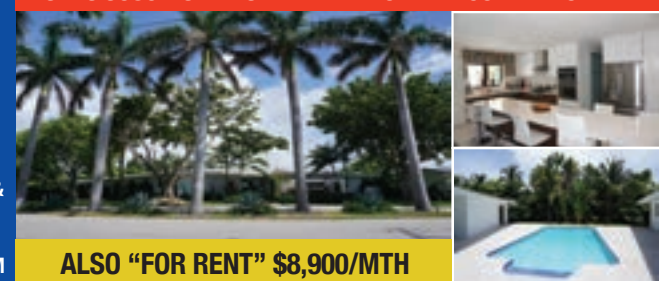
SANS SOUCI ESTATES "ANGLE BAYVIEWS" NEW 2018 CONSTRUCTION



OVERSIZED 1/3 ACRE CORNER LOT ESTATE, ACROSS THE STREET FROM MULTIMILLION DOLLAR BAYFRONT HOMES!

5BD/4.5BA, 4, 732 Sf., pool & jacuzzi, garage. 36" white quartz glass floors & glass tile baths, italian, quartztop, kit. Impact glass. huge master suite & sprawling bath, nice bay breezes 1.69M

"SANS SOUCI ESTATES" "NEW REMODELED CONTEMPORARY"



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Commentary: LETTERS

Little Haiti, Unleash Your Power

Thanks to Erik Bojnansky and *Biscayne Times* for continuing to hit the issue of mega-developers stomping into Little River and Little Haiti (“On the Menu: Higher Prices, Fewer Locals,” October 2018). Here’s to more “galleries, restaurants, bars, salons” — more low-wage service jobs for locals who’ll now have to commute to work.

Jean Mapou hits the nail on the head when he says individuals can’t do much about the encroachment, but a community can. Who doesn’t want to listen to someone with an offer to buy? But selling means you’ll likely have to move to a more expensive neighborhood, further away.

The community has leverage, considering the elevation issue and sea level rise, and can negotiate — as a community — to prevent cherry-picking and lowballing, and to have some say in outcomes.

They need to unleash the power they hold, and they need legal and organizational backup and counsel before it’s too late.

*Tere Alonso
Miami*

Stop These Trains — Ten Times!

Thank you for Francisco Alvarado’s story “Horns and a Dilemma” (October 2018). The real dilemma is how does one catch a train speeding by at 40 mph? There are no stations! The whole point of mass transit is: One can use it!

There should be ten stops between Fort Lauderdale and Miami.

*Patrick Francis
NE 4th Court and NE 78th Street
(where is it very noisy)
Miami*

Way Too Much Noise

I live at the Shores Villas in Miami Shores. Our condos are just off the train tracks between 87th and 91st streets on Park Drive. The number of trains has increased, and the noise from the horns is driving us crazy.

*Antonio Arroyo
Miami Shores*

Train-Horn Slayer

Thank you for your article about the train horns.

As a followup, maybe you should do our story (Mayor Cavalier of Miami Springs and myself) about creating quiet zones at night in 1985 in the State of Florida, and how a federal lie brought the horns back.

*Joseph Platnick, Project Whistle Stop
North Miami Beach*

I’m Ready to Take It to the Tracks

I’m a resident of North Miami. I live near the train tracks on 127th Street and am awakened several times each night by blaring horns and rumbling tracks.

Being an activist, I have considered standing at the tracks with picket signs during commutes.

Thank you for a great article.

*Nicole Sauvageau
North Miami*

Apologies Our

In John Ise’s column “Time to Reboot for November Elections” (October 2018), unfortunately my last name was inverted with my first name.

His column states my name as Dreher Werner.

My name is Werner Dreher.

Thank you.
*Werner Dreher
El Portal*

You Sweet Talker, You

To Jack King: Remember Don “the Con” Dumpster is your president, snowflake (“This Midterm Matters,” October 2018). He will continue to be your president until 2024.

Suck it up, lollipop. Socialism sucks.
*Kat Tesauro
North Miami*

A NMB Plea to Vote

Mark Sell’s column (“Free-for-All in North Miami Beach,” October 2018) underscores that the citizens of North Miami Beach have a rare opportunity. They can vote for city officials who will follow constituent voices, instead of the special interests.

These past few years, our commission has been inundated with more than our share of “rotten apples.” The last two occupants of the mayor’s seat were found guilty of criminal offenses. Another commissioner has been arrested and removed from office.

Officials who followed the lead of lobbyists and dismantled our sanitation department and outsourced management of our water utility must be replaced. Neither of these issues were constituent-driven, and residents were upset with both moves.

We need experienced people who can be trusted with our city. Fortunately, we have three individuals who meet this requirement: Ray Marin, Jay Chernoff, and David Templar.

It’s time for us to take back our city.

*Jaime Miller
North Miami Beach*



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JUST LISTED!

5831 NE 6 Ct. \$749,000

One of Morningside's best corner homes located steps from the wide bay. This is a large 3 bedroom, 2.5 bathroom MIMO ranch.



UNDER CONTRACT!

463 NE 55 Ter. \$935,000

This exquisite 4BR/3,5BA Art-Deco masterpiece, designed by Kiehnel & Elliot, and built in 1935 by Gunn & Goll, will melt your heart!



4700 SW 18 St. \$319,000

Meticulously maintained 3 BR/ 2BA home located on a HUGE OVERSIZED 14,000 sq ft. lot one of only two lots this size in the neighborhood.



JUST LISTED!

2725 Brickell Ct. \$1,665,000

Miami's best kept secret off Brickell Ave. across from Alice Wainright Park, elegant, gated lush tropical paradise with 5BR/5.5BA & 3,315 sf LA.



JUST SOLD!

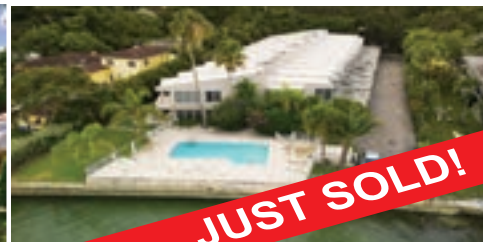
8540 Arboretum Ln. \$862,763

OUR 17th Sale in Casa Blanca! A new private gated community of 18 new construction, modernistic homes. Carina model: 3BR/3BA, 2,460 sq. ft.



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!



JUST SOLD!

6011 N Bayshore Dr #4 \$500,000

Extremely rare to market, this is 1 of only 12 townhomes located in Morningside. Built in a lushly landscaped tropical paradise.



2900 NE 7 Ave #402 \$1,149,000

Amazing unobstructed bay views in Edgewater. Come live in elegance w/ direct water views from this gorgeous 3 BED / 4 BATH condo w/10 ft ceilings.



JUST LISTED!

230 NE 212 St. \$325,000

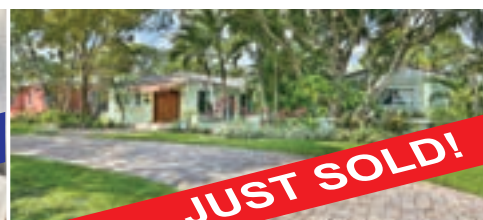
Stunning 2 story home located in the desirable San Simeon Homes gated community. This gem has been totally remodeled.



NEW PRICE!

2150 Sans Souci Blvd #B911 \$265,000

GORGEOUS UNIT! This exquisite 2BR/2BA has been remodeled w/ no expenses spared! Panoramic views from every room.



JUST SOLD!

461 NE 53 St. \$682,500

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.



JUST LISTED!

53 NE 101 St. \$649,000

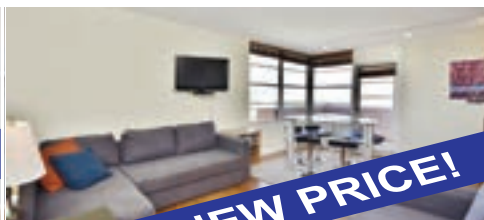
Welcome to one of the most charming homes in Miami Shores! This adorable Mid Century 3BR/ 2BA features a beautiful kitchen with granite countertop.



JUST LISTED!

885 NE 113 St. \$460,000

Beyond Exquisite! This totally remodeled modern masterpiece is a 4BD/3BA, plus in-law quarters, features open euro-kitchen & more.



NEW PRICE!

2899 Collins Ave. #721 \$269,000

Enjoy breathtaking ocean views from this charming beautifully remodeled corner unit! Walk out of your building right onto wide sandy beaches.



NEW PRICE!

830 NE 116 St. \$599,000

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.



NEW PRICE!

1822 Dixianna St. \$1,849,000

The apartment complex is located on a huge 20,953 sf lot. It is 1 block west of Federal Highway. Most tenants are month to month but are long-time renters.

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Countdown to Election Day

And about those constitutional amendments....

By Jack King
BT Contributor

As we come to the end of the 2018 political season, I can't help but wonder how all this is working out. We have as president Don "the con" Dumpster, who's telling everybody that everything is going wrong — except, of course, everything that is going right, thanks to him. He is, truly, an egomaniacal nut case.

He still goes about the world telling thousands of lies — and, yes, I do mean real lies — to anyone who will believe him. And the believers are mostly old white men and white women who apparently believe anything as long as they get something out of it.

They all seem to revel in the Dumpster's lies, even when he lies directly to their faces and then, hours later, tells a completely contradictory lie without batting an eye. It takes many years of experience to learn to lie like that.

Back to Florida. The last thing we need are politicians who have no idea how to help our state. Most of them, of course, only know how to help themselves.

Take, for instance, our illustrious governor, Rick Scott, who is now running for a seat in the U.S. Senate. He talks like

he's in this for the residents of Florida. Well, he's a resident of Florida (if you can call Naples part of Florida), and he has ripped off just about any health company in Florida that would have him.

It would take many pages to tell all the Rick Scott story, so how about just this excerpt for starters. In 2002, one of his health care companies, Columbia HCA (he had been its president before leaving during a federal investigation) was fined \$1.7 billion (that's right, *billion*) by the feds. The Justice Department called Columbia/HCA's the "largest health care fraud case in U.S. history" because it defrauded every governmental program, rather than just one program exclusively. See that? Scott is an equal-opportunity crook.

When Columbia finally bought him out for \$300 million, he was on his way! He decided to jump into politics and ran for governor. That was a bad idea for Florida, and we still haven't recovered. And now he wants to be a U.S. senator, rather than a Medicare fraud specialist. No doubt, it has done him well. He's put at least \$65 million in his campaign so far, and the talk is, he'll get to \$100 million. And he won't even miss a meal or a vacation to the south of France.

Recently, Scott has been missing in action. He says he's been working on the

hurricane mess in north Florida. I've asked a lot of questions, though, and nobody can tell me what exactly he's done. Sounds a lot like his eight years in Tallahassee.

Back to home and to this election. For reasons not too clear to me, the Florida Constitution has enshrined a way for state voters periodically to remove stuff from it. It happens every 20 years, and nobody really knows what to do with or without it. With that said, here goes:

Amendment 1: This amendment fiddles with the existing Florida Homestead Exemption. Don't mess with it. The amendment certainly needs some work, but this is not the way to do it.

Amendment 2: This puts a temporary cap on the Homestead Exemption. While the homestead laws certainly need some adjustment, this is still not the way to do it.

Amendment 3: This is about casino gambling. Most people seem to want it. I'd rather give my money to my ex-wife than gamble it away.

Amendment 4: This allows felons to vote after they've served their time. Why not? There's nothing in Florida law or the U.S. constitution to withhold the right to vote from felons who've paid their debt to society.

Amendment 5: It would require a two-thirds vote to raise taxes. Do you

think that you could get a two-thirds vote for anything in the legislature?

Amendment 6: Why this is even here? It's already in the constitution.

Amendment 7: Death money for first responders. No.

Amendment 8: Forget it. The Supreme Court has removed this one.

Amendment 9: Vaping and oil drilling? Just forget this one.

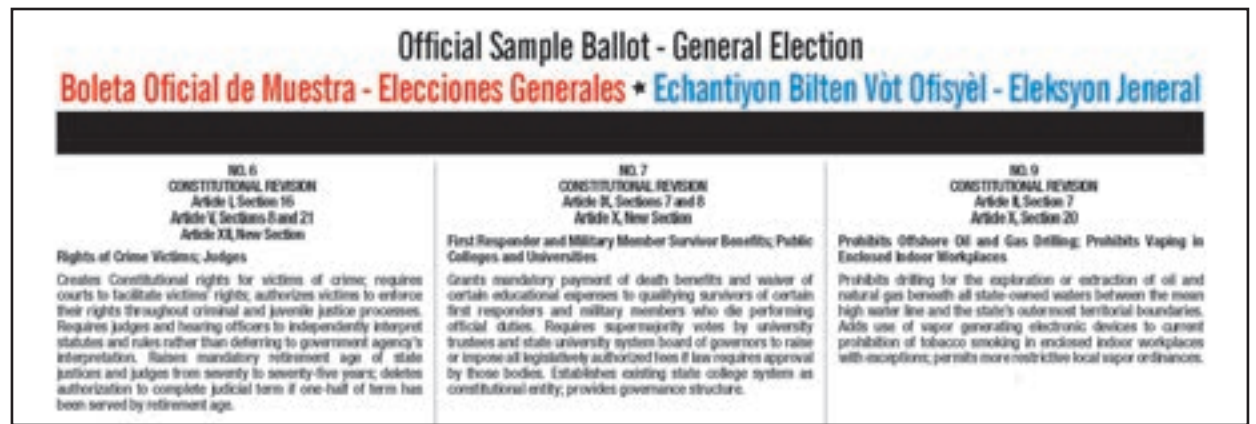
Amendment 10: Florida Office of Counterterrorism. Is Tallahassee now Washington, D.C.? Forget it. Would you like to have Rick Scott run the terrorism office?

Amendment 11: Would repeal the state's ability to prohibit non-citizens from buying, owning, and selling property; deletes a provision that forces the state to prosecute criminal suspects under the law they were originally charged under, even if the Legislature changes that law; deletes obsolete language having to do with high-speed rail in Florida. Are you kidding?

Amendment 12: Lobbying rules. Forget it. There are no lobbying rules in Tallahassee. Tallahassee is actually in Georgia.

Amendment 13: Would ban dog racing. Who cares? It's a dead sport (sport?) anyway.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com





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BizBuzz

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

By Margaret Griffis
BT Contributor

Since Hurricane Michael passed through Florida last month, the migratory songbirds have been rushing through the state on their way to points south. You may have heard their cheery twitterings in the silence between the honking of the cars belonging to a different type of snowbird. Both symphonies exclaim that winter season is here! More people, sure, but also more things to enjoy in our warm paradise.

First, you may have noticed an insert for the **Miami Book Fair** included with this issue. The nation's largest literary gathering celebrates its 35th edition this year, November 11-18, at Miami Dade College's Wolfson Campus (300 NE 2nd Ave.). More than 500 authors and 200 vendors are just the start, with events too numerous to list, so consult the guide. Tickets: \$10/adults; \$5/seniors and teens; and free for kids 12 and younger.

Next, the **City of North Miami** holds its 44th annual Winternational Thanksgiving Day Parade on Thursday, November 22, at 10:00 a.m. this year. The route runs along NE 125th Street between NE 6th and NE 12th avenues, with a mainstage at city hall (776 NE 125th St.). Enjoy spectacular bands, dance groups, and professional floats,

or join the fun yourself by contacting North Miami Parks at 305-895-9840 to volunteer or participate. Don't forget that the city will also be observing Veterans and Family Day at Griffing Park (12220 Griffing Blvd.) Monday, November 12, at 10:00 a.m. Bring a lawn chair or blanket to enjoy a family-style picnic and children's games.

Martha/Mary Concerts (305-458-0111, www.marthamaryconcerts.org) opens the new season Sunday, November 4, at 3:00 p.m. with a "Celebration of Leonard Bernstein and George Gershwin" at the Corpus Christi Catholic Church (3220 NW 7th Ave.). If you attended performances when the series was known as Saint Martha Concerts, you'll be pleased to learn that the new, intimate venue is spectacular. The collection of Spanish Colonial art in La Merced Chapel alone makes for an incredible background. Tickets are \$15 and \$25. Ample, secure parking is free.

Holidays are for visits with family, but there's a point where you want to send some of them...someplace special for a few hours. Why not send all of them, especially the kids, to the **Frost Museum of Science** (1101 Biscayne Blvd. 305-434-9600) to enjoy "Science Circus: The Physics of Fun!?" Comic and science educator Rhys Thomas simplifies Newtonian physics (think



gravity) during his live show, which blends science, comedy, and circus acts. This special Thanksgiving weekend event runs from Friday, November 23, through Sunday, November 25.

Speaking of kids, the drama department at the **Cushman School** (592 NE 60th St., 305-757-1966) debuts *Shrek Jr. the Musical* at the Miami Theatre Center (MTC) on Tuesday, November 6, at 7 p.m. (806 NE 2nd Ave., Miami Shores). Performing arts director Lisa Herbert and musical director Alex Woods have been working on the stage show with the middle school theater students as part of the school's expansion of its arts program.

Monsignor Edward Pace High School (15600 NW 32nd Ave., 305-623-PACE) is in the middle of its annual Tons of Love Food Drive. Students

compete to bring in the most donated items to feed local families. Sounds like everyone is a winner. Meanwhile, Pace Drama presents *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot* November 14-16 at 7:00 each night. Presale tickets are \$12; at the door they're \$15.

The **Metropolitan International School of Miami** (3621 NE Miami Ct., 305-576-6070) is ready to enroll preschoolers and kindergarteners at its new campus, where teachers strive to bring high-quality education represented by the school's motto, *Mens sana in corpore sano*. The emphasis here is a well-rounded child who not only learns the Three R's but also thrives on sports, fine arts, and languages.

Continued on page 20

<p>250 NE 97 St.</p> <p>\$489,500</p> <p>Huge 2 bed/3 bath + garage. Over 2,000 total S.F. Updated kitchen & baths. Newer A/C. Storm shutters. Walk to downtown shops, library etc.</p>	<p>164 NW 92 St.</p> <p>\$539,000</p> <p>Built in 2003, this home has 3 beds/2 baths & 2 car garage. Over 2100 total S.F. Granite kitchen. French doors. New central a/c & storm shutters.</p>	<p>421 Grand Conc.</p> <p>\$269,000</p> <p>Big 2/2 in historic Grand Conc. condo. Biggest unit in the building. Newer impact windows. Updated electric & a/c. Walk to downtown shops & cafes.</p>	<p>12035 NE 2 Ave.</p> <p>\$139,500</p> <p>2 bed/2 bath condo close to Barry U. Corner unit. Currently rented for \$1,400 month to AAA tenant. Low taxes & maintenance. Great investment!</p>	<p>DUFFY REALTY www.duffyrealty.com</p> <p>Patrick L. Duffy 305-904-4803</p>
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Let's face it, this question is on many investors minds.

This month's elections are sure to bring changes that will determine what direction our country's economy and policies will move over the next few years.

Many investors are concerned that the market could have another 2008-style meltdown or a major correction, but don't want to just sit it out while the market is still going strong.

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Wednesday, November 14, 6:30 pm @ Lambda Living

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Our Sponsors: NOVEMBER 2018

BizBuzz

Continued from page 18

Schoolchildren are thrilled to get Thanksgiving off, but they can still be picky about what they eat. Have you noticed some aren't too greedy around Grandma's bean casserole? They want fun foods! **Dogma Grill** (7030 Biscayne Blvd., 305-759-3433) is celebrating 16 years of offering the best hot dogs, sausages, and bratwursts in town. Congratulations! So many frankfurters to chose from; however, the restaurant isn't limited in its scope of comfort foods. The staff also make yummy hamburgers, chicken dishes, and specialty sandwiches...and at pretty good prices.

All this talk of holiday meals and treats can be scary to those of us who easily pack on the pounds this time of year — and it can be a nightmare to those whose obesity is a significant health concern. **Jackson Health Systems** (160 NW 170th St., North Miami Beach, 305-585-TRIM) offers its monthly weight-loss seminar Thursday, November 8, at 6:30 p.m., where you'll learn about treatment options that will begin your journey back to good health.

The change in food routines will seem subtle to some, but for those suffering from allergies, the holiday meals can bring their own sets of challenges. At **Florida Center for Allergy and Asthma Care** (877-4-ALLERGY) board-certified doctors will diagnose your particular allergy or allergies, and personalize a treatment plan for you. Pick from 17 convenient locations throughout South Florida.

The **Aventura Arts and Cultural Center** (3385 NE 188th St., 877-311-7469) still has a number of entertaining shows coming up this season, but the next scheduled event is serious. On Tuesday, November 13, at 7:30 p.m. Charles Zelden, Ph.D., hosts "A Postmortem of the 2018 Midterm Elections." Dr. Zelden is professor of history and political science at Nova Southeastern University and has published seven books on civil rights, voting rights, and the judicial process. This discussion will dissect the outcome of this Election Day and what lessons can be learned. Free with an RSVP.

Along the same lines, **Treece Financial Group** (9999 NE 2nd Ave., Suite 203, Miami Shores, 305-751-8855)

continues its exceptional lecture series on Wednesday, November 14, at 6:30 p.m. at Lambda Living Center (7275 NE 4th Ave., #110). The topic this month will be the election and what the state and federal results mean economically and socially to the LGBTQ communities. It's free and open to the public as well.

If you need to recharge yourself after voting or while running holiday errands, park your caboose at new advertiser **Néktar Juice Bar** (2960 NE 199th St. #4, Aventura, 305-749-6633). The store's cold-pressed juices, smoothies, and açai bowls are at the forefront of the juice cleanse revolution. You can pick from their proprietary blends or create your own. If you want to be slightly "naughty," enjoy a frozen treat made with nut milks. Clip the ad in this issue to get a free 24-ounce bowl, smoothie, or juice with purchase of same.

For a more serious refueling, visit **Meridian Spa and Therapy Massage** (1131 NE 163rd St., North Miami Beach, 305-915-3318). The spa's therapists at have decades of experience in *tui na* and other massage therapies, not like some sketchy parlors of ill repute. Whether you need to treat medicinally or not, the massages will recharge your spirit for the holidays.

It's also that time of year when **KB's Real Christmas Trees** (11400 Biscayne Blvd., 305-899-1955) sets up on the Boulevard and returns to the *BT*'s pages. Former North Miami Mayor Kevin Burns has been providing Miamians with their holiday green for over 40 years. Big trees, little trees, wreaths, and more, but come early for best selection from KB's own tree farms — and to enjoy the scent of pine throughout the holidays. Delivery and setup are available. Opens November 16, 8:30 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. seven days a week.

Don't punish yourself for previous gift disasters by simply shopping online and indoors this season. **Bayside Marketplace** (401 Biscayne Blvd., 305-577-3344) has been renovating its facilities and adding new musical acts to its entertainment roster. Check out the winners of the marketplace's "Sounds of Bayside" contest, which was held in September. The artists perform rock, Latin, reggae, and Top 40 every day, beginning at noon. The soundtrack is great for window shopping and chilling by the Bay.

Finding the perfect gift can be difficult, so **JW Marriott Miami**

Turnberry Resort & Spa (19999 W. Country Club Dr., 305-932-6200) is offering gift cards that can be used throughout the resort, whether it's to stay at the new 16-story Orchid Tower, patronize the Golf Pro Shop, relax at Àme Spa & Wellness Collective, or revive at the CORSAIR kitchen & bar and Bourbon Steak by Michael Mina. A tasteful choice for your boss and work colleagues!

It's also the season of the great dilemma: to cook or not to cook! If you decide to accept this Thanksgiving mission, shop **Milam's Markets** (17100 Collins Ave., Sunny Isles Beach, 305-945-1890, and four other locations) for the best in holiday meats, veggies, desserts, and fixings. Just because you're allowing gluttony to reign supreme during the feast season doesn't mean you can't sneak in healthier choices, such as organic meats, locally grown produce, and gluten-free bakery products.

Don't forget to also pick up ingredients, snacks, and more at the **Legion Park Farmers Market** (6601 NE Biscayne Blvd.). The winter growing season in Florida is fantastic, with vegetables and tropical fruits growing abundantly, far away from away from the cold. SNAP benefits are not only accepted, they are doubled for Florida-grown fruits and veggies. The market is open every Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., but bring a blanket for the "Pallets in the Park" performances on the last Saturday of the month, and watch Miami bands and poets share their art.

Or you can let **Soyka Restaurant** (5556 NE 4th Ct., 305-759-3117) do the heavy lifting for you. This year's pre-made Thanksgiving meal begins with a 12- to 14-pound turkey, accompanied with the house gravy on the side, and your choice of ground beef or bread stuffing. Pick two side dishes from a list that includes beet and potato salad, red onion and organic eggs, almíbar sweet potato wedges with brown sugar and anise, garlic Brussels sprouts with bacon and caramelized onions, or butter parmesan-encrusted truffle mac-and-cheese. Dessert is included, either the pumpkin flan, or apple and pecan pies. Place the order by November 16, or you'll be wearing a dirty apron and sad face on Thanksgiving morning.

Whether you're thinking Thanksgiving dinner or a sweet after-work treat just for yourself, **Nothing Bundt Cakes** (15400 Biscayne Blvd.,

Suite 112, 305-974-4536) has a bundt cake in the size and flavor you require. Now that it's autumn, the bakery has added pumpkin spice to its retinue of cake flavors that use all-natural ingredients including eggs, butter, and cream cheese. Clip the coupon in this issue for a free bundtlet.


Do you need something unique for your holiday table? Call **Pastry Is Art** (12591 Biscayne Blvd., 305-603-9340) to ask about custom cakes in a wide range of flavors and styles. Or drop by to get fresh ideas and enjoy a full menu of breakfast and lunch entrées, sandwiches, and salads. Clip the ad in this issue for a free shot dessert.

Maybe you wish you were the one "making bread" by satisfying palates this season? But you're intimidated by the permitting process? Who isn't? Call attorney **Steve Polisar** (407 Lincoln Rd., Suite 2A, Miami Beach; 305-672-7772, x 206) to make that dream a reality. He knows all the rules — and the shortcuts around them — standing between you and that bar or restaurant you've been fantasizing about. Call today and give yourself a great present.

November is also Lung Cancer Awareness Month, and **Mount Sinai Medical Center** (305-535-3434) is doing its part to increase the number of survivors of this deadly disease. If you've smoked, been exposed to asbestos, or have a family history of cancer, plan on attending the "Shine a Light on Lung Cancer" event hosted by the thoracic oncology department's director, Dr. Estelamari Rodriguez, and thoracic surgeon Dr. Fernando Safdie. The pair will discuss the latest treatments and early diagnostic services. The lecture at the MDC Hialeah Campus (1780 W. 49th St., Hialeah) on November 15 at 11:00 a.m. is free, but please RSVP by calling 305-674-2626.

Heads up for early next month. Miami Art Week is December 3-9. Art Basel may be the centerpiece, but there are numerous fairs and events to satisfy every type of connoisseur, and BizBuzz is happy to see returning advertiser **Superfine!** (1001 Ocean Dr., Miami Beach) on that list. This art fair strives to bring collectors together with affordable pieces from superb artists who don't yet command high prices. Visit superfine.world for tickets, which start at only \$8. The fair is open December 5-9.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com




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A Tale of Two Condos

Residents of Aventura's Coronado and Admiral's Port condominiums were ripped off. But just how bad was it? Who exactly was involved? And why is it so hard to get answers?

By Francisco Alvarado

Photos by Benjamin Thacker





The Coronado Condominium: More than \$72,000 was siphoned from the condo association bank account, but the theft was not reported.

On March 30 of this year, Francisca Wildi marched into the property management office of the Coronado Condominium, an Aventura complex of three high-rise residential towers built along West Country Club Drive in the 1970s. The 75-year-old unit owner was on a mission to look at her condominium association's finances.

Since her election in 2017 to the condo's board of directors, she and two other newly elected unit owners had become increasingly concerned about wasteful spending and lawsuits with contractors, she tells *Biscayne Times*.

"I didn't like what I was seeing," Wildi says. "I took it very seriously and began asking questions because it is our money."

Earlier this year, after two more neighbors she'd supported won seats to the nine-member board, her side now had a five-vote majority. Wildi was named secretary, a position that allowed her to dig deeper into the association's bank records. She explains that only the president, vice president, treasurer, and secretary have access to statements for the Coronado's operating account, held in the Aventura branch of City National Bank.

Two weeks later she met with then-assistant property manager Ximena Lama and asked to see the past year's bank statements, according to an Aventura police investigative report. That's when Lama made a startling revelation. She told Wildi that the account had been closed owing to

fraudulent activity and handed over documents related to the incident, the report states.

One of the papers was a bank statement showing a series of automated transfers that began on September 29, 2017, with \$4870 being deposited into a TD Bank account in the name of one Maria Lola. Twenty days later, another \$4790 had been transferred to the TD Bank account. Between Halloween of last year and February 27, 18 more transfers went through, ranging between \$2000 and \$4900, according to the report. In all, over the time period Wildi examined, more than \$72,000 had been siphoned from the association's operating account into the one parked at TD Bank.

Another document she read was a March 6, 2018, fraud affidavit used to close the account, completed and signed by Jeffrey Luxenberg, who was the association's president from February 2016 to March 13 — which was also the day Wildi was appointed secretary, and her ally and new board member Joanne Orizal took over as president.

Yet Luxenberg, Lama, and then-property manager Caroline Pinsky hadn't bothered to inform the eight other board members at the March 13 meeting, much less report the theft to authorities, Wildi alleges. It was she who filed a complaint with the Aventura Police Department the same day Lama finally told her what had happened. Luxenberg,

Continued on page 26

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420 NE 95TH STREET - Light, bright and airy
 3,546-sf 4/2/2 modern pool home on a large lot in central Miami Shores. Simply sublime. Beautifully and tastefully remodeled w/no expense spared. Vaulted ceilings, wood and tile floors, impact windows, gourmet eat-in kitchen, opulent and expansive master suite w/designer baths and walk-in closets, maid's quarters. Lushly landscaped with tropical verdure for privacy. Exquisite pool patio and back yard perfect for entertaining or just staying home. Florida living as it is meant to be. **\$1,150,000**

5781 BISCAYNE BOULEVARD #PH11
 Loft penthouse w/spectacular water views. Located in The Flats at Morningside in the middle of the MiMo Historic District, this glass house in the sky has volume ceilings and a vast wrap-around rooftop terrace that is perfect for entertaining and offers sweeping views of both sunrise and sunset. Open gourmet kitchen w/granite counters, wood cabinets and stainless steel appliances. Features include concrete floors, impact windows/doors, and pool. Located at the entrance to the Morningside Historic District. **\$489,000**



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

1575 NE 108TH STREET - Charming, light, bright and airy
 Mid-Century 2-bedroom 2-bath home on almost 13,000sf lot in quiet pocket of unincorporated Dade near Miami Shores, east of Biscayne Boulevard, steps from the bay. Lovingly cared-for and beautifully updated. Impeccable terrazzo flooring, new kitchen, light quartz counters, elegant backsplash, updated designer bath, new roof, lots of windows and natural light, bonus room for office or family room, 1-car garage. Sprawling yard w/patio for enjoying bay breezes. Rare find! **\$529,000**

900 BISCAYNE BOULEVARD #5801 -
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A Tale of Two Condos

Continued from page 24

who remains a director, declined to comment for this story.

“If you’re the president, treasurer, or secretary, you have a fiduciary duty to report something like this to the rest of the board,” Wildi tells the *BT*. “If I hadn’t found out, nothing would have happened. It doesn’t make any sense.”

Six months later, Aventura Police detectives traced the TD Bank account to a branch in the Shenandoah neighborhood of Miami belonging to a woman with the first name Maria and second name Lola. Her last name is Martin, but it did not appear in the City National Bank document listing the automated transfers. According to the investigative report, the 33-year-old Martin was arrested and charged with second-degree grand theft and organized fraud on August 2.

Despite the bust, Wildi says, she is still seeking answers about Martin and whether she had any connections to people associated with her condominium. After all, Martin wasn’t a Coronado employee, wasn’t a contractor for the building, and doesn’t own a unit there. But Wildi suspects Martin had help from someone with access to Coronado’s bank account information.

“There is probably more money involved, but there’s no way to account for it,” Wildi says. “And there is no way this ‘Maria Lola’ person was working alone.”

The chances that Wildi will ever find out exactly what happened are highly unlikely, even though both state Republican and Democratic lawmakers have promised hundreds of thousands of condo owners like her that scofflaw employees and board members engaged in unethical and criminal acts would go to prison.

During the 2017 Florida legislative session, the State House and Senate passed a bipartisan bill, and Gov. Rick Scott signed it, that attached criminal penalties to a slew of illicit behaviors, such as tampering with ballots for board elections and manipulating condo association records, that have long



Maria Lola Martin was arrested on August 2 and charged with grand theft and fraud.

Description	Account	Date	Amount
Unrecorded TD Bank Maria Lola ACH	OPR1	09/29/17	4,870.00
Unrecorded TD Bank Maria Lola ACH	OPR1	10/19/17	4,790.00
Unrecorded TD Bank Maria Lola ACH	OPR1	10/31/17	4,900.00
Unrecorded TD Bank Maria Lola ACH	OPR1	11/13/17	4,700.00
Unrecorded TD Bank Maria Lola ACH	OPR1	11/21/17	4,750.00
Unrecorded TD Bank Maria Lola ACH	OPR1	12/05/17	4,900.00
Unrecorded TD Bank Maria Lola ACH	OPR1	12/13/17	4,868.99
Unrecorded TD Bank Maria Lola ACH	OPR1	12/21/17	2,500.00
Unrecorded TD Bank Maria Lola ACH	OPR1	12/29/17	4,700.00
Unrecorded TD Bank Maria Lola ACH	OPR1	01/05/18	2,700.00
Unrecorded TD Bank Maria Lola ACH	OPR1	01/09/18	2,200.00
Unrecorded TD Bank Maria Lola ACH	OPR1	01/25/18	4,750.00
Unrecorded TD Bank Maria Lola ACH	OPR1	01/31/18	2,600.00
Unrecorded TD Bank Maria Lola ACH	OPR1	02/05/18	2,200.00
Unrecorded TD Bank Maria Lola ACH	OPR1	02/06/18	2,600.00
Unrecorded TD Bank Maria Lola ACH	OPR1	02/12/18	4,600.00
Unrecorded TD Bank Maria Lola ACH	OPR1	02/16/18	2,600.00
Unrecorded TD Bank Maria Lola ACH	OPR1	02/21/18	2,000.00
Unrecorded TD Bank Maria Lola ACH	OPR1	02/22/18	2,000.00
Unrecorded TD Bank Maria Lola ACH	OPR1	02/27/18	2,750.00
Total			\$ 72,298.99

Document showing \$72,298.99 of Coronado residents’ money ending up with “Maria Lola.”

plagued condominium and homeowner associations.

Yet critics contend that the new law has yet to produce any meaningful indictments or prosecutions of rogue condo association operators.

“I see this not just with this case,” says Russell Jacobs, attorney for the Coronado condo association. “We’ve

uncovered instances of fraud that are neatly wrapped up in a bow that are not getting prosecuted. If there was a crackdown, it would curtail it.”

Instead there are a lot of frustrated condo owners like Wildi. “It’s very discouraging,” she says. “There are a lot of bad things going on with condos. But when we go to the authorities, no one pays attention.”

The first case to be brought under the new law involved an administrator working at Admiral’s Port, another Aventura condominium complex comprising twin 22-story towers on NE 183rd Street. It began with rolls of video footage, some taken in a laundry room, one in a manager’s office, and more in the office of an Aventura police detective.

For starters, picture Donovan Staley as he enters the corridor leading to the laundry room inside the east building of Admiral’s Port. A surveillance camera captures the 33-year-old property manager as he approaches the machine that takes cash and converts it to credit onto “smart cards” used for the washers and dryers. The west building also has a smart-card machine. The date on the footage reads August 1, 2017.

A walkie-talkie dangles from the left pocket of his neatly pressed slacks, and he’s in a crisp long-sleeved, buttoned-down shirt. He wears his gelled hair in a clean side part.

As the camera hovers over him, Staley unlocks the machine. He turns around as if to see whether anyone is watching, opens the machine, and stuffs a wad of green bills from it into his right pants pocket. After relocking it, he steps away, out of camera view. Over the next two weeks, surveillance cameras capture Staley repeating the same ritual.

An employee of Castle Group, the property management company hired by the Admiral’s Port condo association board, Staley was responsible for negotiating contracts with vendors, making sure contractors got paid, and acting as a safeguard for monies collected from the card-loading machines.

“We felt he was a good manager,” says Jaye Chip, who was Admiral’s Port vice president until March of this year, and has since sold her unit. “And we were happy with Castle.” Linda Goldman, who served as the association’s secretary alongside Chip, agrees, noting that “everybody liked him.”

Continued on page 28

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A Tale of Two Condos

Continued from page 26

It turns out, Staley was breaking the rules for collecting cash from the machine, according to a sworn statement to police given by Nina Marcovich, who served as Admiral's Port treasurer with Chipy and Goldman. Every time cash was taken out, Marcovich explained, a form had to be filled out detailing the amount of the collection, and then verified by four people: herself, Staley, the building engineer, and a resident picked at random. The funds would then be deposited monthly, as card-machine revenues, into one of the bank accounts for Admiral's Port.

"One day a maintenance worker brought the video surveillance to our attention," Chipy says. "We watched it, and we couldn't believe what we were seeing. It was incredible. Donovan was hitting the machines frequently."

Armed with the footage, Chipy went to the Aventura Police Department and filed a complaint on August 3, 2017. The same day, Det. Thomas Mundy interviewed Doug Waller, the maintenance worker who'd tipped off the board members and had more allegations to reveal about Staley.

Waller, a husky man with sandy hair, gave a video-recorded sworn statement in which he accused Staley of having pilfered the laundry-card machines for more than six months. (Staley, who was arrested on August 22, 2017, declined through his attorney, Omar Johanssen, to comment for this story.)

Sitting at a cramped table inside an Aventura Police Department interview room, Waller claimed that he and other employees, including a security guard, knew about the alleged thefts but were afraid to come forward because Staley was their boss.

"The security guard would text me to let me know Donovan was hitting the ATM again," Waller told Mundy. "That's what we called the laundry-card machine."

Waller said Staley tried to force him to accept some of the money he was stealing. "I walked into my office and an envelope is sitting on my desk," Waller said in his statement. "There was \$615



Attorney Russell Jacobs represents the Coronado: "The State Attorney is not doing enough to prosecute those cases, and it's giving criminals a heightened sense that they can get away with it."

in it. Donovan then sent me a text saying, 'A little gratitude goes a long way.' That's when I called Jaye [Chipy]."

Waller then dropped an even bigger bombshell. He said he decided to rat on Staley because, he claimed, his boss and an Admiral's Port board member were soliciting kickbacks from contractors working on the property's 40-year recertification project, a Miami-Dade and Broward County requirement of building safety inspection and certification.

In his statement, Waller also alleged that one company paid Staley and the board member a \$9000 kickback, and that Medley-based Safety Electric, an electrical contractor he'd recommended, had reluctantly agreed to pay the pair kickbacks to win a job for the 40-year certification.

According to the quote submitted in his June 20, 2017, bid for the job, Alexander Lopez, Safety Electric's owner, expected the company's work for the 40-year certification to total \$12,800. Waller told the detective that "Donovan told me to call Alex up and tell him to add three grand to the quote.

"I took Alex to the rooftop and let him know what he was up against," Waller added. "Alex told me he didn't feel comfortable with this."

Regardless, Lopez submitted a second invoice with a new price quote: \$15,800. Waller claims that Staley then made the electrical contractor doctor a third invoice for \$18,800 that included \$6000 meant for the property manager and the board member.

However, after Lopez completed the job and his company was paid, he had second thoughts about paying the kickbacks. When contacted by the *BT*, Lopez declined comment.

"Donovan has been e-mailing and calling him," Waller told the police detective. "He's been blowing up my phone, asking, where the hell is Alex."

After interviewing Waller, Detective Mundy contacted Lopez, who agreed to speak with the detective. In addition to corroborating Waller's sworn statement, Lopez agreed to participate in an undercover sting against Staley.

On August 22, 2017, the detective set up a hidden camera inside the property management office of Admiral's Port before Staley arrived for work. Lopez was already there, too. Footage shows Lopez handing Staley an envelope containing \$6000 while they sit at a desk. After Lopez leaves, Mundy, who declined through a spokesman to be interviewed for this article, enters the

room and explains to Staley that he is being placed under arrest on charges of organized fraud, unlawful use of a communications device, and two counts of grand theft for taking money from the laundry-card machines and the kickbacks.

The investigation left board members shocked, according to Goldman, the former secretary. "Donovan fooled everybody," she says. "What he did — no one saw it coming."

A slim woman with raven hair, Francisca Wildi sits in a chair inside a conference room in one of the three towers of the Coronado Condominium. She is flanked by unit owners Chaia Rotem, Digna Flores, and Paul Duggal, who were all also elected to Coronado's board of directors this past March.

"It's been more than five months since I made my complaint to Aventura police," Wildi says. "I had to call Detective Mundy to find out that they'd made an arrest. But he didn't give me any other information on who Maria Martin is. To me, it looked like a fictitious name. We still don't have a lot of answers."

Wildi claims she has been unable to get answers from Luxenberg, who filled out the fraud affidavit, and that Pinsky, the property manager at the time, quit her job on March 28, the same day Wildi went to the Aventura Police Department. FirstService Residential, the company that managed Coronado and employed Pinsky, hasn't helped either, she alleges.

In April, Detective Mundy obtained a subpoena for the TD Bank account, according to the police investigative report. Bank records show that Martin opened the account in early August 2017. The detective identified deposits that matched withdrawals made from the Coronado's bank account. On August 2, 2018, Mundy arrested and charged Martin with organized fraud, grand theft, and offenses against computer users. At her arraignment in early October, Martin pleaded not guilty. She did not return two messages on the voicemail of the

Continued on page 30

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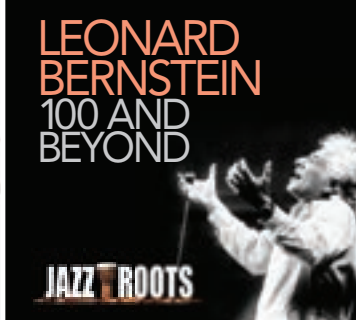
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November 3 - 11



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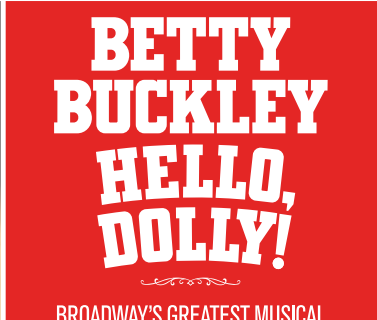
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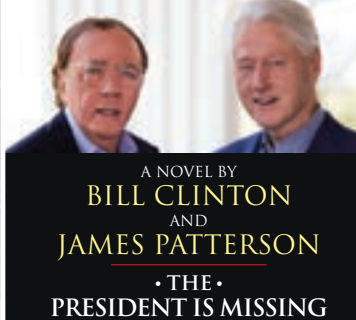
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BISCAYNE Times



A Tale of Two Condos

Continued from page 28

cell phone listed in her arrest report.

Still, Mundy didn't find any links to FirstService Residential employees or board members. "Maria Martin didn't work for Coronado," says Russell Jacobs, the association's attorney. "We thought it was a fabricated name. The problem with ACH transfers is that all you need is a voided check. Certainly the management company could have done a better job reconciling things. We are still only learning who she is."

Jacobs says that as a result of City National Bank's internal investigation, the \$72,000 was returned to the Coronado condo association. He adds that the bank is still assisting the ongoing police investigation.

In May, Coronado's board voted to replace FirstService with Sunrise Management, with offices in Plantation.

Paul Duggal, an 80-year-old retired engineer who owns three apartments at Coronado, says that he and Wildi ran for seats on the nine-member board of directors because the property has been neglected and mismanaged for years.

"I pay \$1600 a month in maintenance, and for what?" he asks. "Look at our corridors. All of them are shabby. Our elevators were supposed to be done and inspected in July 2017. It still hasn't happened."

Duggal rattles off a number of poor management decisions that have plagued Coronado in recent years. "One time the board approved \$17,000 in bonuses for FirstService employees," he says. "We had a pool-fixing contract for \$300,000. It ended up costing \$1.3 million. Then we had a company install [key] fobs for \$106,000, and it ended up being \$300,000 without any change orders or documentation. This association needs to be thoroughly investigated."

Executives in the Dania Beach office of Toronto-based FirstService Residential did not return two messages seeking comment. "It's a real, real mess here," Duggal says. "So much money has been going out."



A surveillance camera captures property manager Donovan Staley as he approaches the laundry room machine and turns as if to see whether anyone is watching.



Walkie-talkie dangling from the left pocket of his neatly pressed slacks, Staley unlocks the machine and stuffs a wad of bills into his right pants pocket.



After relocking the machine, Staley steps away, out of camera view. Over the next two weeks, surveillance cameras capture him repeating the ritual.

Wildi is convinced that Maria Lola Martin had an inside accomplice. "I don't believe she acted alone," she says. "The property management company handled the accounting. How did they not see all this money going out? How do they not reconcile the accounts? And if you're the president of the board, how do you keep it to yourself?"

Wildi says she and Duggal have been trying to get a forensic audit of their books conducted but are being met with resistance by other board members. "We need to get to the bottom of this to find out who else was involved," Wildi says. "The only way to do it is to conduct a forensic audit. But that hasn't been approved by the board."

According to Duggal, it's an uphill battle fighting to reform the board because a majority of Coronado's residents are senior citizens who can't stand up for themselves. "A lot of people here are elderly and on Social Security," he says. "Some have trouble walking. You feel bad for them."

Hours after Mundy arrested Donovan Staley on August 22, 2017, on charges of ripping off the laundry-card machines and accepting kickbacks, he and Aventura Police Chief Brian Pregues joined Miami-Dade State Attorney Katherine Fernandez Rundle for a press conference about the bust. Flanked by the Aventura police officials and state Senators Rene Garcia and José Javier Rodriguez, Rundle hailed Staley's arrest as the first under the new condo law approved by the state legislature. A large poster of Staley's mugshot with a list of the charges against him served as a backdrop.

"Donovan Staley abused the trust of the condo directors and owners to line his own pockets," Rundle said. "We want the community to know that the new law is going to make a difference."

Garcia, who co-sponsored the legislation with Rodriguez, claimed that Staley's arrest sends a message that authorities and politicians were done with "rogue association members" and "fraudulent activity going on at these associations."

Continued on page 32



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A Tale of Two Condos

Continued from page 30

“It stops today,” he said. “With today’s arrest, it sends a strong message that the community is not going to stand for this type of behavior anymore.”

Yet Admiral’s Port board members had no advance notice of the press conference, according to Jaye Chipy, or its aftermath.

“The Aventura police weren’t very forthcoming with information,” she says. “Next thing we know, Rundle is holding this big press conference, waving a life-size poster of Donovan’s mugshot. We were like: ‘They are really going to put a stop to this.’ Then it just fizzled out.”

According to the Staley investigative report, Mundy found no evidence backing Waller’s claims that a board member was in cahoots with the property manager. Meanwhile, Staley’s trial date has been postponed several times since his arrest. His next hearing is scheduled for December 5. He has pleaded not guilty. “I don’t know if they’re hoping people are going to forget,” says Chipy. “But I’m not. Donovan did so much damage.”

Staley’s alleged improprieties sent the Admiral’s Port 40-year-recertification into a tailspin. “When Donovan was arrested, it all came to a screeching halt,” explains Chipy. “The parking lot was turned upside down due to all the construction equipment there.”

She says the board was hoping the investigation would continue efforts to determine if any other contractors were paying kickbacks. “We had some faith in the people doing the investigation,” Chipy



In August of last year, Donovan Staley was arrested and charged with organized fraud, unlawful use of a communications device, and two counts of grand theft.

says. “It set back the construction schedule tremendously, not to mention we also had to change the property management company. Anything Donovan had touched became questionable.”

Castle Group tried to hold on to the management job, claiming that Donovan was a rogue employee, Chipy says. Company officials didn’t respond to three phone messages seeking comment. Like Detective Mundy, Aventura Police Chief Pregues declined comment through a spokesman.

The fallout also led to a complete turnover of the Admiral’s Port board. Even though Chipy, Nina Marcovich, and a third board member had assisted the investigation, they were voted out in early March. The six new board members all declined speak to the *BT*, citing a desire to move on from the scandal or a lack of knowledge about the case. “They think it isn’t too good for Admiral’s Port reputation,” says France Soude, who was an Admiral’s Port director until July of this year.

The current president, Judy Pasternak, adds, “The current [directors] and I were not on the board last year. This is a criminal case and an ongoing investigation. We have no knowledge pertaining to this case.”

“Kathy Fernandez Rundle said she would make an example out of [Staley],” Chipy grouses. “It was just a very sad ending.”

Ed Griffith, Rundle’s spokesman, says he can’t comment on the specifics of Staley’s case. However, he says, it is moving along at a normal pace: “The

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Former Admiral's Port vice president Jaye Chipy: "Next thing we know, Rundle is holding this big press conference, waving a life-size poster of Donovan's mugshot. We were like: 'They are really going to put a stop to this.' Then it just fizzled out."

A Tale of Two Condos

Continued from page 32

overall pace of a criminal prosecution can always seem too slow for those individuals who may feel victimized by a particular defendant. However, the exact pace of a criminal case is normally dictated by the legal activity generated by courtroom actions."

As she sits inside the Coronado Condominium's conference room with her fellow unit owners, Francisca Wildi wonders how long she'll be able to continue fighting to learn more about the illegal bank transfers to Maria Lola Martin. "I'm the one who keeps calling the detective to ask what

is happening," she says. "I'm really surprised at how slow the law works here in Florida."

Russell Jacobs, the Coronado board's attorney, claims the new condo laws have not enhanced the ability of prosecutors to prosecute crimes involving condo associations. "The State Attorney is not doing enough to prosecute those cases, and it's giving criminals a heightened sense that they can get away with it," he says. "Prosecutors claim to be overwhelmed, and that's why the cases take so long to conclude."

Spokesman Griffith insists that Rundle and law enforcement agencies are taking the problem seriously. An assistant state attorney in the

economic crimes division is focusing on condo crimes.

"That work is supplemented by the activities of the Miami-Dade Police Department's condo crimes unit and the work of the Miami Beach and Aventura police departments, which also work condo crime investigations," Griffith says. "Presently, we have 12 active ongoing condo investigations, but that number can change, depending on the information and evidence brought to the police by individual complainants."

Griffith also notes that condo crime investigations are very "paper intensive." "It always takes time to develop these cases, which is often exasperating for condo residents," he says. "Our American system of

justice requires concrete evidence and cooperative witnesses willing to come forward to testify for a case to successfully lead to a criminal conviction, beyond a reasonable doubt."

Wildi, who purchased her first Coronado unit 18 years ago and her second unit 15 years ago, says she's been struggling to reform the condo association for nearly two years.

"Before this latest incident with Maria Lola, three of us filed a complaint with the state attorney general and a state senator whose office is in Kendall," she says. "But we don't hear anything or get a response. Nobody cares."

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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Fireflies of Memory

Motel “guests” will relive MiMo’s fringe and celebrated past

By Mark Sell
BT Contributor

In that fifth dimension beyond space and time, from November 30 through December 23, you’re invited to meet 30 souls who lived for a while in the rooms of the rechristened Gold Dust Motel at 7700 Biscayne Blvd.

You may meet a Playboy bunny, a would-be CIA operative, a hooker, an ex-boxer, and a lovelorn waitress. There’s also a bookie, the speakeasy manager, and a cast of tourists, residents, traveling salesmen, hustlers, and dreamers who’ve stayed at the motel through fat times and lean since 1957.

All are composites of real people, brought back to life by prize-winning Miami playwright John C. Sanchez and a cast of 30 actors.

This is the second edition of *Miami Motel Stories*, an immersive experience

produced by Tanya Bravo, founder and executive director of the Juggerknot Theatre Company. The work is directed by Mia Rovegno, imported from New York. The first edition won raves last year at the 1920s-era Tower Hotel in Little Havana. Coming up in 2019: Overtown and North Miami Beach.

To be more precise, the production is called *Miami Motel Stories MiMo* — a double-sided wordplay on Miami motels and mid-century modern, the term for the playful postwar architectural and design style that defined the row of motels along the Boulevard between 50th Street and the Little River Canal.

Tickets run \$45-\$75, are going fast, and are available at www.miamimotelstories.com. The lowest rate gets you into the 1957 opening tiki party, the grounds, the 1960 coffee shop, the speakeasy, the bookie joint, and a



BT photo by Caitlin Granfield

Once the Gold Dust Motel, then Motel Blu, now Gold Dust again: It will soon be the scene of a unique theater experience.

meeting with the talkative fisherman by the Little River Canal.

For \$65, you get to pick a pink, blue, or yellow key, unlocking doors to the rooms and people inhabiting different decades, in décor befitting their times and psychic states. Only four can enter the room at a time, honoring the intimacy. The \$75 ticket gets you all that

and an after-party.

So much for the basics. The real story of this production goes ever deeper. It is one of executive intelligence and community collaboration. As with so much in Miami, it’s also about real estate. But the heart of the story is a passion to

Continued on page 38

Get Ready for “Miami’s Eiffel Tower”

Work has begun on Skyrise Miami at Bayside Marketplace

By Erik Bojnansky
BT Senior Writer

Attention, fans of observation towers. Someday soon, perhaps as early as January, a press conference will be held at the Miamarina at Bayside Marketplace to discuss the development of SkyRise Miami, a proposed 1000-foot tall structure that developer Jeffrey Berkowitz describes as a “vertical amusement park” and “Miami’s Eiffel Tower.”

“Hopefully, we will [hold a press conference] after the beginning of the New Year,” Berkowitz states in an

e-mail to the BT.

The Arquitectonica-designed tower is slated to be built on a former parking lot along Biscayne Bay near the Miamarina and a Hard Rock Café restaurant just east of the sprawling Bayside Marketplace.

When the tower is finally completed sometime around 2023, SkyRise Miami will have “the world’s only indoor controlled free-fall system, a ‘drop tower’-style ride featuring a record-breaking 95-mile-per-hour descent,” according to an October 26 press

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The developer sees a unique world attraction, while others see a hairpin.

An Existential Question, but No Master Plan

Promises, mega-projects, and the future of Little Haiti

By Erik Bojnansky
BT Senior Writer

Miami city officials may soon hear two separate proposed projects, each with a massive number of new apartments, retail, office, hotel rooms, and other uses in Little Haiti, a working-class neighborhood that is already experiencing major changes.

On November 13, a partnership of four real estate and investment companies is scheduled to ask the Miami City Commission for its blessing to build a 7.8-million-square-foot “mixed-use urban campus environment,” called the Magic City Innovation District, near 60th Street and NE 2nd Avenue, just a couple of blocks from the landmark Caribbean Marketplace and the Little Haiti Cultural Center.

And on December 5, representatives of the Podolsky family are expected to

make their own pitch to replace Design Place, a low-rise apartment complex at 51st Street and NE 2nd Avenue with a 5.4-million-square-foot community, Eastside Ridge.

Both applications are known as special area plans, or SAPs, under an application process that allows property owners with more than nine acres of land to seek massive development rights in exchange for public benefits.

If approved, these projects would add another 13 million-plus square feet of residential and commercial development to northeast Miami, and that makes residents and activists in Little Haiti, Buena Vista, and the Upper Eastside nervous.

“There is much opposition to both projects,” states Morningside activist Elvis Cruz in an e-mail to the *BT*. “They are enormous projects that will forever change the character of the area.”



Rendering of Magic City Innovation District looking east, minus proposed 25-story buildings.

But the developers of these two projects aim to change that perception by negotiating directly with local organizations, mainly within Little Haiti. They’re also doling out money to groups in the Little Haiti area.

“We are committed to the economic, social, and cultural prosperity of Little Haiti, and the diverse population

of people who live and work there,” declares Neil Fairman, one of the developers of the proposed Magic City Innovation District.

Eastside Ridge and Magic City aren’t the only mega-projects planned in northeast Miami.

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Final Cut

Aventura gets a new city manager

By Erik Bojnansky
BT Senior Writer

Bay Harbor Islands’ top administrator has been hired as Aventura’s new city manager.

Ron Wasson will start his new job November 14. He’ll be only the third city manager Aventura has had in its 23-year history, and starts work less than four months after the city parted ways with Susan Grant, its second city manager, who resigned soon after elected officials expressed dissatisfaction with her budget and management style during a June 25 special meeting. Grant had been Aventura’s city manager for less than six months. (See “She’s No He,” September 2018.)

Enid Weisman, Aventura’s mayor, says she’s confident Wasson will be a good fit. Last year, when Aventura’s longtime city manager, Eric Soroka, announced his intent to retire, Wasson was among eight finalists, she says. But

he backed out of the running after South Florida was hit by Hurricane Irma.

“His reasons for withdrawing [at the time] were particularly important — he just couldn’t leave his city,” Weisman says. That sense of loyalty impressed Weisman. “As luck would have it, he applied again this time,” she adds.

Aventura Commissioner Denise Landman likes Wasson’s familiarity with the “local players in the area.” Most of the applicants were from out of state, she notes. And Howard Weinberg, another commissioner, says Wasson came highly recommended from Bay Harbor Islands. “They said, ‘We don’t want to lose him, but you’d be crazy not to take him.’”

“Remember,” he adds later, “we have the biggest shoes of any city to fill. We had Eric Soroka.”

Hired back in April 1996, Soroka was Aventura’s first manager and stuck around for 21 years until he retired in January 2018 — sort of. He still receives



BT photo by Caitlin Granfield

Ron Wasson at Aventura City Hall: “It’s not wasted on me that it’s the City of Excellence and very well regarded.”

\$6000 a month for consulting on a high school construction project, as well as city finances.

During his time in office, Soroka forged an efficient government while charging homeowners and landowners \$1.73 for every \$1000 of assessed

property value, the lowest municipal property tax rate in Miami-Dade County.

Wasson says his desire to follow in Soroka’s footsteps was part of the reason he wanted to become Aventura’s city manager.

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Fireflies of Memory

Continued from page 36

capture the fireflies of memory before they vanish in this fast-changing city.

And change is afoot at this site, too. Developer and historic preservationist Avra Jain, head of the Vagabond Group four blocks down the street, bought the motel, until recently Motel Blu, for \$6.1 million in September, and rechristened it with its original name, the Gold Dust Motel.

In the past six years, Jain has snapped up motel properties like a smart player on a Monopoly board and is renovating them to recapture the neon-lit essence of their heyday along this stretch, known not so long ago for junkies, streetwalkers, police sirens, and darkness.

The Gold Dust itself is now a construction zone. The theatrical production will be confined to the north side of the property. Coordinator and designer Lee Harrison has been working to prepare the rooms and capture the historical and personal moments of each character and space.

In the second half of 2019, the motel is slated to reopen as Gold Dust Motel by Selina, a fast-growing lodging and co-working company with properties throughout Latin America. Selina is scheduled to open its first U.S. location in February in Little Havana at the Tower Hotel, with others to follow in Washington, D.C., Brooklyn, Philadelphia, Boston, and Los Angeles.

In the 1950s and 1960s, before I-95 replaced U.S. 1 as America's eastern road artery, Biscayne Boulevard from 79th Street south to 50th Street was a motorist's gateway to the Magic City, its motels offering air conditioning, TVs, and swimming pools for weary travelers.

The Gold Dust attracted road-trip families, new Miami transplants getting their sea legs, seasonal residents, and traveling salesmen. Visitors could enjoy the temptations to the east, where Mob-influenced North Bay Village beckoned with its Rat Pack entertainers, steak dinners, and hookers. The Hialeah racetrack was to the west along 79th Street.

Decline set in with the advent of I-95. In 1970 the Boulevard Theater just to the north shuttered after 30 years. Adult business entrepreneur Leroy Griffith reopened it as a burlesque house before repurposing it for various adult entertainment themes. Under new



BT photo by Caitlin Granfield

Tanya Bravo, founder of the Juggerknot Theatre Company: “The type of theater we’re doing, immersive theater, is a vessel that brings empathy. You’re actually part of the story.”

ownership, the theater is now the Gold Rush, billed as “a proper cabaret.”

The Playboy Club, which opened just across the street from the motel in 1961, coped through changing times and neighborhood decline before moving to LeJeune Road in 1983 and finally going out of business. It is now an Advance Discount Auto Parts outlet.

With the new millennium, the neighborhood sputtered to life and was designated historic in 2006. Chef Kris Wessel embraced the cleanup of the turbid Little River Canal, and manatees and fish returned. In 2008, Wessel opened the popular Red Light restaurant at the north end of the Motel Blu property. But the Great Recession hit, the motel changed hands, and the restaurant closed in 2012, the very year Avra Jain bought the Vagabond for \$2 million four blocks to the south.

Jain is a patron of this Miami Motel event, and collaborated with artistic

director Bravo well before closing on the property. Bravo has enrolled a growing cast of civic and corporate players as additional collaborators. *Miami Motel Stories* was funded in part by the Knight Foundation, and Chivas is a big sponsor (the speakeasy is called the Chivas Room). Miami-Dade Transit is supplying a 1950s bus, and Don Bailey is supplying the carpets. Other sponsors include Goodwill South Florida, Café La Llave, and HistoryMiami, the last a particularly vital link.

Attendees at this “real-time theater experience” will walk straight into 1957 and the opening tiki hut reception, with a greeting from actors playing Mr. and Mrs. Keith Wade, the managers from 1957 to 1961.

You can enter the 1960s diner, where a cast of characters through the decades wanders in and out, in a conflation of time and memory.

“These represent the people who stayed or worked in the motel at some point,” says Sanchez. “This is an homage to the past. This is how we got here.”

It's quite a cast of characters. There's the 1959 New Jersey couple seeing the USA in their Chevrolet; Kim, the lovelorn waitress from 1960; Greg, the braggart calling the CIA's listed Miami number to offer his services and dynamite to blow up a Cuban power station; Stella, the Playboy Bunny from 1966, violating house rules with a Playboy Club customer.

Fast-forward into 1976 and decline, as you meet Linda, the hard-bitten disco-hippie prostitute pushing 40; Cecil, the 1993 homeless man touched by Jesus and trying to get on his feet; Rene, the washed-up Cuban-American boxer in 2000, down for the count on drugs and struggling to get up from the mat.

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Fireflies of Memory

Continued from page 38

Then, as the Great Recession lifts, you can meet Carla and Carlos, would-be 2015 Instagram stars questing for luxe, glamour, and attention, and finding themselves a bit early to the party.

“You may meet these people in the rooms,” says playwright Sanchez. “You might encounter some of them in the diner or one of any number of environs in the hotel. That’s why this project is a dream project for me. Oh, my god, it’s like heaven to discover this stuff and do something with it. It’s fascinating information.”

Sanchez holds out his smartphone. “Because of this,” he says, “people want immediacy. For that, a motel is a perfect venue.”

Sanchez has written steadily since 2003, completing 11 plays, with productions in New York, London, Miami, Minneapolis, and Peru. He was born in Cuba and arrived in Miami when he was six. Theater grabbed him in high school, but he discovered he liked playwriting more than acting. He wakes between 4:00 and 5:00 a.m., he says, and writes until sunrise, takes a break and returns around 11:00, often working in a library. He quit cars in 2000 and takes public transportation because he can write while traveling.

“The type of theater we’re doing, immersive theater, is a vessel that brings empathy,” says Bravo. “You’re actually part of the story. I love Juan’s writing because he takes characters on the fringe of society and humanizes them.”

In the Tower Hotel shows last year, Sanchez depicted the shifting populations layered in the history of Calle Ocho, from the original Anglos to the Jews to the Cubans, and even decorated a room with religious symbols from Protestant Christianity, Judaism, Catholicism, and Santería.

The Upper Eastside, he says, evolved through real estate and shifting fortunes. Sanchez lived in apartments near Legion Park in the 1990s and was struck by how relatively pristine the neighborhood has since become.



BT photo by Caitlin Granfield

Playwright John C. Sanchez is writing for a cast of 30 actors: “You may meet these people in the rooms. You might encounter some of them in the diner.”



BT photo by Caitlin Granfield

The old Gold Dust diner more recently housed chef Kris Wessel’s popular Red Light restaurant.

Jain has worked with a team of architects, HistoryMiami, universities, local historians, and individuals to help add flesh and sinew to the stories.

“I had the privilege of seeing the program at the Tower Hotel last year and was quite blown away,” Jain says. “With hotels and motels, you can underestimate the emotional impact of stories in time. Historic preservation is a public benefit

and part of maintaining the heritage of communities. Otherwise, they might be lost forever. Not maintaining that context is a big loss to society and community-building. We believe preservation is an important aspect to doing thoughtful city planning. And *Motel Stories* brings attention to that.”

Last year, Bravo formed a partnership with Barlington Group, which is converting

the Tower Theater into a Selina property. “Our relationship with developers is really important,” she says. “We want to change the conversation between the artist and developer, giving us that moment in time to tell the story of the neighborhood and the building. This change is happening in real time. We live, breathe, and sleep *Miami Motel Stories* 24-7. The developer allows us to tell the story of their neighborhood and communities.”

Amid all the change, the stories, and the hustle of changing buildings and deal-making are the tales of ordinary people. For Suarez, Bravo, and Jain, honoring

their lives and struggles is like fashioning their stories into gold dust, if you will, and presenting them as small offerings.

“It’s not just from a point of view of neighborhood and communities,” says Bravo, “but from a point of service. And we are here to serve, right?”

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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Final Cut

Continued from page 37

“Just the reputation of Aventura is very special,” Wasson tells the *BT*. “It’s not wasted on me that it’s the City of Excellence and very well regarded. Being its manager is something to aspire to.”

Wasson will receive \$205,000 a year plus a \$500 monthly car allowance, a \$70 monthly cell phone allowance, and health benefits. That’s not quite as high as the \$220,000 that Grant made during her brief time as city manager or what Soroka received prior to his retirement: \$250,000 per year.

Still, it’s more than what Wasson earned at Bay Harbor Islands, where he received \$172,579 annually and a \$470 monthly car allowance.

Less than a square mile in size, BHI consists of two islands in Biscayne Bay located between North Miami and the Bal Harbour-Surfside area. About 6000 people live on the islands, a community of mainly houses and low-rise multifamily buildings that’s in the midst of a development boom. According to the latest census figures, BHI’s median annual household income is \$61,225.

In contrast, Aventura is a 3.5-square-mile mainland city, home to 38,000 people, most of whom live in high-rise condominiums. While BHI’s retail is limited to Kane Concourse, Aventura teems with retail and offices, including Aventura Mall. Aventura’s median annual household income is \$55,891 (the median for Miami-Dade County is \$44,224).

Wasson spent a large part of his life in New York City. A member of the NYPD for 21 years, he was a captain in the Emergency Services Unit during 9/11. ESU members escorted firefighters into the burning towers and assisted in the rescue and recovery efforts.

In August 2002, Wasson retired and accepted a job as village administrator of Rockville Centre, a Long Island village of 25,000 people. Five years later, he became town manager of Bay Harbor Islands. “I was looking for a community that was by the water, and my parents at the time were alive and lived in Vero,” he explains.

BHI councilman Isaac Salver says he’s sad to see Wasson go. “I understand, from a professional standpoint, he still has more growth in him,” Salver says. “I think being the manager of a city the size of Aventura will be a capstone of his career.”



BT photo by Caitlin Granfield

Aventura Commissioner Howard Weinberg: “They said, ‘We don’t want to lose him, but you’d be crazy not to take him.’”

Salver credits Wasson with transforming the town’s police department into a “top-ranked” agency accredited by the Commission for Florida Law Enforcement Accreditation. More recently, Salver says, Wasson was phenomenal cleaning up Bay Harbor Islands in the aftermath of Hurricane Irma. “Within 36 hours of the eye of the storm leaving South Florida, you could drive through Bay Harbor Islands and not know a storm hit it,” he says.

Salver says Wasson also showed leadership in the aftermath of the financial crisis. By 2010, property values plummeted and BHI was forced to raise its property tax rate from \$4.41 to \$5.29 for every \$1000 of assessed value. No one was laid off, Salver says, but Wasson told department heads to slash ten percent of their budget every year.

Today, the Bay Harbor Islands tax rate is only \$3.72 per \$1000, thanks to the wave of development hitting the east island. Dozens of older buildings have been torn down for more than 25 luxury condo projects, with units priced up to \$3.5 million.

Most of these projects are under the town’s 75-foot height limit. However, developers Ugo Colombo and Valerio Morabito want to build a 120-foot-tall condominium at 1135 103rd St., where the Bay Harbor Continental once stood. Voters will decide if they can receive such a massive variance on the November 6 referendum, which would also allow the owners of four buildings exceeding the 75-foot height limit to

rebuild should they be damaged or destroyed. All four were built prior to the 2002 enactment of the height limit restrictions.

The development wave has divided BHI residents. Among its opponents is Victor Joseph Maya, a preservation activist and resident of BHI for the past five years. He lives in the three-story Bay Harbor Club, built in 1956 and one of the four older buildings exceeding the 75-foot height limit. The proposed charter amendment would enable Colombo and Morabito to build their condo tower right next to his building.

“The island is undergoing a lot of change,” Maya says. “It was growing too fast, when the citizens stepped in and put a limit on the heights of buildings. And ever since then, the town council has gone out of the way to make development really easy on the island.”

A critic of Wasson, Maya argues that he’s hardly a fiscal hawk. Instead, Maya claims, he regularly gives town employees raises and is reluctant to review performances. “They don’t believe in efficiency studies,” he asserts.

Maya also disparages Wasson’s handling of the 67-year-old Broad Causeway renovation. The project started soon after half the causeway’s raised drawbridge slipped and smashed the top decks of a passing mega-yacht in December 2014. Originally budgeted for \$11.5 million, costs eventually ballooned to more than \$18 million.

Councilmember Salver says he wasn’t pleased with the cost of the

renovation either. “That was definitely a low point in the relationship between the town and the manager,” he acknowledges. However, he points out: “We were replacing and repairing elements for the bridge that have not been touched since 1952.”

Maya also accuses Wasson of engaging in “dirty small-town politics,” adding that his co-op has been cited by the town’s building department twice for the rusted appearance of its historic “Bird’s Cage” spiral staircase. In both instances, the citations came almost immediately after Maya confronted councilmembers.

The first citation occurred in May 2016, one day after Maya had a heated argument with Wasson and then mayor (now councilman) Jordan Leonard over various town issues, including Maya’s objections to Wasson participating in the town’s employee pension plan. At the end of the meeting, Maya threatened to run for office against Leonard.

A report from the Miami-Dade Ethics Commission states that “circumstantial evidence” indicates that Leonard “exploited his official position by using an agency of the town he leads to retaliate against, or ‘send a message’ to a critic of town management who threatened to run against him in the next election cycle.”

Unfortunately, the report noted, the town had no written records on why the citation was issued, so the complaint couldn’t be substantiated.

The second time occurred again just one day after the April 10, 2018, town election, in which Maya failed to win a council seat. This time the town red-tagged the spiral case as “an unsafe structure.”

In April, the *Miami Herald* reported that Wasson issued a 39-page report rebutting claims that the citations were politically motivated as “false and without merit.”

Leonard couldn’t be reached for comment.

Salver didn’t want to comment, except to say that Wasson hasn’t been charged by the ethics commission for any missteps. He did say that Wasson tried to fulfill the wishes of the council, and without being political. “He was very, very good at putting into practice the wishes of the council,” Salver says, “and he stayed very neutral.”

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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Little Haiti

Continued from page 37

Last year, the operators of Miami Jewish Health Systems, a 20-acre healthcare facility for the elderly just west of Design Place, won city approval for its “Empathic Village” redevelopment plan that includes a new three-story complex for dementia patients, a 140-room hotel, and a conference center.

There’s also anticipation that the 15.6-acre shuttered Archbishop Curley-Notre Dame High School will become a SAP, too, being marketed for sale by the Archdiocese of Miami. Triple Five Group, the Canadian developers of the proposed 6.2-million-square-foot American Dream project near Miami Lakes, was interested in buying the school property, but has since backed out of its purchase contract. *The Real Deal* recently reported that there may be a “backup” contract with another developer.

Some nearby residents fear that these mega projects will further congest roads in the northeast sector of Miami, force out low-income renters and homeowners as property values rise, and encourage more high-rise development.

“No one is saying we don’t want development. It just needs to be restricted,” says Robin Porter, president of the Buena Vista East Historic Neighborhood Association. “The city is using SAPs as a large Band-Aid to let developers do what they want without a holistic look at the impacts.”

Ric Katz, a Miami publicist representing the New York-based Podolsky family, says Eastside Ridge would have a positive impact. His clients would offer an “enormous benefits package” in exchange for support for the zoning increase, including a \$10 million contribution to the city’s affordable housing fund, the majority of which would be earmarked for Little Haiti. Katz also says that construction jobs, hotel jobs, and retail jobs will be reserved for Little Haiti residents.

Katz also says his clients are still negotiating the exact terms of that package with the city and community leaders, such as Father Reginald “Reggie” Jean-Mary, pastor of the Notre Dame d’Haiti Catholic Church. Attempts to reach Jean-Mary through his employer, the Archdiocese of Miami, were unsuccessful. However, Pastor Erick Jules of the One God in Three Persons



Magic City Innovation District vision of a restored DuPuis Medical Office and Drugstore.



Little Haiti icon Jan Mapou: “It’s a major development. People coming to this, they’re going to say, ‘I came to see Magic City.’ It won’t be Little Haiti anymore.”

First Baptist Church tells the *BT* that he and Jean-Mary spoke to Eastside Ridge’s representatives as recently as two months ago.

“We sat down and discussed [a benefits plan], but we don’t have anything yet,” Jules says, adding that they plan to continue talking about a package that will include affordable housing and jobs.

Neil Fairman says his team is negotiating with the city. “They have required the inclusion of infrastructure improvements, workforce housing, affordable housing, and job creation to name a few,” Fairman states in an e-mail to the *BT*.

And, Fairman insists, the Magic City Innovation District will provide such benefits, forming entrepreneur programs for locals and artists, providing 18,600 “direct and indirect” jobs, and reserving 21 percent of the nearly 2700 residential units he wants to build for affordable and workforce housing.

Fairman is co-founder of Plaza Equity Partners (PEP), a real estate company that counts Marina Palms Yacht Club & Residences in North Miami Beach as one of its projects. To build the Magic City Innovation District, PEP teamed up with Metro1 Properties CEO Tony Cho, Dragon Global chairman Bob Zangrillo, and Lune

Rouge founder (and Cirque du Soleil partner) Guy Laliberte. It was Cho and Zangrillo who assembled 17.8 acres of territory in Little Haiti, including the old Magic City Trailer Park, the circa-1902 DuPuis Medical Office and Drugstore, and various warehouses.

Fairman states that he and his partners are already fixing up the DuPuis building and converting the 200,000 square feet of warehouses into commercial spaces. Two former warehouses already serve as the home for two technology companies: Motorsport Network and Online Global. The next phase will be turning the old trailer park into the Magic City Park, an outdoor interactive area run by Lune Rouge that will “showcase the work of international and local artists, as well as food and beverage outlets within unique temporary structures,” Fairman adds.

But ultimately the developers want the zoning to build their pedestrian-friendly “cultural campus,” which would include 2630 residential units, 2.2 million square feet of office space, 520,970 square feet of retail space, 201,600 square feet of hotel space, 119,610 square feet of expo space, and 215,493 square feet of civic space in buildings up to 25 stories tall.

The land’s current zoning allows commercial and light-industrial uses, but caps height at ten stories and limits residential to just 381 units, according to a city report.

Fairman states that his team has already invested \$100 million on property acquisition, renovations, and “programs that benefit the local community and facilitate sustainable growth through the Magic City.”

The partners also set up the Magic City Foundation, explains Tony Cho in an e-mail to the *BT*, which has given money to Sounds of Little Haiti, Little Haiti Football Club, Notre Dame d’Haiti Catholic Church, Women of Tomorrow Mentorship Program, Little Haiti Optimists Club, various local artists, and annual Thanksgiving events.

Magic City Innovation District *does* have supporters. They include Ashlee Thomas, president of the Little Haiti-based arts group Miami Urban Contemporary Experience, or MUCE. Thomas says she attended several community meetings where the developers promised to hire workers,

Continued on page 46



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Little Haiti

Continued from page 44

contractors, and subcontractors from Little Haiti and other poor communities like Liberty City. Another beneficiary, Thomas argues, would be artists who help set up the interactive park. “They’re working with a lot of community artists to get that space activated,” she says.

One of those artists is Serge Toussaint, who has painted many of Little Haiti’s murals. Toussaint says Magic City is paying him \$17,000 to paint “whatever I want” on a wall near Little Haiti Park. “I’ve been painting here for 30 years,” he says, “and I never made that much painting 100 murals.”

Toussaint says Magic City would provide what the area needs most: employment. “People complain that change is coming to Little Haiti,” he says. “But they’re here to rebuild. To make Little Haiti a better place to live and visit.”

Jan Mapou has operated a Creole language book store at 5919 NE 2nd Ave. since 1990. He thinks that Magic City Innovation District will overwhelm Little Haiti.

“It’s a major development,” he says. “We’re talking about commercial and residential. People coming to this, they’re going to say, ‘I came to see Magic City.’ It won’t be Little Haiti anymore.” And the name, Mapou adds, is all too similar to Magic City Casino in Little Havana. “It has a negative



Kobi Karp Architecture

Eastside Ridge, along NE 54th Street and NE 2nd Avenue, would have at least 2600 residential units, around 390,000 square feet of retail, some 400 hotel rooms, and perhaps a train station.

connotation,” he warns.

But what makes Mapou particularly anxious is that property owners around the Magic City Innovation District are knocking down old apartment buildings and retail, places that once had affordable rents and housed Haitian residents and businesses, in anticipation that their properties will be purchased by developers. “They’re tearing everything up so they can start development,” he says.

There are similar worries that Eastside Ridge would also spark a wave of gentrification. Now known as Design Place, the sprawling, walled 22-acre property has been owned by the Podolsky family since 2000, and consists of 100 two-story apartment buildings with more than 400 units. Current zoning allows 380,901 square feet of

commercial space and 1691 residential units in buildings up to five stories high.

The Eastside Ridge SAP now calls for at least 2600 residential units, around 390,000 square feet of retail, some 400 hotel rooms, and perhaps a train station.

Publicist Ric Katz says Eastside Ridge would be a positive addition, providing jobs, taxes, and impact fees. Its two hotels would hire from the Little Haiti area, he adds. Katz says the Podolskys have also given money to local organizations, including Sounds of Little Haiti and Notre Dame D’Haiti Catholic Church. The Podolsky family even contributed to the annual dinner for the Sant La Haitian Neighborhood Center in North Miami, Katz adds, which is run by prominent Haitian activist Gepsie Metellus. (Metellus did

not return a phone call from the *BT*.)

But most of all, Katz says, his clients are more than willing to talk to Haitian activists. “We continue to speak to anyone we can in the Haitian community,” he says.

Katz notes that his clients would especially love to talk to Marlene Bastien, executive director of the Family Action Network Movement (FANM). One of the loudest critics of the mega-projects, Bastien has repeatedly called for a comprehensive look at the potential impacts Eastside Ridge and Magic City would have on Little Haiti.

“The City of Miami’s Planning Department failed to do its job in planning for the future of Little Haiti,” Bastien declared in an open letter to Mayor Francis Suarez and the Miami City Commission in September. “It must develop a comprehensive master plan for the future of Little Haiti. It must develop a comprehensive master plan for the area involving all sectors. SAPs should be assessed collectively to assess the impact on residents, small businesses, and the infrastructure.”

In a text to the *BT*, Bastien says that FANM’s attorneys are talking to the representatives of both projects “to see if we can reach common ground.” But she still wants a community meeting to discuss both projects: “We want the community to be at the table and part of the decision-making processes.”

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

Skyrise

Continued from page 36

release from Plaza Construction, the project’s newly announced contractor. Transparent ledges, a bungee drop, observation orbs, and a virtual-reality facility will be among the other amusements offered at the tower, according to SkyRise Miami’s website.

The development of SkyRise Miami is actually part of Bayside Marketplace’s extended lease that was approved by City of Miami voters in August 2014. The land that Bayside Marketplace has stood on, and the future site of SkyRise, is owned by the City of Miami, although Bayside is run by the Ashkenazy Acquisition Corporation while SkyRise will be controlled by Berkowitz Development Group and Legends, an entertainment company that manages eight observation towers around the world.



The so-called SkyPlunge is imagined as a bungee jump on steroids.

Originally slated to be completed in 2020, SkyRise Miami will reportedly cost \$430 million to build. In December 2014, the Miami-Dade County Commission agreed to kick in \$9 million

toward construction. In response, county officials and Berkowitz were sued by auto dealership magnate Norman Braman and Raquel Regalado, the daughter of then-Miami Mayor Tomás

Regalado and, at the time, a county mayoral candidate. The litigation ended after Berkowitz announced he would no longer seek public money.

Berkowitz was also going to raise \$270 million for SkyRise construction from foreign individuals seeking to immigrate to the United States using EB-5 visas. The EB-5 visa program allows individuals to obtain a green card if they invest at least \$500,000 in a venture that creates more than ten jobs.

The visa program has been used by many South Florida entrepreneurs and investors to fund their projects. Brightline used the EB-5 program to raise \$130 million for its MiamiCentral depot project in Park West. Developer Ye Zhang also reportedly is using EB-5 visas to help pay for his ongoing project to convert the former Immigration

Continued on page 48

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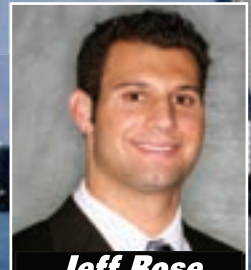
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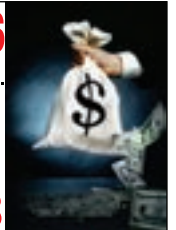
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Community News: BISCAYNE CORRIDOR



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Skyrise

Continued from page 46

building at 7880 Biscayne Blvd. into Triton Center, a 139-room hotel and 324-unit apartment complex.

That federal visa program, however, is set to expire on December 7, unless it's extended by Congress. It's also an increasingly unpopular program with wealthy individuals wanting to immigrate with their families to the United States, says Ira Kurzban, a Miami immigration attorney. That's because it takes 5 to 15 years. "They don't want to wait 10 or 15 years or whatever," Kurzban explains.

In an e-mail to the *BT*, Berkowitz states that the EB-5 program "is no longer a significant component" of the tower's financing, adding: "Further financing details will be addressed at the press conference."

Seth Gordon, a publicist for Bayside Marketplace and a friend of Berkowitz, says that Berkowitz told him "he hit his number a month or so back" but was "vague on details."

Pamela Weller, general manager for Bayside Marketplace, says Berkowitz has been active on the site. "They have done behind-the-scenes work there for a few years, mostly utilities and infrastructure work. They are doing seawall and excavation work there now," she notes.

According to Eugene Ramirez, director of the city's office of communications, the site preparation, which will include the demolition of the Miamarina harbormaster building, began three months ago. "The official

start date for that was July 5, 2018, when the site was fenced, but the demolition began in August," Ramirez explains in an e-mail.

The harbormaster building still stands but will be demolished once a temporary trailer for city staffers operating the Miamarina is completed, says Capt. Ivan Perez, a marina aide. Under the Bayside lease agreement, Berkowitz will build a new harbormaster building for the City of Miami. Construction on the foundation is slated to start sometime between April 1 and June 30 of next year, according to Plaza Construction's press statement.

When construction on the foundation does start, Berkowitz will pay the City of Miami an annual rent of \$700,000 per year. After SkyRise Miami is completed, Berkowitz will pay the city \$1.05 million a year and give another \$200,000 annually to the Liberty City Trust.

According to his biography, Berkowitz, a former real estate attorney, built his first shopping center in Kendall in 1978. Since then he has built several projects in Miami-Dade County, including Dadeland Station Shopping Center, Aventura Commons, Fifth and Alton in Miami Beach, and the electronic billboard-adorned Miami Children's Museum on Watson Island.

"He invented the big-box stacked stores like the one over on Fifth Street in Miami Beach," Gordon says. "He's clever, different, innovative, and he has a flair for the dramatic. When he's ready to go, he'll have an event and invite lots of people."

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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Walled In, Walled Out

UMSAs are unknown and overlooked

By John Ise
BT Contributor

One of the great essays in modern times on the topics of class and community belongs to economist Robert Reich and is his “Secession of the Successful,” which ran January 20, 1991, in the *New York Times Magazine*. The modern world offers an abundance of material advantages; it can also segregate and chop us up into tribal clans who eye other groups with suspicion and even hostility.

To Reich, society has become increasingly distinguished by the upwardly mobile who wall themselves off, both figuratively and literally, from the rest of society.

Reich’s essay came streaming back to consciousness as I surveyed the unincorporated areas that surround Miami Shores, Biscayne Park, and El Portal. The starkest reminder of the

divide can be found with a wall that spans five blocks, cutting through streets to separate Miami Shores from the unincorporated area to its west.

The wall extends from NW 3rd Avenue between NW 91st Street, then creeps up to NW 95th Street and snakes eastward to NW 2nd Avenue, where it continues as fencing northward to Barry University. It serves as a physical barrier to prevent crime and traffic from our western neighbors, and is a metaphor of the village’s status.

There’s an undeniable truth that the unincorporated Dade pockets that abut the tri-villages area are too often disorganized and disheveled. A notch down the economic ladder, these areas are collectively known as Unincorporated Municipal Statistical Areas, or UMSAs, where Miami-Dade County offers municipal services, from trash collection and police protection to code enforcement. To many, these low-tax, low-service areas offer freedom



BT photo by Janet Goodman

Biscayne Shores & Gardens Park in unincorporated Miami-Dade County: Who to call for maintenance?

from municipal nitpicking at an affordable price. To others, the UMSAs spawn blight, neglect, and crime.

The UMSA areas that surround Miami Shores, El Portal, and Biscayne Park are named by Miami-Dade County as “Community of Interest (COI)” #11, #12, #13, and #14. Touring around these areas on my bicycle, I was tempted to ask residents I encountered how they enjoyed living in COI #14 or COI #12.

COI #11 is the enclave to the east of Biscayne Park, north of the old Kmart that then crosses Biscayne Boulevard, extending to the bay and encompassing the Quayside condos. The area, informally known as Biscayne Shores, consists of close to 8000 residents and has been target of recent cherry-picking annexation efforts by both Biscayne Park and Miami Shores.

Miami Shores sought to annex the old Kmart lot and neighboring car wash, while

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Biscayne Park tried to extend its boundaries by jumping the FEC train tracks and creating a narrow corridor eastward so as to capture office complexes on Biscayne Boulevard. Both were naked cash grabs that excluded the area's remaining residents and their 29 percent poverty rate.

COI #12 is the wedge directly to Biscayne Park's southwest, south of North Miami, north of Miami Shores, and hemmed in on the west by Barry University and I-95. The area consists of 5600 residents densely packed into 1600 units of housing.

COI #13, the home of Phyllis Miller Elementary, is known as North Shorecrest. An island of 1400 residents, North Shorecrest is surrounded by Miami Shores to the north, Miami to the south, and El Portal to the west. It is undoubtedly the funkier neighborhood of the bunch, having a rough yet unique vibe that I find appealing when contrasted with overly aseptic and manicured nature of Miami Shores.

COI #14 is the community of 9000 wedged between the Miami Shores wall to the east and I-95 to the west. The area extends south from Barry, jumping over the Little River canal, to Miami's northern tip.

These UMSA areas are quasi-governed by Miami-Dade's Community Councils, which are elected and serve mainly as zoning boards for the unincorporated pockets. Newly elected Community Councilmember Diane Washington, a Teach for America alumna from Las Vegas who now teaches at North Miami Beach Senior High School, represents the Biscayne Shores area and is acutely aware of the communal and governing void. Brimming with idealism and optimism, Washington hopes to serve as a voice for residents and to marshal county resources for Biscayne Shores.

But being a bicycle-bound tourist atop my Trek, I sensed disorganization. Speaking to anyone who was willing to stop and chat, it was clear that most are well aware that their community lacks identity and attention. Asking what they call the neighborhood they live in, most simply said "Miami" or shrugged. And, in fact, some of these communities have no name beyond "COI" and a number.

All this gets to the larger question of why Miami-Dade allows itself to be put into this mousetrap. Large

unincorporated areas and contiguous areas like Kendall might work well enough to keep the status quo, but unincorporated islands and donut holes are recipes for mass inefficacy.

In 2016, the county commission received a report prepared by the Broward-based research firm PMG Associates that recommended the county's unincorporated areas become their own municipalities or be annexed into neighboring cities, leaving the county to focus more on regional issues and services.

And while that makes sense, the fine print is where the controversy begins. For most UMSAs, incorporation/annexation would likely mean higher tax bills. On the other hand, these communities would undoubtedly be improved by having independent, neighborhood-based governments that create community identities and set tax rates, and whose elected officials and municipal department heads are empowered, accountable, known by name, and a mere phone call away.

If garbage and disorder prevail at Miami Shores recreation fields, I can easily call the head of the village rec department. But if I see the same at the

Biscayne Shores and Gardens Park, who do I call at Miami-Dade County...and would I even get a return call?

Yet for every argument in favor of incorporating UMSAs, there is the inconvenient case of municipal basket cases like Opa-locka. More akin to a criminal enterprise, Opa-locka is where corruption and extortion prevail, and its residents would arguably be much better served with the city's dissolution.

Then take a quick look to the north and Miami Gardens, where residents are satisfied with their 15-year old city — and perhaps Opa-locka should be viewed as the drunk who needs to hit rock-bottom before embarking on the road to recovery.

Which leads us back to how tri-villagers and our UMSA neighbors relate — or not. The surrounding UMSA areas tally to approximately 24,000 residents, while Miami Shores, El Portal, and Biscayne Park collectively total just 16,000. Yet how much do we know or even care about our UMSA neighbors? Perhaps a genuine effort to build bridges to these UMSAs, and not just walls and gates, would be the first step.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com



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Game On!

Newcomer cannonballs into mayor's race

By **Mark Sell**
BT Contributor

We are shocked, *shocked* to report that North Miami is gripped by a lack of trust.

Why not bring in light? Today is a new day, and the conversation can change on a dime. The lame-duck council and administration have six months until the next election to come clean, mend their ways, break open that year-old state audit, act on it, and start to restore trust.

Plus, as a citizen, you can take your best shot at making a difference through constructive civic engagement and board participation, in addition to honest griping and action when you think you're getting a raw deal.

But before bringing in light, we must face the darkness.

One new mayoral candidate, a newcomer to North Miami and

its politics, wants to change the conversation. He's Mac-Kinley Lauriston, the \$125,000-a-year chief of staff for Miami-Dade County Commissioner Jean Monestime, whose district covers most of the City of North Miami with offices just two blocks east of city hall. He says the decision to run was his, not Monestime's.

While affable and friendly, Lauriston is glad to ladle out sour cherries. He's positioning himself as a technocrat, taxpayer watchdog, and champion of accountability. He filed in September and raised \$15,000 for his campaign as of October 10, compared to Councilman Philippe Bien-Aime's \$85,000. Activist Hector Medina is also running for mayor.

Lauriston, age 52, bought a split-level house on NE 132nd Street east of N. Miami Avenue in late March, just in time to qualify, and lives there with his wife, a nurse, and three sons ages 8, 13, and 14. He has previously lived in Miami



BT photo by Mark Sell

Mayoral candidate Mac-Kinley Lauriston: "The more voice you give the people, the less insulted they will be."

Shores and Miramar.

In his campaign to clean up Dodge, Lauriston is a big critic of reckless spending and hiring, suspects the city is veering toward a financial crisis, and can be as subtle as a wrecking ball.

"It is incumbent on the council to make a decision that is for the community and not for themselves," he

says. "I want to run as the great uniter. Where people feel they don't have a voice, they are greatly frustrated. The more voice you give the people, the less insulted they will be. The time for excuses is over, and people on the dais need to own up to the failure and the responsibility for their record. We want to see a city that is professionally run."

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An MBA, Lauriston spent 16 years as an accountant and senior financial analyst for Ryder Systems Inc. before moving on to public service in Miramar and for the county.

“Politicians cannot escape the blame,” he says. “They try to put it on the city administration, but they bear the brunt of the responsibility because they set policy. If you are presented a budget and don’t understand it, you’re just rubberstamping. I worked for a number of years as a senior accountant at Ryder, so numbers don’t lie. If you constantly say from the dais that you’re ‘not an accountant,’ you need to take some accounting lessons, or you don’t deserve to be in office.”

Lauriston attacks the city’s bloated payroll, with more than 400 full-time employees and about 200 contract employees who don’t have civil service protections and are easier to hire and fire. This can also blow a budget, and Lauriston thinks some common-sense management might even lower the city’s tax rate, which has held steady the last few years at \$7.50 per \$1000 assessed valuation. He also says other cities of

similar size, such as Coral Springs, provide better services for less money.

Lauriston has felt some of the pain of being a North Miami resident. Early this past summer, he had several instances of clogged sewage backups in toilets, the bathtubs, and floor on the lower level of his house. Not far away, Gwen West, on Griffing Boulevard, has been shut out of her house since a post-Hurricane Irma sewage backup and lives in a trailer in the front yard. She has sued the city and county, which are blaming each other.

So Lauriston understands distrust and hears plenty. The inept promotion and lopsided failure of the city’s May bond issue in every district confirmed the sourness and distrust (see “North Miami Bond Goes Down in Flames,” June 2018).

Former budget director Terry Henley’s acrimonious departure and civil service revelations raised more flashing red lights (see “North Miami Has Its Own Meltdown,” October 2018). Battling for his own reputation, city manager Larry Spring responded by sliming Henley, who had previously received great reviews, for rotten performance in a letter to city council.

Henley is far from alone, and the city has a growing list of would-be whistleblowers fired, blackballed, conspicuously demoted, or slimed for not playing ball. One exhibit: Janice Antoine, a married employee whose contract was terminated in September after filing suit against the city, alleging Councilman Philippe Bien-Aime had sexually harassed her for months. The suit is a potential powder keg for both Bien-Aime and the city.

In this atmosphere, one can understand a council member on the dais during an uneasy meeting dreaming of that mountain home. But they did vote themselves \$12,000 raises in 2017, to \$47,910 for a council member (\$85,000-plus with fringes, travel, expenses, and benefits) or \$59,880 for mayor (\$100,000-plus all told). Spring and city attorney Jeff Cazeau each get a base of \$240,000. Deputy city manager Arthur Sorey III gets better than \$177,000.

Lauriston’s mayoral opponents, Bien-Aime and Hector Medina, have their own challenges. Bien-Aime has a big edge in fundraising and home-field advantage in caring for the people in his district, but is dogged by that

lawsuit. Medina, who won his stripes as a community organizer in driving back dry cleaner Spotmaster from the houses next to it, has filed but held back. There’s still time for both to build platforms.

But it’s best to crawl before walking. One place each council member and senior manager can begin is the 69-page state audit of the city completed in November 2017. The audit came up with 30 recommended procedures to get the city on the right track. How are those recommendations coming along?

At the October 8 council meeting, former city Councilman Arthur “Duke” Sorey, the mailman who became the city’s first African-American councilman, gave a stirring defense of his namesake son, the embattled deputy city manager who runs personnel, talking up his family ties, community roots, and lessons learned when the boy did wrong.

Blessed be the ties that bind, but numbers are more absolute than sentiment, tribe, friends, and family. If there’s a government to run, and we’re paying it, maybe it’s time to just get real.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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Cesar Sayoc's colorful van.

More police? No Thanks

Risk-taking is inherent in an open society

By **Jay Beskin**
BT Contributor

As we go to press, the formerly mild-mannered city known as Aventura has exploded onto the national scene as the home of Cesar Sayoc, the whack job with a long criminal record who sent pipe bombs to top Democrats around the country, including former Presidents Clinton and Obama. He claimed — falsely, it turns out — to be a Seminole. He has been constantly in trouble, in and out of jail.

As soon as the FBI lab developed a latent fingerprint on the package sent to Rep. Maxine Waters in California, they were able to match it to Mister Sayoc's police file.

When they checked the file, his home address was listed in Aventura. In fact, his mother did live in Aventura and was even head of her condo board for a while. Her neighbors have only nice things to say about her. The son, on the other hand, is a clearly troubled individual who was presumably not welcome in his

mother's home, whether or not he had her permission to use hers as a mailing address. (I think most of us under those circumstances would be hard put to refuse that simple consideration to a child, however disturbed.)

Where he actually resided, according to neighborhood scuttlebutt, was inside his van, which he often kept parked at the Aventura Waterways. He blocked the back windows by pasting up pro-Trump posters alongside numerous stickers derogating the president's critics. All in all, he harks back to the long and tragic American tradition of the demented loner, reeling inside the chaos of a disordered life until he or she begins acting out in a dangerous manner.

In a perverse sort of irony, one of the targets of Mister Sayoc's mail bombs was Robert De Niro. He probably targeted De Niro for his harsh critiques of Trump ("He's a dog! He's a pig! He's a con! He's a mutt!"), but ironically one of De Niro's great performances was as a demented fan of a celebrity in the movie...*The Fan!*



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The 1996 film shows De Niro eerily merging his obsessions with knives and with the star baseball player he adores, played by Wesley Snipes. If you have trouble imagining a Cesar Sayoc type, no one can give you a better visual than De Niro did in that movie.

We'll leave the rest of the sleuthing to federal law enforcement. No doubt each day will bring new details to fill in the blanks of our morbid fascination with what makes the latest Looney Tune would-be assassin tick. What I do think we need to talk about among ourselves is the question of security — or insecurity, as the case may be.

Say you were shopping at Sarah's Tent at the Waterways, or for some reason you were strolling what used to be a fairly nice shopping area there. This could have been a week ago or a month ago, or even longer.

You couldn't help but notice the goofy-looking van festooned with a cartoonish version of an all-consuming partisanship. The door might have been slightly ajar with a shadowy figure inside "getting some air." You pointed it out to your friends and they all reacted characteristically, one shrugging, one muttering "Fruitcake!" and another sighing, "It takes all kinds!" and someone else suggesting maybe we should call the cops.

It turns out the last one was on target, and that call would have been well placed.

But in harkening back to an experience of that sort, many of us would be tempted to shut the barn door so hard that the hinges would vibrate like a metronome. We should have security everywhere! No more open parking lots! They're an invitation to every malcontent and misfit, every stalker and menace, every fantasist and conspiracy theorist, every anti-social crank with a grudge! We need to shrink further into our fortresses and block out the world with its weirdos.

There is little doubt that these voices will be raised in the coming days. We will be reminded that, indeed, even paranoids have real enemies. If you can't trust a Floridian, who can you trust? If you can't trust a guy with an Aventura address, who can you trust? All this sentiment will create a forceful bias toward being over-protective, over-suspicious, and way too fearful.

The truth is that while security is valuable, even critical, in housed facilities like schools or in overpopulated facilities like stadiums, the importance of freedom and relaxation in our open areas is critical to our functioning as a free society. You can build enclaves inside caves, but by definition you are forfeiting the opportunity to function within an open society. If you want to soar, you must have wings — it is that simple.

We have an excellent police force in Aventura, and I take some pride in my role as a commissioner in the early days of the city, when we were building the force. From Day One, it has been an exceptional feature of our city, so we always feel confident that when a cop answers our call, we are dealing with a skilled professional.

It is comforting to know these guys and gals are always just a three-digit phone call away in time of emergency, and in most instances that is enough. Obviously, during public events we all want to see a police presence; but for the most part, none of us should be eager to embrace a more smothering version of "coverage."

As they say, be careful what you pray for, because you just might get it. It would be miserable to contemplate an over-policed environment where we would constantly be called upon to show our identification before entering any place of business, signing in at Starbucks, for example. And, frankly, the heightened state of alert just makes people even more tense and ill at ease, leading to greater potential for conflict and alienation.

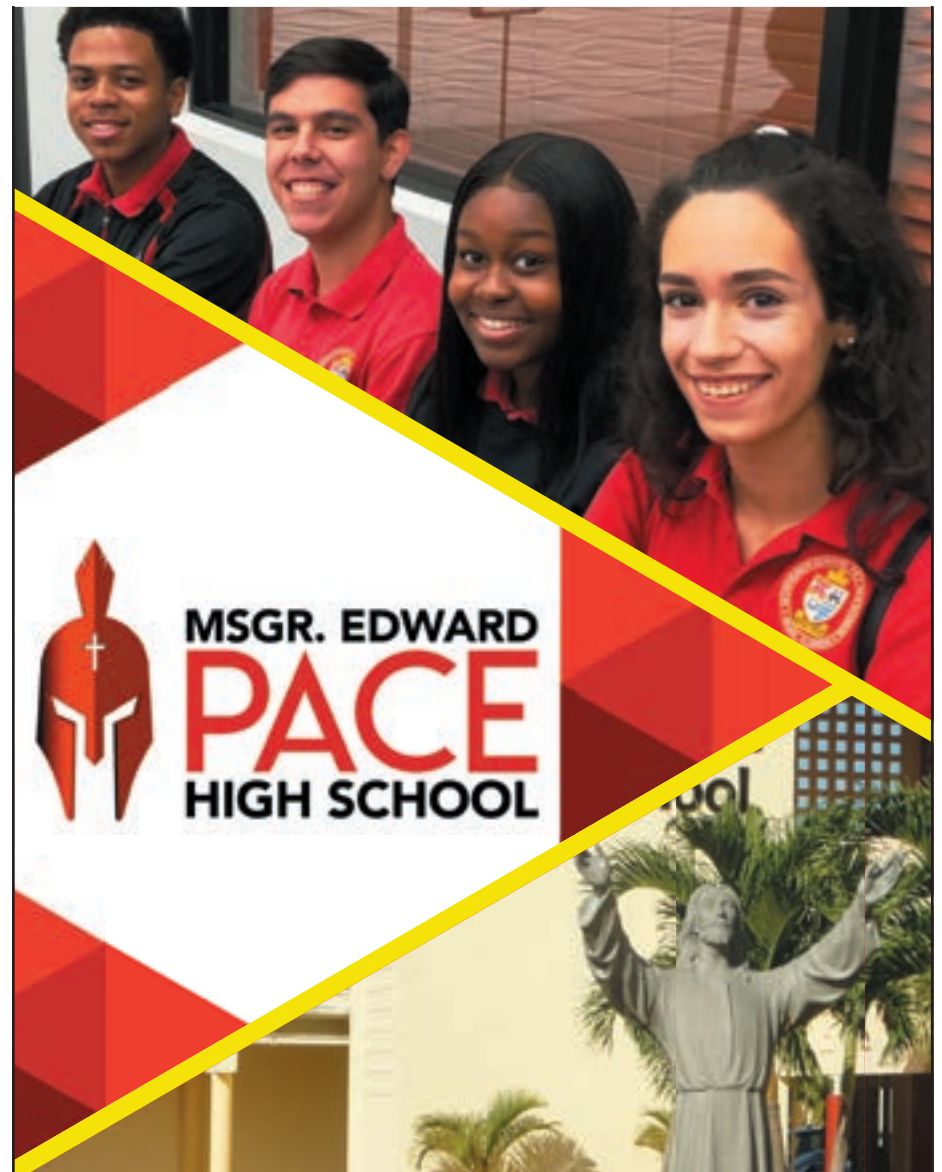
I know it's not easy to take it easy. The reason why books are being written all the time to teach people how to relax is because our natural default position is not relaxation, but something akin to jitteriness.

What really "makes America great" and makes Florida especially great is our culture of easygoing productivity. This may be one of the very few places in the world where combining those two words does not produce an oxymoron.

All these shrill violent partisans would like nothing more than to keep us on edge at all times. Please join me in saying no to terror. Shake your neighbor's hand, hug your kids, kiss your spouse.

Relax!

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com



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The Subtleties of Sound

At ArtCenter, learn the art of listening to art

By Anne Tschida
BT Arts Editor

The listening room on the second floor of the 924 Building on Lincoln Road (the remaining ArtCenter/South Florida home on South Beach) is extremely dark. It takes a while for the eyes to adjust, to realize there are square sitting couches and

but the ears to an art form that is gaining recognition as a new frontier.

For audiotheque 2.0, a Knight Foundation-funded project, every Saturday afternoon through December, sound artist Gustavo Matamoros will be playing his amazing, aurally stunning *Four Audible Experiences of Movement of Sound in Space*. The four pieces include “Everglades: Applied Universal



Photos courtesy subtraptics.org

Sound artist and cultural entrepreneur Gustavo Matamoros.

Another is “String Solo for Vito Acconci,” for the famous boundary-breaking performance and installation artist who also died in 2017. Matamoros worked with both.

To complement the Saturday events, various guest “sound artists,” both local and international, are also on hand to perform their own works and describe what the visitor is hearing. This in-person interaction is essential to the afternoons, as Matamoros says that audiotheque 2.0 really is about learning how to listen — very few visual accoutrements are involved.

So for a piece such as “Everglades,” one can hear familiar sounds that emanate from the River of Grass — bugs, the wind, birds, and so on. But slowly the ears start to pick up other sounds; the narrative is not as linear as a walk in nature might be.

Same with “String Solo” — we all know what typical string compositions sound like, but these are atypical,

forcing you again to concentrate on the various sounds, not really the music. The audience can sit on the couches or sit against the walls or move around on the floor, trying to get different perspectives on the speakers’ sounds.

Matamoros knows that this new terrain of sound art can be intimidating — “this experimental stuff is so confusing, isn’t it?” he quips. Which is why he wants this latest series from the long-running Audiotheque program to be more accessible.

“Each Saturday audiences will hear the four [set] pieces,” he explains, “plus a new featured work. They can also request to listen to full versions of excerpts of material that we’ve already presented.” The audience will be able to hear something new, prepared for the sound system that same week. New material, according to Matamoros, that is the result of artist residencies.

“When people walk in here...I greet everyone and create an on-the-spot



“Everglades: Applied Universal Force for Charles Recher” features familiar sounds — bugs, wind, birds — but slowly the ears start to pick up other sounds.

speakers placed all around. This is how it should be — the goal here is to experience *sound*, to adjust not the eyes

Force for Charles Recher.” Recher was a Miami experimental filmmaker who died in 2017.



custom tour of the installation. It isn't a situation where people are let alone — unless they want to be. It's very friendly and open."

Those artist residencies that Matamoros mentions are part of the world he has created in South Florida for well over 30 years, sometimes under the annual series of experimental music he has been hosting, titled Subtropics (now known as isaw+subtropics), where he has invited artists from across the globe to participate in the festival and to stay for a residency to create some of these new sound works. Through the Audiotheque listening studio and the Subtropics fest, Matamoros has carved out a unique niche, making South Florida one of the innovators in sound art the world over.

Much of what Matamoros has done has gone under the radar, however, and sound art itself has only relatively recently gained respect. MoMA in New York had one of the first U.S. exhibits dedicated to the genre in 2013. Closer to home, the Margulies Collection exhibited a powerful piece by Turner Prize-winner Susan Philipsz in 2015, a sound piece based on snippets from composer Hanns Eisler, a German refugee who was hounded in the United States during the Red Scare. But even here, a visual was incorporated, with 12 prints of the FBI files compiled on the man.

In reality, some form of sound works have been part and parcel of the contemporary art scene for almost a century, often as an interdisciplinary piece. Performance artists, filmmakers,



Sound artist Julio Roloff premiered an original piece in the first months of programming at audiotheque 2.0.



Charles Recher, a Miami experimental filmmaker who died in 2017, with Gustavo Matamoros.

even architects have used sound, sometimes to highlight a more visual work. Dadists and Surrealists played around with sound, and in the 20th century, especially in Europe, experimental sound art took root. Still,

an element of the visual is present, maybe through text, technological imagery, or instruments themselves.

In Matamoros's listening studio, the visual has all but disappeared, although even here not entirely. There can be projections against the wall, and the guest artists may choose to "illustrate" some form of their sounds. For instance, Wolfgang Gil, a former Audiotheque resident who hosted the October 27 Saturday, used a shimmering blue rectangular sculpture for his multi-channel "Aural Fields 0."

But the emphasis is supposed to be on the ear, and not really the way we have been trained to listen traditionally to music. As Matamoros explains, just as we learned to observe and appreciate modern, abstract, and contemporary art, we can learn to hear

sounds in all their subtle and varied nuances. One visitor to audiotheque 2.0 suggested that the room be even *darker*, to make the cocooning listening experience all the more intense and informative.

In the first months of the programming, "so far we have premiered pieces created here with John Driscoll and Julio Roloff," says Matamoros, and presented pieces from the archives.

"Currently in the queue are residency pieces with [locals] Edward Bobb, Rene Barge, and José Hernandez-Sanchez," he adds, although nothing is set in stone. "This being an experimental project, we'll advertise them when I see them!" says the always enthusiastic Venezuelan-born artist who has worked tirelessly to bring such sounds and boundary-breaking music to the aural attention of Miamians and to the world.

But as he knows, the nature of the experimental beast means perpetual movement, including physically. Although the Audiotheque Listening Studio has been housed and supported by ArtCenter, its time there is coming to a close at the end of December. This program and Subtropics will be looking for a new home or maybe becoming nomadic for a stint. Now's the time to catch this artistic genre in a sophisticated but public-friendly atmosphere, guided by a tried and true mastermind of the field.

Four Audible Experiences of Movement of Sound in Space, Saturdays in December, 1:00 to 6:00 p.m., Audiotheque, 924 # 201, Lincoln Road, Miami Beach.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

Christo and Jeanne-Claude

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Christo and Jeanne-Claude. Documentary photograph of *Surrounded Islands*, Biscayne Bay, Greater Miami, Florida, 1980–83. Photo: Wolfgang Volz. © Christo 1983.



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6306 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
www.andgallery.net
786-442-8280

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Reception November 1, 6 to 9 p.m.

ART BASTION

2085 NW 2nd Ave., Suite 104, Miami
www.artbastion.com
Contact the gallery for exhibition information.

BAKEHOUSE ART COMPLEX

561 NW 32nd St., Miami
305-576-2828
www.bacfl.org
November 3 through March 1: "Collectivity" with various artists, curated by Quinn Harrelson
Reception November 2, 7 to 10 p.m.

BILL BRADY GALLERY

7140 NW Miami Ct., Miami
www.billbradygallery.com
Contact the gallery for exhibition information.

BRIDGE RED STUDIOS / PROJECT SPACE

12425 NE 13th Ave. 5, North Miami
305-978-4856
www.bridgeredstudios.com
November 4 through January 6:
"The Eros Effect" with various artists. Curated by Jane Hart
Reception November 4, 4 to 7 p.m.

CENTRAL FINE

1226 Normandy Dr., Miami Beach
917-306-1218
www.centrafine.com
Through November 20:
"Like Crazy Nature" by Kyle Thurman

DAVID CASTILLO GALLERY

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

DIANA LOWENSTEIN GALLERY

98 NW 29th St., Miami
305-576-1804
www.dianalowensteingallery.com
November 2 through December 31:
Loris Cecchini
Dirk Salz

DOT FIFTYONE GALLERY

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305-573-9994
www.dotfiftyone.com
Through November 25:
"Proximities" by Graciela Hasper



Thomas Bils, *4th of July Bomb Sesh*, 2018, oil on panel, at & Gallery.

EMERSON DORSCH

5900 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-576-1278
www.emersondorsch.com
Contact the gallery for exhibition information.

FREDRIC SNITZER GALLERY

1540 NE Miami Ct., Miami
305-448-8976
www.snitzer.com
Through November 24:
"Interrogations" by John Millei

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
Through November 2:
"Interspace" with various artists

LOCUST PROJECTS

3852 N. Miami Ave., Miami
305-576-8570
www.locustprojects.org
November 17 through January 26:
"The Litany" by Bethany Collins
Reception November 16,
6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

MINDY SOLOMON GALLERY

8397 NE 2nd Ave., Miami
786-953-6917
www.mindysolomon.com
Through November 24:
"It Only Hurts When I Bend" by Virginia Leonard
"Close the Blinds" with Danny Ferrell, Hiba Schahbaz,
and Sophia Narrett

NINA JOHNSON GALLERY

6315 NW 2nd Ave., Miami
305-571-2288
www.ninajohnson.com
November 18 through January 31:
"Immolation" by Judy Chicago

PAN AMERICAN ART PROJECTS

274 NE 67th St., Miami
305-751-2550
www.panamericanart.com

Through November 3:
"Structural Narratives" by Gustavo Acosta
November 10 through January 3:
"Space as Form" by Carolina Sardi

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
Through December 18:
"Time and Timeless" with various artists

TILE BLUSH

8375 NE 2nd Ave., Miami
office@tileblush.com
www.tileblush.com
November 3 through January 16:
Aramis Gutierrez and Jonathan Gonzalez

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12425 NE 13th Ave. Suite 4, North Miami
305-987-4437
www.bridgeredstudios.com
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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
Contact gallery for exhibition information

WYNWOOD WALLS

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

MUSEUM & COLLECTION EXHIBITS

ARTCENTER'S PROJECT 924

924 Lincoln Rd., 2nd Floor, Miami Beach
305-674-8278
www.artcentersf.org
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

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Judy Chicago, *Women and Smoke*, 1972, photograph, at Nina Johnson Gallery.

At the time of its creation, *Atmosphere* played out against a harsh social and political landscape: The horrors of the Vietnam War were colliding with a visual culture dominated by male artists. Photographs of protest and burning monks left Chicago struck by the practice of immolation, both forced and chosen. In turn, Chicago imbues *Atmosphere* with an undeniably feminine touch, at once liberating the female body from formal figuration and softening the harsh Californian terrain with clouds of vibrant color. On the significance of this series, Chicago reflects: “I think [these images] still resonate in terms of women’s experience in the world, their self-sacrifice, their sacrifice in culture.” — *Melissa Wallen*

Melissa’s Pick

Over the course of her six-decade career, pioneering feminist artist Judy Chicago’s passion for art, education, and organizing has elevated the famous second-wave feminist slogan “the personal is political” to a worldview. This phrase extends to her most iconic works — including the canonical installation *The Dinner Party* — which boldly explore the desires, achievements, oppression, and dynamism of women both past and present. On view shortly before the Institute of Contemporary Art’s career-spanning survey of Chicago’s work, Nina Johnson Gallery presents an exhibition of rarely seen photographs from the artist’s *Atmosphere* series. Filmed amid the arid landscape of California’s desert between 1968 and 1974, *Atmosphere* sees the artist blanketing her female subjects in billowing bouquets of colored smoke.

THE BASS MUSEUM OF ART
2100 Collins Ave., Miami Beach
305-673-7530
www.thebass.org
Through March 10:
“Art with a View” by Paola Pivi
Through April 21:
“Tune Yer Head” by Aaron Curry

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:
“Force and Form” with various artists

FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY FROST ART MUSEUM
10975 SW 17th St., Miami
305-348-2890
www.frost.fiu.edu
Through December 9:

“The Writing on the Wall” with Hank Willis Thomas and Dr. Baz Dreisinger
Through January 13:
“Relational Undercurrents: Contemporary Art of the Caribbean Archipelago” with various artists

INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ART, MIAMI
61 NE 41st St., Miami
305-901-5272
www.icamiami.org
November 1 through March 10:
“Time Machines” by Larry Bell
November 1 through April 14:
“I Don’t Want to Wait For Our Lives to Be Over” by Manuel Solano
Through November 4:
“Typhoon coming on” by Sondra Perry
Through November 25: Francis Alÿs

JEWISH MUSEUM OF SOUTH FLORIDA, FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY
301 Washington Ave., Miami Beach
305-672-5044
www.jmof.fiu.edu
November 7 through March 3:
“The Art of the Lithograph” with various artists
Reception November 7, 7 to 9 p.m.

LOWE ART MUSEUM, UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI
1301 Stanford Dr., Coral Gables
305-284-3535
www.lowe.miami.edu
Through January 20:
“American Portraits” by Yousuf Karsh
Through January 27:
“My Page Is Glass” by Giampaolo Seguso
“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
November 15 through April 21:
“We Are All in the Same Boat” by SUPERFLEX
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
Though 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
Through May 19:
“Affinities and Distraction” by William J. Glackens and Pierre-Auguste Renoir
Through June 30:
“Remember to React: 60 Years of Collecting” with various artists

PÉREZ ART MUSEUM MIAMI
1103 Biscayne Blvd., Miami
305-375-3000
www.pamm.org
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
Through February 17:
“Surrounded Islands, Biscayne Bay, Greater Miami, Florida, 1980 - 83: A Documentary Exhibition” by Christo and Jeanne-Claude

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 various artists

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
Through December 9:
“Education as the Practice of Freedom” with various artists. Curated by Jasmine Wahi

THE WOLFSONIAN-FIU
1001 Washington Ave., Miami Beach
305-535-2622
www.wolfsonian.org
November 16 through April 28:
“Made in Italy: MITA Textile Design 1926–1976” with Fortunato Depero, Gio Ponti, and Arturo Martini
Through January 13:
“Wit as Weapon: Satire and the Great War” with various artists

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

/// Louise
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Manuel
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Breathtaking Bravura at the Arsht

Founded in 1958, the **Chinese Warriors of Peking** offer the mastery of precision acrobatics, martial arts, and choreographed strength we expect from the best Chinese stage productions, and in Cirque de Soleil, with whom this company has toured. Set during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), this performance pits two rival martial arts disciplines against each other in a show of complex juggling, gravity-defying acrobatics, and staged combat. The company performs one day only, **Saturday, November 17**, 3:00 and 7:30 p.m., Knight Concert Hall of the Arsht Center (1300 Biscayne Blvd.) Tickets: \$29-\$49. arshtcenter.org.



El Cigala Heads a Constellation at the Fillmore

In 2000, Spanish flamenco singer **Diego el Cigala** received a transformative jolt to his art when he met Cuban pianist Bebo Valdés. The resulting two decades have been a glorious dive into a flamenco-inflected range of Latin music, from boleros to salsa, and mega-hits and world tours, of which this performance is a highlight. The concert, **Friday, November 9**, 8:00 p.m. at the Fillmore Miami Beach (1700 Washington Ave.), features “15 Years of Lágrimas Negras” and stars as well **Oscar D’Leon, Gonzalo Rubalcaba, Larry Harlow, Luis “Perico” Ortiz, and original Fania studio musicians**. The concert coincides with the release of a documentary, *Indestructible: The Soul of Salsa*, about El Cigala’s take on the genre. Tickets: \$39-\$79 (plus fees). Doors open 7:00 p.m. rhythmfoundation.com.

International Film Fest in Aventura

The **Aventura International Film Series** screens the 2017 Israeli feature *The Cakemaker*, shot in Berlin and Jerusalem. The film touches on the love affair that develops between a young male pastry chef in Berlin and an Israeli businessman. When the latter dies unexpectedly back home, the baker travels to Jerusalem and finds his life slowly intertwining with that of the widow’s. Showtime: **Tuesday, November 6**, 7:30 p.m. Aventura Arts & Cultural Center (3385 NE 188th St.). General admission: \$12; seating at 7:00. aventuracenter.org.

Annual Party Celebrates the River

Now in its 11th year, the popular **Downtown Miami International Riverwalk Festival and Boat Parade** takes place **Saturday, November 10**, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., and offers activities ranging from face painting, raffles, music, art and crafts booths, and international foods — and flotilla viewing. The event takes place along the Riverwalk bordering the Intercontinental Hotel and One Miami condominiums, at the mouth of the Miami River, north bank. Parking is available in nearby public parking garages, and a Metromover station is one block away. Free admission. miamiriverwalkfestival.com.

All Aboard for Miami Shores History

Brockway Memorial Library hosts a **Miami Shores History Bus Tour** with

local resident and guide John Bachay. The tour takes place **Saturday, November 10**, 10:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., and features local sites, as well as private tours of some historic area homes and gardens. The trip, which concludes with lunch at Sherwood’s Bistro, leaves from the library (10021 NE 2nd Ave.). Tickets: \$45, which includes lunch and tips. Info: 305-758-8107; reservations: eventbrite.com.

Breakfast, Tour, and Baking Class

Dade Heritage Trust’s newest series, “**Baking in Historic Places**,” allows participants to visit the kitchens of renowned sites. On **Saturday, November 10**, for example, you’ll meet at the Scottish Rite Temple (471 NW 3rd St.) in the Lummus Park Historic District. There, from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. you’ll settle in with Lucia Meneses, the Trust’s school programs director — and master baker — for a continental breakfast and sourdough bread-baking session, plus a tour of the building. Participants will receive sourdough starter and a loaf pan of sourdough to bake at home. Members \$25, nonmembers \$30. Info: 305-358-9572. Reservations: dadeheritagetrust.org.

Chill Time at the Book Fair Porch

Yes, we do support our public libraries, but we can’t resist **Miami Book Fair**, held this year **Sunday through Sunday, November 11-18**. In addition to the book signings, pop-ups, and author talks and panels, there’s a full roster of events at the Porch (located at the northwest corner

of NE 2nd Avenue and NE 3rd Street), where you’ll want to take breaks at “the most chill space at the fair.” Each Porch day features local performers plus music, games, food, drink, art, and film. On Day 1, for example, beginning at 4:00 p.m., you’ll find food trucks, games, a coloring wall, Silent Poetry Disco, photo exhibits, DJ Mr. Pauer spinning “Electrónico,” and beer on tap. Events run from late afternoon into the night, and all day Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. For daily Porch events: miamibookfair.com/programs.

The Cristo Projects on Film

In conjunction with PAMM’s documentary exhibition “**Christo and Jeanne-Claude: Surrounded Islands, Biscayne Bay, Greater Miami, Florida, 1980-83**,” about the project that put Miami on the global art scene map 35 years ago, the museum (1103 Biscayne Blvd.) hosts an afternoon of four short films on **Saturday, November 17**, about the duo’s projects. Open seating begins at 12:45, and the films are as follows: 1:00 p.m., *Valley Curtain* (1974), 28 minutes; *Running Fence* (1978), 56 minutes; 2:30-3:00 p.m., intermission; 3:00 p.m., *Christo in Paris* (1990), 58 minutes; and *Islands* (1986), 56 minutes, concluding at 5:00 p.m. Free with museum admission. pamm.org.

Lantern Festival at the Fairgrounds

To get us ready for 2019’s Chinese New Year, we have more Sino-related

marvels at the **Lantern Light Festival**, running from **November 30 through January 20** at the Miami-Dade County Fairgrounds (10901 SW 24th St.). The Lantern Festival is one of China’s oldest, dating back 2000 years, and celebrates the new season, new hopes, and rebirth. The local version features immense and intricately constructed light displays up to 30 feet tall and 300 feet long that look as though they’re floating in air. Also: arrays of food, fireworks, and entertainment, including children’s activities. Thursdays through Sundays 5:00-10:00 p.m., Fridays and Saturdays 5:00-11:00 p.m. Adults \$23; children (3-12) \$18; seniors and active military \$20. lanternlightfestival.com.

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



Penny Arcade Despairs of the New New York

Penny Arcade is a “Warhol superstar,” the woman Quentin Crisp called his “soul mate and anima figure,” the queen of avant-garde theater and performance art. Poet, actor, filmmaker, life chronicler, erstwhile Green Party candidate, she now brings “Longing Lasts Longer,” billed as a “rock and roll blend of standup comedy and memoir,” to the Live Arts Lab (300 NE 2nd Ave.) of MDC’s Wolfson Campus. Shows: **Thursday through Saturday, November 8-10**, 8:00 p.m. Tickets: \$30. mdclivearts.org.

The Grand Flamingo Hotel, Part 2

A view of our past from the archives of HistoryMiami

By Paul George
BT Contributor

In the last installment of “Picture Story,” we explored the origins of developer Carl Fisher’s Flamingo Hotel, early Miami Beach’s most spectacular hostelry. The hotel opened with a private New Year’s Eve party in 1920 and officially opened to guests the following day.

Room rates started at \$15 for a single and \$20 for a double. During its inaugural month, the Flamingo Hotel welcomed a special guest, President-elect Warren G. Harding. During his brief stay, Harding enjoyed poker games and whiskey, despite a national prohibition law that was recently enacted. He also got in a round of golf with the quirky Fisher’s

elephant, Rosie, as his caddy!

The national publicity from that visit, and his praise for the area, helped elevate the hotel’s business, as did the onset of a massive real estate boom that brought record numbers of visitors to the area. As the boom crested in the mid-1920s, the Flamingo Hotel, in the telling of Jane Fisher, Carl’s wife, became “the center of gaiety” on Miami Beach, which had by then become a leading East Coast tourist resort.

The boom’s collapse and the ensuing Great Depression caused the hotel to operate on a smaller scale, but Miami Beach and the Flamingo were again brimming with tourists by early 1940s. With the U.S. entry during World War II, the Flamingo leased its facilities to the Army Air Forces (AAF). In addition



Photo courtesy of HistoryMiami, X-1061-1

Boats racing on Biscayne Bay, facing the Flamingo Hotel, circa 1930s.

to housing AAF personnel, the hotel served as Branch No. 2 of servicemen’s recreational facilities during the war.

In the postwar era, Miami Beach rocketed to the top of U.S. tourist destinations, but the Flamingo, along with other older hotels on Biscayne Bay, suffered from a location away from the warm Atlantic waters and the addition of new hotels with attractive amenities. In 1960 the Flamingo Hotel was demolished

to make way for the massive Morton Towers, 1500 Bay Rd., and is little remembered today.

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

Hotel Stay from Hell

100 Block of Biscayne Boulevard

Being away from home on vacation usually means you're staying in a hotel and sleeping in a strange bed. It can be a pleasant experience. In this scenario, though, a couple left their hotel room early in the morning and made sure the room was properly secured. When they returned that evening, they found that the room had been ransacked, with their luggage torn open and valuables missing. There are no leads and it's not known if there's video of the incident. No room service tonight.

Don't Palm the Alms

6400 Block of NE 2nd Avenue

Some criminals have a code, some line they just won't cross. Not one guy. In this incident, a neighbor across the street saw a man with a crowbar forcing open the front door of a church. The guy managed

to get in and started to turn on the lights inside the church. Was he looking for the Bible study room? No way. The only thing he studied was the offering box, as all the money was taken. The thief made his escape before police arrived.

Just the Essentials

2400 Block of Biscayne Boulevard

A mystery man threw a rock at the window of this grocery store after hours. Then he entered the business via the broken window. He immediately went to work and took several cartons of cigarettes, lottery tickets, and cash from the register. There is video surveillance of his activity. Here's to hoping he gets apprehended before going into that second carton.

The Purse and the Desk Clerk

5900 Block of Biscayne Boulevard

This woman was checking out of a motel and realized she'd forgotten something



in her room. She asked the front desk clerk to watch her purse, which seems like a simple instruction, doesn't it? After she returned to the front desk, her purse was gone. The desk clerk said she had no idea who took the purse, even though she'd been tasked with watching it. The motel advised the woman that it's not responsible for customers' items.

This means, of course, don't ever trust the desk clerk.

Clothes and the Man

6100 Block of NE 4th Court

A man was washing his clothes at a Laundromat. It's tough, we know, when you don't have your own washer and dryer. He made it through the wash cycle

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and then transferred the clothes to the dryer before stepping outside. When he returned, his dryer was empty. He's likely hating the thought that someone right now is wearing his tighy-whities.

An Odd Way of Giving Back

2700 Block of N. Miami Avenue

A homeless man known in the local area went into a restaurant and right up to the tip jar. Rather than take the whole jar, as happens in other reports, he reached inside and took just seven dollars. He walked out, although an employee followed him and asked him to return the money. The man returned inside and put one dollar back in the tip jar, hoping his generous contribution would negate the theft. He then left the scene

Amazon Gives and Somebody Takes

20 Block of NE 51st Street

A woman ordered four pairs of Nike tennis shoes. She received a text notification that they'd been delivered, but when she arrived home there was no package. She looked through her surveillance video and saw that the

packages were left indeed on her front porch. Come on, people, this is Miami! A man in a hoodie was seen taking the packages. His face was obscured by the hoodie, and there is no way to identify him. Maybe it's time for a return to good old-fashioned brick-and-mortar.

He Knows What He Wants

6600 Block of Biscayne Boulevard

Sometimes a thief doesn't have to be a clandestine Jedi Master. This man walked into a restaurant and, completely unimpeded, went for the cooler and removed three bottles of wine. He then walked out without incident. It was a quick and rather painless heist (for him anyway).

A Plea for Compassion

200 Block of Biscayne Boulevard

In a CVS, a man carrying a canvas bag began loading it with items: shampoos, conditioners, and other lotions. Hey, even petty thieves want to look and smell good. The store manager stopped him and asked what he was doing and whether he was going to pay for the items. To this the man pleaded, "I do not

want to go to jail." The manager may have been taken aback by this and let him go in the hope he'd pay for his items. The man headed for the cash register with his bag but veered off and ran away.

Getting Too Old for this Stuff

100 Block of NE 2nd Avenue

At a gas station a man likely in his late 50s walked to the back of the store and removed a 12-pack of Corona from the cooler. He then walked back out of the store with no attempt to pay. He did this walking slowly in and out, demonstrating to young thugs that age is just a number when it comes to good beer.

Broke WWE Fan

3500 Block of N. Miami Avenue

At Target a man ventured to the toy section and began feverishly touching and holding a package. He was trying to open it — as we know, some of those toy packages can be really hard to open. The man was going for a Roman Reigns wrestler doll. He then dropped the package, put Roman in his pocket, and left the store. No other WWE wrestlers were taken.

Stupid Is As Stupid Does

100 Block of NE 79th Street

A woman parked her vehicle before going into the building where she works. She later admitted to police that she can't lock her car because the key remote is broken, but she left her purse inside vehicle anyway. When coming back for a lunch break, she saw that her purse was gone and that random papers had been strewn about the car. Report mentions how the kindly officers gave the woman information on how to properly secure her vehicle.

Invest in Better Security

2500 Block of Biscayne Boulevard

This man returned to his apartment and saw that his front door had been forced open. The apartment was ransacked, and items were stolen. When he filled out his continuation sheet for police, he listed all the items, to the tune of \$50,000. He has had no luck getting anything returned, but with valuables just lying around like that, how about spending some bucks for a better lock on the door?

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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New Park in Town

Arthur Woodard Park is finally official

By **Janet Goodman**
BT Contributor

For decades a privately owned greenspace located four blocks west of I-95 in the Twin Lakes/Pinewood community of Miami was utilized by local families for picnics and sports activities. This past August 10, the parcel was dedicated as the latest Miami-Dade County park.

Named Arthur Woodard Park in honor of the late coach, teacher, principal, and civic activist, this peaceful place, located on a modest residential street on the north lake of Twin Lakes, was acquired by Miami-Dade Parks, Recreation, and Open Spaces Department in two installments: the first 2.2 acres in April 2015, followed by an additional 1.49 acres in February 2017, for a total of 3.69 acres.

Both parcels were acquired from the Miami-Dade Public Housing and Community Development Department.

Park visitors are now enjoying numerous recent improvements, such as bolted, split-rail, pine wood fencing; the planting of 30 red-mulched and braced shade trees, of which the majority are native oaks; three green metal benches and matching garbage receptacles; bike racks; and a meandering concrete walkway that makes the park handicapped-accessible for the first time. The wood fencing runs parallel to the main street and prevents vehicles from driving up onto the greenspace.

Even though the park is located less than a block away from Faith Deliverance Cathedral of Miami, the street is a quiet one, off the beaten path.

One of the newly planted oaks has died and is marked for removal. The county erected one park entrance sign and installed a park rules sign at both the east and west entrances. Numerous rules note, among other things, that no dogs are allowed on the park grounds. Lush cattails along the lake banks provide a safe haven for wildlife, as will the young leafy trees in a few years, making this park even more nature friendly.

Miami-Dade County Commissioner Jean Monestime sponsored the county resolution for naming the park. At the dedication ceremony this summer, Monestime said, “I applaud the Parks Department for their great work in bringing this much-needed park development to fruition. Arthur Woodard Park stands as a living legacy to beloved educator and civic leader Dr. Woodard, and is a vibrant recreational space where neighbors and their children can gather for generations to come.”

Arthur Woodard’s obituary in the *Miami Herald* notes that he personally started to maintain the neglected property at 1220 NW 99th St. in 1969, and that he lived in this neighborhood just north of North Shore Medical Center with his family for 46 years. Although it wasn’t a publicly funded park at the time, Woodard made it a family spot for cookouts and



BT photos by Janet Goodman

Recent improvements include bolted, split-rail, wood fencing that prevents vehicles from driving up onto the greenspace.



Lush cattails along the north lake of Twin Lakes provide a safe haven for wildlife.



The county put together two parcels to complete the park, which now totals 3.69 acres.

sports, with the dream that it would one day become an official county park.

In 1997 that dream was nearly dashed by the sale of the property to developers with the aim to build homes,

but that plan never occurred. Sadly, Woodard passed away in 2014 at age 86, before he saw his public park realized.

According to the *Herald*, Woodard had a long career as an educator. At Tivoli

ARTHUR WOODARD PARK

Park Rating

**1220 NW 99th St.,
Miami, FL 33147
305-755-7842**

Hours: Sunrise to sunset
Picnic tables: No
Barbecues: No
Picnic pavilions: No
Sports field: Yes
Lakeside ambiance: Yes
Night lighting: No
Swimming pool: No
Playground: No

High School in the Florida panhandle town of DeFuniak Springs, he was head coach of football, basketball, baseball, and track. He was named Coach of the Year in 1962-63 and was inducted into the Florida High School Athletics Association Hall of Fame in 2008.

Woodard moved to Miami in 1968, worked as a physical education teacher at Allapattah Elementary School, assistant football coach and athletic director at Miami Central High School, earned a master's degree and a Ph.D. in education administration, became assistant principal at Miami Edison, and principal of Miami Douglas MacArthur North Senior High School, from which he retired in 1991.

Woodard is a member of Florida A&M University's Sports Hall of Fame and was a president of the school's Miami-Dade chapter of the alumni association. As a civic leader, he was a board member of the Dade County Office of Community Development and president of the Model Cities Optimist Club.

The importance of this neighborhood park is highlighted by the fact that there are no other parks in the community. The closest parks are Little

River Park at NW 24th Avenue (1.7 miles away), Arcola Lakes Park at NW 83rd Street (1.6 miles away), Gragny Plateau Park at NW 117th Street (1.5 miles away), and Arcola Park at NW 87th Street (1.4 miles away).

On a *BT* visit at the end of September, the grass needed mowing, and litter was scattered about, but mostly accumulated by benches and in front of the park along the sidewalk on NW 99th Street, where cars are parked. Pizza boxes, fast-food packaging, and plastic bottles seemed left behind by those driving up for lunch. A couple of strategically placed garbage receptacles are needed in front of the entrances; and picnic tables would be ideal. A water fountain, barbecue grill, and some lighting would be welcome additions, as well.

But a visitor with a keen eye can see the potential for this greenspace, as Dr. Woodard surely did for nearly half a



In late September, litter had accumulated in front of the park along the sidewalk on NW 99th Street.



Woodard, who passed away in 2014 at age 86, had a long and distinguished career as a coach, teacher, principal, and civic activist.

century. This place is a work in progress. And over the next several years, the community will undoubtedly see more of his vision realized.

According to the county, exciting improvements are in store for Arthur Woodard Park. In an e-mail exchange with the *BT*, Laura Phillips, the information officer for Miami-Dade County Parks, Recreation, and Open Spaces Department, writes: "Phase 1 development includes access control, walkways, a shelter,

and landscaping improvements. The development for phase 1 is currently scheduled to commence in late February 2019, and funding will be provided by the Building Better Communities General Obligation Bond Program and Impact Fees."

Phillips goes on to announce future improvement plans beyond 2019 for a community art area, fitness equipment, and some additional shelters.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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A second series of charrettes will be conducted for the Northeast Corridor, which runs from Downtown Miami to Aventura. These charrettes will include interactive activities where the community will provide input on a preferred vision for this rapid transit corridor.

For more information please contact:
Monica R. Diaz, Consultant Team Public Information Officer
monica@iscprgroup.com | (305) 573-0089

1 CHARRETTE 1
Thursday, November 8, 2018
6:00 pm – 8:00 pm
Legion Park
6447 NE 7 Avenue
Miami, FL 33138

2 CHARRETTE 2
Wednesday, November 14, 2018
6:00 pm – 8:00 pm
McDonald Senior Center
17051 NE 19 Avenue
North Miami Beach, FL 33162

Public participation is solicited without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability, or family status. Persons who require special accommodations under the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) or persons who require translation services, should contact Monica R. Diaz, Consultant Public Information Officer for the Northeast Corridor at (305) 573-0089 at least seven days prior to the public meeting.

www.MiamiSMARTPlan.com #MiamiSMARTPlan

A Good Death

When is it time for euthanasia?

By Janet Goodman
BT Contributor

At some point in our pet-loving lives, many of us will face the wrenching decision of whether to end the life of an ailing pet. It's not always a clear and easy decision. How do we know that, if we do nothing, our loved one's health won't improve? How do we determine if quality of life is poor?

Since we're so emotionally involved, are we in denial about their state of decline? If we invest in life-extending veterinary treatments, will they be worth it? Will a natural death be peaceful? Welcome to the hard side of responsible pet ownership.

Euthanasia is a veterinary procedure in which a sedative and often a pain medication are administered to a dog or cat; then a lethal injection of sodium pentobarbital is given that quickly and painlessly causes loss of consciousness and the heart to stop beating, leading to death in a few seconds. It is considered the most humane and respectful means of taking the life of an animal. The word euthanasia comes from the Greek, meaning "good death."

Veterinarians are often helpful in the decision-making process, although ultimately, it is up to the pet owner to determine the next steps to take.

Melinda Harper, a program coordinator for WPLG-TV and contributor to its weekly program *SoFloTaste* tells the *BT* that she was traumatized by the sudden and difficult

end-of-life decisions for her beloved 13-year-old Boston terrier, Miso.

Diagnosed with pancreatitis and treated at an emergency vet hospital, Miso's condition worsened, and Harper transferred the dog to her regular vet at Biscayne Animal Hospital.

Miso couldn't eat, lost a lot of weight, and eventually her kidneys and liver failed. "Dr. Goldstein asked me what I wanted to do, but I didn't want to give up on the chance of a miracle happening. But I soon had to make one of the saddest and most heartbreaking decisions ever," says Harper, which was euthanasia.

Online sites can help people evaluate their pet's condition by charting and scoring on a quality-of-life scale.

Journeys Home Pet Euthanasia (www.journeypet.com) offers a quality-of-life calculator that measures eight variables on a score from one to ten. It adds up your scores for the following: mobility, pain, medical uncertainty, respiration, hygiene, eating and drinking, your sense of worry, and the pet's social ability. A score of 80 is a happy, healthy pet. A score of 8 is a pet that is suffering. A low score on a single variable may be a good reason to look at euthanasia.

Ohio State University Veterinary Medical Center has an excellent program called Honoring the Bond (www.vet.osu.edu/honoringthebond). This nonprofit offers services at no cost to pet owner clients of the medical center. Its social workers support pet owners in assessing quality of life and treatment options. They provide crisis intervention and can



be present during euthanasia.

Honoring the Bond's online guide, "How Will I Know?" helps pet owners make the difficult decisions involved in end-of-life care. Within the ten-page guide is a 25-variable worksheet that evaluates an ailing pet's well-being. Scores are rated one to five; low scores indicate low quality of life. Completing the worksheet helps owners to better visualize their pets' well-being and is an important tool in making treatment and end-of-life decisions, especially for those who feel overwhelmed by emotions.

HTB variables are specific, such as: my pet...does not want to play; is trembling; is losing weight; is having diarrhea often; has a rough-looking coat. The program recommends other simple assessments of quality of life. It suggests marking a pet's good and bad days on a calendar. When bad days outnumber good days, euthanasia should be considered. Also, list five things a pet likes to do. When he's consistently unable to enjoy things on the list, it is time to think about end-of-life decisions.

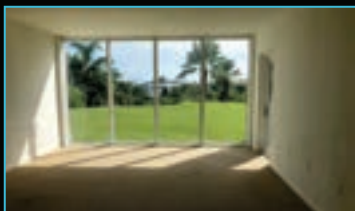
Sometimes a catastrophic event happens that allows little time for end-of-life decisions. This summer my niece and her husband were

vacationing in upstate New York, 200 miles from their Pennsylvania home, when Gunner, their seven-and-a-half-year-old Great Dane, started vomiting at night. The next morning, they drove the dog to Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine's Companion Animal Hospital, an hour away in Ithaca, where he was diagnosed with bloat, a life-threatening condition where the stomach twists. Emergency surgery would have been \$6000. Gunner's advanced age (a Dane's life-span is nine years), plus a painful and costly treatment, were factors in their decision to euthanize.

After reading Honoring the Bond's guide, Harper says she thinks it's very helpful, especially for pet owners who have not yet had to deal with a dying pet. "Leaving your pet in pain or poor quality of life — to let him die naturally on his own so you don't feel guilt — is prolonging unnecessary suffering."

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

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com



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White Colonialist Mythology

Just what does Thanksgiving celebrate, anyway?

By Jenni Person
BT Contributor

Thanksgiving is coming, and with it a multifaceted, complicated mess. In addition to all the infamous thorny family issues anticipated as the fourth Thursday in November approaches, there is also the controversy of the holiday itself. It's 2018, and we seem to have acknowledged a culture that there is some pretty serious misinformation surrounding what we parents learned in school about Thanksgiving.

We have the research, awareness, and discourse to support that “the First Thanksgiving” in which jolly Pilgrims expressed gratitude to Native Americans for their hospitality was not such a pretty story. We now have the knowledge that we, in fact, annihilated native communities, stole land, property, and peoplehood.

So how do we gather around the table topped with an overflowing autumn harvest cornucopia and celebrate the invasion and attempted erasure of a population? Our kids are learning something so different about this holiday and about our country's history in school and in life. How do we support that and implement a pedagogy that supports the true history of our land that they already know better than we do?

For many, Thanksgiving has become instead a holiday simply about assessing and celebrating gratitude. That's a good start in dismantling white colonialist

mythology and paradigms, but there is more work to do. Thus, this may be the moment when we follow our kids' leads.

For example, in the name of food for thought about these issues of cultural equity, here is what my 15-year-old had to say recently about Columbus Day:

“Yesterday, I was in the middle of Period 3 when I received a Snapchat notification from my dear friend Kate. I opened it immediately. Staying true to the teenage custom of communicating via photograph instead of actual words, she had sent me a selfie. This selfie appeared to have been taken in her bedroom. Although I assumed that she was simply sick, I proceeded to ask her why she was at home on a seemingly normal school day.

“Kate casually replied that her private school in New York City (definitely not verbatim) isn't in session on Columbus Day. As a kid that strongly dislikes school, hearing that Kate had off that day instantly flowered my interest. I opened my calendar on my laptop and ‘discovered’ that it was, in fact, a holiday, but not quite ‘Columbus Day.’ Instead, October 8, 2018, was labeled as ‘Indigenous People's Day.’ Initially, I was thrilled to see an official calendar change as a result of social justice. After internally celebrating for around 30 seconds during my teacher's AP Psychology lecture, a heavy question crowded my prefrontal cortex.

“Why do I have school today?”



“Pump the breaks.

“Miami Dade-County Public Schools had observed ‘traditional’ Columbus Day for decades upon decades (no classes that day, most likely involving some sort of brief activity surrounding the holiday). Somewhere along the way, the board got rid of Columbus Day, with GREAT reason and support from me and my peers. Not only did they get rid of it, but they (rightfully) replaced Columbus Day with Indigenous People's Day, a much more forward-thinking (AKA historically accurate) celebration of the genuine natives of our country. While this seems all well and good, I couldn't help but ponder why in Steve Jobs' name Indigenous People's Day was being so outwardly disrespected. Not a SINGLE staff or faculty member employed at my school had even gently whispered the name of the holiday prior, or during, and certainly not afterward.

“As for the disgrace of school continuing to be in session that day, why is it that (prior to the adjustment) students got to enjoy a day off from classes in honor of the leader of a GENOCIDE? I generally try to not dwell on the past, but when it comes

to the celebration of the deliberate and systematic murder and abuse of thousands upon thousands of people, I tend to have my concerns. The MDCPS school board seems to share similar logic with me, hence their decision to eliminate the observance of Columbus Day, as I stated earlier.

“But why wouldn't that immediately grant Indigenous People's Day the same rights to observance as the celebration of the visionary of the pillaging of an entire ethnicity? Shouldn't this truly historical change be a fairly mainstream dialog between students and teachers? What does this public lack of consideration for Native Americans say about MDCPS's stance on educating their students about the (seemingly) basic human principle of respect?”

And with that, from our family to yours on this time of giving thanks, from our perch on this land that was once the land of the Tequesta people: Listen to your kids. Respect the earth, its true ecology, and cultural histories. And count your blessings.

Thank you, Goldi LieberPerson, for sharing your thoughts with me and the readers of this column.

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

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Kill, Replace, Kill, Replace

Miami squanders budget, violates its own ordinances

By Jeff Shimonski
BT Contributor

Well, this past month was eventful for tree care in the City of Miami, at least if you've been reading the papers and live in Brickell.

What was the city thinking? Let's cover tree roots with concrete and then install green plastic sheets on top of the concrete? That'll be a thing of beauty, right?

Here's what's going to happen: No water or oxygen will get to the remaining roots, and the tree will eventually die. This may take a while — so as the foliage slowly drops off and the smaller branches grow brittle, more sunlight will shine through to the plastic below, which will in turn produce more reflective heat. That extra heat will cause the tree to decline faster, and as a bonus, all the dog poop and urine on top of the plastic will really stink.

I'll bet no one even considered the heat that is reflected by the plastic versus the heat absorbed by real grass. Just ask anyone who walks their dog in the afternoon. They'll know for sure where the hottest areas are. Let's just speed up those climate-change issues!

There's more, though. Because the larger branches will begin to drop off as the tree slowly dies, you'd better be careful where you park your car or walk your dog. And then, after someone's windshield has been smashed by a falling branch or the tree completely dies, the city will plant a palm in its place

— and, of course, replace the concrete as well, since it will have begun to break up into pieces and is now a trip hazard. Oh, and the plastic cover will now be faded from sunlight, so it'll be replaced.

Beautiful!

The same thing, of course, will happen to the palm — but no one in a decision-making position will likely consider consulting a licensed arborist, who actually knows about tree or palm biology. Worse yet, the people making these decisions won't even follow the City of Miami's own tree ordinances. After all, why should they?

In fact, all our cities have ordinances proclaiming that they'll follow American National Standards Institute (ANSI) A300 standards, and will acknowledge and respect the "critical root zones" of their trees and palms.

Yet I also see developers and property owners fighting this every day. The developers fight because they may have to change design structures to accommodate the roots, or maybe relocate trees, or have to negotiate mitigation with the city because they've already removed trees.

Well, at least there's an attempt on paper to protect the trees.

But do the Public Works or other departments of these municipalities follow their own ordinances? They certainly didn't for their Brickell "kill the trees with plastic" fiasco.

Take a look at the photo with this article. The trunk of this tree is so wide,



BT photo by Jeff Shimonski

Who made the decision to remove all these roots?

I can't get my arms around it. The tree is about 50 feet tall and the canopy about as wide. But look at all of those roots that were cut off right up to the root collar of the tree!

I could go into a long diatribe about the specific damage done to the tree since its critical root zone was almost completely removed on two sides. But I won't.

This debacle was mandated by Public Works or some other department. Maybe the tree sits in the right-of-way, but it's also in someone's front yard. And when it fails, it'll either completely block the street or lie on top of the house. It's certainly large enough to crush a car.

This happens all day everywhere. Cutting roots on healthy trees is commonplace.

So why don't some municipal departments follow their own municipal ordinances? Is this okay with their municipal risk management and legal departments?

I recently overheard a landscape architect discussing heat issues that had resulted from the removal of trees on a project. Now the developer was considering adding new trees to the

exact same location — because of the extra heat produced since the original trees were removed!

Municipal departments are also creating more disasters in the way they prune trees. Check out some of the recently pruned trees along I-95 in downtown Miami. I assume these trees were pruned to provide clearance, but the city could have saved money if leaders had used common sense and pruned the trees formatively when they were put in. This pruning is atrocious and against any standard or best management practice.

But there's an upside, I guess. It creates more work for arborists when we're called in as consultants because plaintiff's lawyers want to know who had the duty of care.

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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Do or Die Election

It's official: Many environmentalists don't vote

By Kim Ogren
BT Contributor

Florida's Panhandle, where I grew up, is one of the nation's richest biodiversity hotspots. I bet you didn't know that. Here live the kindest, most hard-working, generous, and misled citizenry, a majority of whom are deeply committed to supporting candidates for office who tell them they must choose between economic well-being and the environment.

I still call Panama City Beach home, but I've also lived in Coral Gables for 20 years, and in the Keys before that. As a South Floridian, I, like you, know that decisions about the environment can be acutely felt. In the Panhandle, where I am now, people haven't had to make tough decisions in favor of the environment. Our natural resources pre-Hurricane Michael were relatively abundant, our economic diversity less so.

The point is, and hear me when I say this, I wasn't surprised by Trump's election. I was surprised that *you* were surprised. And right now, only one thing is clear to me: November 6 is do or die for our state's environment.

If you don't want to be surprised again, pay attention to what I have to say. Stop trying to convince anyone of your point of view, especially about the environment. Talking until you're blue in the face doesn't turn anyone from red to blue. It exhausts you and only encourages your audience to dig in their heels.

Science has proved that persuasion has much less effect on behavior than anyone would hope. If we want to save the planet, we have to change behaviors, not minds.

Aside from issue-focused influence and other forms of persuasion, there are many "get out the vote" campaigns. In late September, Michelle Obama spoke at the University of Miami for a "When We All Vote" rally. She told a relatable story about how we're busy, we get hyped and bombarded around election time, we survive an election — then we go back to ignoring important issues.

I liked how she was using empathy to break down barriers, and really thought this was a promising strategy — until I learned of something entirely different when it comes to environmental voters.

Too few environmentalists actually vote. So it should be no surprise that the politicians don't take more action on climate change, right? Where's the pressure?

Worse, when environmentalists report that they voted, they're often lying. I'm sure you know that your voting record is public. Not how you voted, but whether you voted. This information and more like it has been assembled and analyzed by the Environmental Voter Project (EVP), the brainchild of founder Nathaniel Stinnett.

A former political strategist, Stinnett has been called a visionary by the *New York Times*, and his approach has been likened to that used by the NRA.



EVP's research uncovers that most people know voting is an important responsibility and they feel ashamed if they didn't do the homework. We don't want to mess up. And they lie rather than admit the truth, 78.1 percent of the time, based on surveys. The liars are EVP's targets because it believes that "the single most important thing a person can do for the environment is to vote."

EVP describes the flawed thinking: "Since most environmental groups are trying to win the next big election for their endorsed candidates, they rightly focus on targeting voters who are likely to show up on a particular Election Day. The Environmental Voter Project never talks to these voters — all we care about is turning non-voting environmentalists into super-voters, so we only focus on the environmentalists who rarely or never vote."

This year EVP has targeted 2.4 million environmentalists in five states, including Florida. The election is a battle for control of the Senate and thus direction on climate change and other environmental matters important to Miamians, and EVP's presence here feels like an awkward privilege. I welcome

it. EVP has communicated with 961,161 environmentalists across Florida this fall — 99,550 in Miami-Dade County alone.

At the top of EVP's nonpartisan messaging is the request for a commitment to vote. That's it. All the research has directed the canvasser to the right target. There's no judgment. My friend Jess Zimbabwe intuited this power of the promise as she helped her daughters distribute "I promised a Girl Scout I would vote" stickers. In a similar vein, the EVP pledge goes like this (say it with me): "I pledge to be a consistent voter, and I will always prioritize environmental issues."

With *Moneyball*-style big data analysis, Girl Scout pledges, and NRA-like focus, we can get turn the tide.

"It's unbelievable how much latent political power environmentalists have in South Florida," says Kate Heffernan, EVP's national organizing director and a Boca Raton native. "If we start showing up to vote, we could completely change environmental policy at the local, state, and federal level."

Feedback: letters@biscaynetimes.com

Wines for the Thanksgiving Table

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

By **Jacqueline Coleman**
BT Contributor

Ah, the holiday season is upon us. Before you know it, there will be twinkling lights in every home, and blow-up Santas dotting your neighborhood lawns. But first we must get through November.

Some people look forward to Thanksgiving as the time to enjoy an abundance of food, family, and football; while others cringe at the thought of attending yet another mandatory meal with distant relatives who rarely even send birthday wishes from year to year.

There's no doubt that wherever you fall on the spectrum of loving to loathing Thanksgiving, there's always a special layer of stress that comes along with hosting the big annual meal. As host, you're likely responsible for everything from the table decorations and seating to ensuring that your guests are enjoying their evening with the right kinds of wine.

Fear not, Thanksgiving hosts. Here at VINO, we have you covered with a list of some old-time favorite bottles, as well as some unexpected varieties that will give your holiday guests something else to talk about around the supper table besides President Trump's tweets. Sit back and relax, and only freak out over the turkey. Here are some affordable and enjoyable red and white wines for your Thanksgiving dinner.

Start your evening with an elegant and crisp Chenin Blanc from Loire. The

2016 Famille Bougrier V Chenin Blanc was a favorite wine of this bunch. A light but aromatic floral nose gives way to lingering citrus on the palate. Perfect for an aperitif or with some undressed poultry, V surprises with excellent acidity for food pairing. This lighter white wine also comes in a beautiful gold-accented bottle, which can add to the sophistication of a formal table.

For white wine from Italy, look for the **2017 Fannia Falanghina Del Molise by Campi Valerio**, only at ABC Fine Wine & Spirits. This Falanghina is on the lighter side, with notes of tropical fruit, limoncello, and even a bit of spicy vanilla on the nose, and robust citrus fruit flavors that dance on the back of the tongue for a persistent finish. Fannia is an excellent wine for a South Florida seafood feast or with some light cheese and cured meats.

Chardonnay drinkers, I haven't forgotten you. The **2016 Bread and Butter Chardonnay** is what I would call a classic California Chard. This big and buttery white wine is at the opposite end of the spectrum from the previous two, coating your mouth with smooth, full-bodied, heavy Chardonnay creaminess. Don't be afraid to use it with your potatoes and gravy, as it certainly lives up to its name.

The **2015 Horton Tower Series Cabernet Franc** is produced in Orange County, Virginia. This Southern red wine is all dark fruit and smoke, with hints of black pepper spice and vanilla from oak. I love a Cabernet

Franc, but especially for Thanksgiving. It's lighter than its relative, Cabernet Sauvignon, and smokier and spicier than a Pinot Noir, and is a perfect wine for red meats, pork, or a peppery dish.

Speaking of Pinot Noir, no Thanksgiving table is complete without one. I think you'll like the **2016 Fly By Pinot Noir** out of California. Another beautiful accent bottle, this fruit-forward Pinot is typical of the New World style and holds its own with a medium-light body. Slight tannins give the wine a nice structure, and big red fruits like cherry and cranberry, perfect as a turkey accompaniment, complete this lovely value Pinot.

For the South American-style churrasco Thanksgiving, don't forget your Argentine Malbec. The **2017 Domaine Bousquet Malbec** is a perfect blackberry and dark cherry fruit-forward red wine. Not too heavy, and the tannins don't overwhelm, but I'd still match this with something weightier. For the environmentally conscious at the table, note that this wine has been Organic Certified and is even found in the "environmentally



The Horton Tower Series Cabernet Franc is \$13.99, the Bread and Butter Chardonnay is \$14.29, and the Famille Bougrier V Chenin Blanc is \$10.99 at the North Miami Total Wine & More (14750 Biscayne Blvd., 305-354-3270). Whole Foods Market in North Miami (305-892-5505) carries the Domaine Bousquet Malbec for \$12.99. Publix at Biscayne and 18th has the Casillero del Diablo Cabernet Sauvignon for \$10.29 (305-358-3433). The Fly By Pinot Noir is \$11.99 on sale, and the Campi Valerio Fannia Falanghina Del Molise is \$12.99 at North Miami ABC Fine Wine and Spirits (14025 Biscayne Blvd., 305-944-6525).

conscious" aisle at Whole Foods.

Finally, for all you "big red" drinkers, I recommend the economical **2017 Casillero del Diablo Reserva Cabernet Sauvignon**. Concha y Toro from Chile makes a great go-to Cab. Dominating the nose is black pepper, mixed with black cherry and dark chocolate. An easy-drinking Cab, this is one you can match with any heavier cheesy dish or smoky meats.

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Miami Restaurants Embrace Plant-Based Cuisine

Food news we know you can use

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

When you go out to eat, you want to leave feeling satisfied. A meal should leave you full — not so full that you hate yourself, but full enough so that you don't need to keep eating afterward.

For many diners, a true meal involves red meat or some other hearty protein. Plant-based cuisine? That might as well be a foreign language to them; it's just not filling to some people.

But it can be. Miami restaurants have been embracing vegetarian and vegan dishes that are comparable in size and flavor to their meat counterparts. There is plant-based food beyond tofu — it just takes some searching. And your search should start in Brickell.

Over there, **Zuuk Mediterranean Kitchen** (1250 S. Miami Ave., 305-200-3145) is catering to carnivores and herbivores alike. Customers can't resist the array of tasty spreads that can be added to any meal: roasted red pepper hummus; feta, mint and lemon; and tzatziki — to name just a few. Paired with falafel, roasted vegetables, or one of the restaurant's other vegetarian options, these dips make for an appetizing lunch or dinner. We suggest spicing things up with Zuuk's signature red harissa sauce.

Out in Wynwood, **Charly's Vegan Tacos** (172 NW 24th St., 305-456-8202) is doing its part in getting patrons to eat more veggies. The restaurant is 100 percent vegan, which may be an instant turnoff for some. But don't judge a book by its cover; tacos with grilled seitan steak and porkless cracklings have the taste and texture of the real things. Here at Charly's, it's hard to tell you're not eating meat; if you want a glimpse into how good plant-based food can be, this is the spot.

In a hurry? Empanadas are always good for grabbing and going, and **Fufi's Empanadas** (4600 NE 2nd Ave., 305-576-7444) in Buena Vista serves up a ton. Alongside their steak, pork, chicken, and pizza options are creative plant-based takes like eggplant curry and vegan chorizo and beans. Get the berry guacamole for the road, too; the cranberries and pomegranate seeds elevate an already delicious dip.

In Sunny Isles Beach, **Saffron Indian Cuisine** (18090 Collins Ave., #T-22, 786-899-5554) is busy filling a few big neighborhood niches: Indian food and vegetarian food. There's a whole menu section dedicated to vegetarian dishes; you'll find items like channa masala (chickpeas, dry spices, onions, and herbs), paneer tikka masala (onions, bell pepper, cashew, and fenugreek leaves), and fried okra available to satisfy your appetite.



Vegan tacos from Charly's.

Courtesy Charly's Vegan Tacos

OPENINGS

In between all these plant-based bites, make sure to get your fill of new South Florida restaurants. The summer lull is long gone, and new spots are starting to pop up in time for the season.

One of our favorite new additions is **Silverlake Bistro** (1211 71st St., 786-803-8113) in North Beach, from the team behind the wildly successful Hialeah French restaurant, La Fresa Francesa. Forget about your diet at this California-inspired bistro, as decadent — and delectable — options like the Napa grilled-cheese sandwich and the duck fat-seared gnocchi mac and cheese will knock it into 2019.

Pizza, pasta, wine, and spirits are plentiful at **Amarone** (15400 Biscayne Blvd., Ste. 107, 305-440-0766), a recent addition to North Miami. The menu is huge at this Italian restaurant, so pace yourself. While it's tempting to scarf down Amarone's carbonara and ravioli to your stomach's desire, save room for some pizzas, too. They're the usual ones you can find at other Italian restaurants, but these classics are done right — even the margherita pizza is worth writing home about.

CLOSINGS

In downtown Miami, **Jon Smith Subs** closed as quickly as it opened. The sub shop, known for embracing the local Cuban culture in its menu, lasted only a few months before calling it a day.

Up in the Upper Eastside, several eateries have also gone dark. Neighborhood staple **Mina's Mediterraneo** abruptly shut down after five years; the restaurant announced its final service with only a day's notice. We'll miss that Shashuka.

Not too far away, **Balans** on Biscayne also bid the neighborhood farewell. Slow business was cited as the reason for the departure; the brand plans to double down on its other locations in Brickell and Miami Beach.

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: 248

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

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)

Alloy Bistro

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

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

All Day

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

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

Area 31

270 Biscayne Boulevard Way, 305-424-5234

Not that the sleek interior of this seafood restaurant (named for fishing area 31, stretching from the Carolinas to South America) isn't a glamorous dining setting. But we'd eat outside. From the expansive terrace of the Epic condo and hotel on the Miami River, the views of Brickell's high-rises actually make Miami look like a real city. It's hard to decide whether the eats or drinks are the most impressive. The food is impeccably fresh regional fish, prepared in a clean Mediterranean-influenced style. The cocktails are genuinely creative. Luckily you don't have to choose one or the other. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$ (PRB)

American Social

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

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

Arson

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

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

Balans

901 S. Miami Ave., (Mary Brickell Village), 305-534-9191

Open until 4:00 a.m. on weekends, this London import (Miami's second Balans) offers a sleeker setting than its perennially popular Lincoln Road progenitor, but the same simple yet sophisticated global menu. The indoor space can get mighty loud, but lounging on the dog-friendly outdoor terrace, over a rich croque monsieur (which comes with an alluringly sweet/sour citrus-dressed side salad), a lobster club on onion toast, some surprisingly solid Asian fusion items, and a cocktail is one of Miami's more relaxing experiences. \$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

Bali Café

109 NE 2nd Ave., 305-358-5751

While Indonesian food isn't easy to find in Miami, downtown has secret stashes — small joints catering to cruise-ship and construction workers. This cute, exotically decorated café has survived and thrived for good reason. The homey cooking is delicious, and the friendly family feel encourages even the timid of palate to try something new. Novices will want Indonesia's signature rijsttafel, a mix-and-match collection of small dishes and condiments to be heaped on rice. Note: bring cash. No plastic accepted here. \$\$\$ (PRB)

Bazaar Mar

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

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

Bengal Indian Cuisine

109 NE 1st St., 305-403-1976

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

Big Easy

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

If you visit Big Easy with expectations of po'boys, muffuletta, and beignets, you're going to be very disappointed. The restaurant has nothing to do with New Orleans — it's actually the nickname for

NEW THIS MONTH

MIAMI

BRICKELL / DOWNTOWN

Jaguar Sun

230 NE 4th St., 786-860-2422

Jaguar Sun might seem like a standard lobby bar. It's not. This is a menu that both welcomes and challenges guests. Pastas like bucatini and rigatoni make up most of the large plates here, with smaller plates like nduja toast and Parker house rolls rounding out the satisfying food offerings. On the cocktail side, Jaguar Sun juxtaposes familiar spirits with out-of-the-box selections that will keep you coming back to not only imbibe but also learn. \$\$\$ (MFP)

Latin Café 2000

1053 Brickell Plaza, 305-646-1400

In a sea of upscale restaurants, Latin Café 2000 is a breath of fresh air in Brickell. The Cuban café stands out for all the right reasons: low prices, big plates, and familiar fare. Steak sandwiches, fried pork chunks, and other Cuban classics are all available here along with a full bar. Unlike its other locations with old-timey decor, this Brickell outpost is full of modern flourishes that make the place pop. One thing hasn't changed, though: the sight-for-sore-eyes ventanita serving Cuban coffee. \$\$\$ (MFP)

MIDTOWN / WYNWOOD / DESIGN DISTRICT

Charly's Vegan Tacos

172 NW 24th St., 305-456-8202

For plant-based eaters, Charly's Vegan Tacos is an easy sell. For carnivores, the name might be an instant turn-off. Give it a chance: Charly's makes some tasty

South African golf pro Ernie Els, one of the restaurant's partners. Here's what you can expect: delectable South African cuisine incorporating a wealth of flavors and spices. Start with the Boerie Bites — they look like mini-hot dogs but elevated — then work your way to the bison ribeye and the toasted couscous risotto, which can double as a meal. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$ (MFP)

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 beggar's purses with a shrimp/pork/mushroom/water chestnut filling and tamarind sauce. \$\$ (PRB)

Boulud Sud

255 Biscayne Blvd. Way, 305-421-8800

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

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

tacos, many of which resemble their meat counterparts to the T. For example, there's the “carne asada” taco that uses grilled seitan steak; and the “chicharron prensado,” which uses “porkles” cracklings for that recognizable crunch. Get a few of either plus a bowl of pozole (Mexican stew), and you've got yourself quite the meal. \$\$\$ (MFP)

NORTH BEACH

Silverlake Bistro

1211 71st St., 786-803-8113

At Silverlake Bistro, American influences abound. The cozy eatery features an array of rich items like the Napa grilled cheese sandwich and gnocchi mac and cheese that will have you hating yourself — but they're oh so worth it. Balance these out with some vegetables like the baby carrots with honey and ricotta, one of the restaurant's many highlights. Our suggestion: Throw caution — and your diet — to the wind and get the burger, a double-patty monster with porcini mayo and the kitchen sink. \$\$\$ (MFP)

NORTH MIAMI

Amarone

15400 Biscayne Blvd., Ste. 107, 305-440-0766

Amarone touts four things in their logo: wine, pasta, pizza, and spirits. Where to start? Try the brick-oven pizzas. While they don't break new ground in the creativity department, this North Miami Italian restaurant gets the classics right — even your basic margherita is impressive. Decadent pastas with truffle oil and other rich ingredients make this place a carb lover's dream. Wine connoisseurs will also have their hands full with selections from all over Italy. \$\$\$ (MFP)

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

Café at Books & Books

1300 Biscayne Blvd., 305-695-8898

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

Cantina La Veinte

495 Brickell Ave., 786-623-6135

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

Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

delectably crunchy softshell crabs wrapped in flour tortillas with creamy/kicky jalapeño sauce, are irresistible. Bonus: A specialty market/deli with imported packaged goods, cheeses, pastries, more. \$\$\$ (PRB)

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

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

Cipriani 465 Brickell Ave., 786-329-4090

Derived, like all Cipriani family restaurants worldwide, from legendary Harry's Bar in Venice (a favorite of Truman Capote, Hemingway, and other famous folks since 1931), this glamorous indoor/outdoor riverfront location in Icon has two absolutely must-not-miss menu items, both invented at Harry's and reproduced here to perfection: beef carpaccio (drizzled artfully with streaks of creamy-rich mustard vinaigrette, not mere olive oil) and the Bellini (a cocktail of prosecco, not champagne, and fresh white peach juice). Venetian-style liver and onions could convert even liver-loathers. Finish with elegant vanilla meringue cake. \$\$\$\$ (PRB)

Clove Mediterranean Kitchen 195 SE 3rd Ave., 786-717-6788

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

From the stylish setting in Miami's historic Firehouse No. 4, one would expect a mighty pricy meal. But entrées, which range from Nuevo Latino-style ginger/orange-glazed pork tenderloin to a platter of Kobe mini-burgers, all cost either \$18 or \$23. And the price includes an appetizer

— no low-rent crapola, either, but treats like Serrano ham croquetas, a spinach/leek tart with Portobello mushroom sauce, or shrimp-topped eggplant timbales. The best seats are on the glam rooftop patio. \$\$\$ (PRB)

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)

Fi'lia 1300 S. Miami Ave., 305-912-1729

Fi'lia ("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. Fi'lia 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, Fi'lia 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 foccacia or crunchy ciabatta; even the vegetarian version bursts with complex and complementary flavors. During weekday dinners, try generous plates of risotto with shrimp and grilled asparagus; homemade pastas like seafood-packed fettuccine al scoglio; or delicate Vitello alla Milanese on arugula. \$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

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

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

Il Gabbiano 335 S. Biscayne Blvd., 305-373-0063

Its location at the mouth of the Miami River makes this ultra-upscale Italian spot (especially the outdoor terrace) the perfect power lunch/business dinner alternative to steakhouses. And the culinary experience goes way beyond the typical meat market, thanks in part to the flood of freebies that's a trademark of Manhattan's Il Mulino, originally run by Il Gabbiano's owners. The rest of the food? Pricy, but portions are mammoth. And the champagne-cream-sauced housemade ravioli with black truffles? Worth every penny. \$\$\$\$ (PRB)

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 beauty 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 ambiance 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.

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Each floor houses a variety of themed concepts: Meat and seafood lovers should head to the second floor, where Pesce and Carne, respectively, will hit the spot, while pizza fans can find satiety at Pizza e Pasta on the first floor. In a hurry? Head to the Mercato for grab-and-go bites or to do a little ingredient shopping for a hearty meal at home. \$\$\$\$ (MFP)

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 amarettino-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 caous, 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 lechón belly (roasted pig), kare-kare kawali (Asian vegetables cooked in peanut sauce), and the Sinigang na Hipon (shrimp in sour broth). For many, however, the main event is the halo-halo, a popular Filipino dessert made with shaved ice and evaporated milk, topped with a mélange of ingredients, including sweet red and white beans, bananas, coconut, sweet potato, coco jellies, leche flan, and milk. The boodle fight platter is piled high with an assortment of meat, rice, and vegetables on a bed of banana leaves. First conceived in the mess halls of the Filipino military, the boodle fight platter encourages eating with your hands. When checking in, remember to keep your mind and stomach wide open. \$\$\$ (AM)

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

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

Meraki Greek Bistro 142 SE 1st Ave., 786-773-1535

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

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

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



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

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

N by Naoe 661 Brickell Key Dr., 305-947-6263

Like local secret-star chef Kevin Cory's dinner-only Naoe, newer lunch-only N by Naoe shares a reservations-only, omakase-only (chef's choice) policy — and actually shares the same door. Turn left for Naoe, right for N. Main differences: N has one elegant communal table, perfect for impressive power lunches (vs. Naoe's intimate individual seating), and prix fixe lunches are \$80 vs. \$200 for dinner. Admittedly, lunch is abbreviated: soup and multi-course bento box plus one dessert, without the dozen or so sushi dishes. But 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 seasonal soup true to both Japanese tastes and local terroir (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 Dali's moustache and Gaudi's Sagrada Familia." Actually, it's in the heart of downtown, but the description does reflect the Barcelona-born chef's weirdly wonderful yet seriously skilled twists on tapas. Instead of Catalonia's rustic, bread-thickened tomato soup, there's a refined cold tomato broth poured over a mustard ice cream-topped croûton. Mato, a simple cheese and honey dessert, translates as custardy fresh cheese atop eggplant "jam," with candied hazelnuts. \$\$\$ (PRB)

Novecento 1414 Brickell Ave., 305-403-0900

For those who think "Argentine cuisine" is a synonym for "beef and more beef," this popular eatery's wide range of more cosmopolitan contemporary Argentine fare will be a revelation. Classic parrilla-grilled steaks are here for traditionalists, but the menu is dominated by creative Nuevo Latino items like a new-style ceviche de chernia (lightly lime-marinated grouper with jalapeños, basil, and the refreshing sweet counterpoint of watermelon), or crab ravioli with creamy saffron sauce. Especially notable are the entrée salads. \$\$\$ (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 Thanos 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., 305-374-9499

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

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

If you can overlook a name as unenlightening as most

in-jokes (it evidently refers to a favorite character of owner Claudio Nunes's kids — we assume the Pokémon Psyduck), you'll experience pretty perfect pizza. Sadly, not all brick ovens turn out perfectly char-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 (lacy rice crepes with a variety of savory fillings) and uttapam, thickened 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)

Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

Seaspice Brasserie & Lounge 422 NW N. River Dr., 305-440-4200

Unlike older Miami River market/restaurants like Garcia's, run by fishing families, this stylishly retro/modern-industrial converted warehouse (once Howard Hughes's plane hangar) has an owner who ran South Beach's hottest 1990s nightspots, so expect celebrity sightings with your seafood. What's unexpected: a blessedly untrendy menu, with simply but skillfully prepared wood-oven-cooked fish and clay-pot, shellfish casseroles. Standouts include luxuriant lobster thermador, as rich as it is pricey. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$ (PRB)

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 bevy 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 Italian food (Alfano hails from Pompeii), it's fitting that the menu is dominated by authentically straightforward yet sophisticated Italian entrées. There are salads and sandwiches, too. The most enjoyable place to dine is the secret, open-air courtyard. Alfano serves dinner on Thursdays only to accompany local musicians and artists. \$\$\$ (PRB)

Sparky's Roadside Barbecue 204 NE 1st St., 305-377-2877

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

Stanzione 87 87 SW 8th St., 305-606-7370

Though Neopolitan-style pizza isn't the rarity it was here a decade ago, this is Miami's only pizzeria certified authentic by Italy's Associazione Verace Pizza Napoletana. This means following stringent rules regarding oven (wood-fired), baking time (90 seconds maximum, here closer to 50), tomatoes (imported San Marzano), olive oil (extra-virgin), even flour (tipo 00, for bubbly-light crusts). Toppings do exceed the three original choices served in 19th-century Naples, but pies like the Limone (fresh mozzarella, pecorino, lemons, arugula, EVOO) prove some rules should be broken. \$\$ (PRB)

Station 28 91 SE 2nd St., 305-905-0328

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

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

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 crudos shine: hamachi "sashimi" slices flash-marinated in a subtle citrus/ponzu emulsion and enlivened by jalapeño relish; a sprout-topped, smoothly sauced tuna tartare with lemon and horseradish flavors substituting for clichéd sesame. Light pizzas topped with near paper-thin zucchini slices, goat cheese, roasted garlic EVOO, and squash blossoms virtually define farm-to-table. And doughnuts with Cuban coffee dip are the definitively local dessert. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

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 Blanco, 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. Personally, just the simple, superb steaks leave us happy as clams. \$\$\$\$ (PRB)



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Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

Zest 200 Biscayne Blvd., 305-374-9378

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

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

This Miami River restolounge has a London parent on San Pellegrino's list of the world's best restaurants, and a similar menu of world-class, Izakaya-style smallish plates (robata-grilled items, sushi, much more) meant for sharing over drinks. Suffice to say that it would take Junebe a dozen visits to work your way through the voluminous menu, which offers ample temptations for vegetarians as well as carnivores. Our favorite is the melt-in-your-mouth pork belly with yuzu/mustard miso dip, but even the exquisitely-garnished tofu rocks. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

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

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

Midtown / Wynwood / Design District

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

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

3 Chefs Chinese Restaurant 1800 Biscayne Blvd. #105, 305-373-2688

Until this eatery opened in late 2010, the solid Chinese restaurants in this neighborhood could be counted on the fingers of no hands. So it's not surprising that most people concentrate on Chinese and Chinese/American fare. The real surprise is the remarkably tasty, budget-priced, Vietnamese fare. Try pho, 12 varieties of full-flavored beef/rice noodle soup (including our favorite, with well-done flank steak and flash-cooked eye round). All can be customized with sprouts and fresh herbs. Also impressive: Noodle combination plates with sautéed meats, salad, and spring rolls. \$\$ (PRB)

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

Edgewater isn't usually a neighborhood that comes up in discussions of Miami's food scene. Amara at Paraiso could change that soon, however. This Latin America-inspired concept from chef Michael Schwartz overlooks Biscayne Bay, providing guests with a beautiful backdrop for an equally alluring menu. The stars of the show are the restaurant's wood grill and Jospier oven that turn out an array of items like grilled lamb ribs, beef short rib, and hefty meat and seafood platters. The view alone is worth a visit. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (MFP)

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

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

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

Named after essential tools in the kitchen, you can't miss the restaurant, with its rooftop orange neon sign. Inside industrial meets rustic chic, as is the standard in Wynwood. All menus are expertly labeled and separated into fun, yet useful categories like Bites, Colds, Strange, and Shaken. The sandwichito with pork belly and watermelon rind on plantain brioche, and adult-friendly chicken nuggets with avocado and sweet 'n' sour have become quite iconic. The wine list includes lesser-known vineyards. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (MB)

Blackbrick 3451 NE 1st Ave. #103, 305-573-8886

Inspiration for the Chinese food at this hotspot came from authentic flavors Richard Hales (from Sakaya Kitchen) encountered during travels in China, but the chef's considerable imagination figures in mightily. Example: Don't expect General Tso's chicken on the changing menu. The General's Florida Gator, though, is a distinct possibility. Dishes less wild but still thrilling, due to strong spicing: bing (chewy Chinese flatbread) with char sui, garlic, and scallions; two fried tofu/veggie dishes (one hot, one not) savory enough to bring bean curd maligners (and confirmed carnivores) to their knees. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

Bunbury 2200 NE 2nd Ave., 305-333-6929

Bunbury has an easy charm that is hard to deny and even harder to fake. The eclectic décor and quirky yet cozy ambiance, earmarks of many new eateries, comes off as unpretentiously artful. The fact that the restaurant is located in a converted tire shop and features ample outdoor seating makes the dining experience even more fun. But atmosphere would mean zilch if the food didn't pass muster. Thankfully, Bunbury's affordable Argentinian-American cuisine is fantastic. Count on a good selection of cheeses, cured meats, appetizers, well-portioned seasonal entrees, an extensive wine list culled mostly from Argentina (naturally), and some incredible house-made empanadas. If you're dining during the cooler months, definitely grab a seat outdoors. \$\$\$ (AM)

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)

C Si Bon 350 NE 24th St., 786-615-4820

On the ground floor of an Edgewater condo, you'll find one of Miami's best-kept secrets: C Si Bon. The French restaurant's concise menu wastes no time making guests salivate over classics like French onion soup, croque madame, and mussels and frites. If the weather is nice, take advantage of the outdoor dining space — especially during brunch. C Si Bon's salmon eggs Benedict, a mimosa, and clear skies are all you need for a tasty close to the weekend. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (MFP)

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 snacks. \$\$ (PRB)

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/huitlachchle with cotija cheese; tasty churros for dessert; and beer and margaritas. \$\$\$ (PRB)

Crazy Poke 312 NW 24th St., 786-401-7542

Crazy Poke, Wynwood's latest poke spot, is joining a crowded landscape; the neighborhood is already full of places that serve the Hawaiian specialty. Fortunately, the restaurant has one big advantage: flexibility. Guests who make their own bowl have a laundry list of ingredients available, including over one dozen mix-ins and an array of sauces like creamy miso and wasabi aioli. Signature selections like the Citrus Shrimp take the guesswork out of ordering, but we suggest you let your creativity run wild. \$\$ (MFP)

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)



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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 milks, 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 outdoorians 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 anticuchos. 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 Pizza Volante) are many key components from Michael's Genuine Food & Drink two blocks east — local/sustainable produce and artisan products; wood-oven cooking; homemade everything (including the ketchup accompanying crisp-outside, custardy-inside polenta fries, a circa 1995 Michael Schwartz signature snack from Nemo). Beautifully blistered, ultra-thin-crust pizzas range from classic Margheritas to pies with house-smoked bacon, trugole (a subtly flavorful — fruity, not funky — Alpine cheese), and other unique toppings. Rounding things out: simple but ingenious salads, ultimate zeppoles, and Florida craft beers. \$\$ (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 2Alas, 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 shishito-herb vinaigrette; tuna tataki takes a spicy turn with fire-roasted peppers, fermented chili, and citrus; and white

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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 cornbread) from the hidden yard's grill. Relax in the comfie mismatched furniture, over extensive wine/beer choices and laidback live music. No cover, no attitude. \$\$ (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 Dizengoff and Federal Donuts rises Le Chick, a rotisserie-chicken spot that should hopefully avoid its neighbors' fate. While chicken is the restaurant's signature protein, it's not the only standout. A delicious Royale With Cheese is sure to please burger fanatics (and *Pulp Fiction*) fans with two hefty patties, cheddar, pickles, and secret sauce. The best value, though, is the Why Not platter that comes with all the hits: rotisserie chicken, fried chicken, pork ribs, and onion rings. \$\$\$ (MFP)

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 "piadenas," saladlike seasonal/regional ingredient

combinations atop heavenly homemade flatbreads. Cocktails feature ingredients from za'atar to salmon roe. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

Michael's Genuine Food and Drink 130 NE 40th St., 305-573-5550

An instant smash hit, this truly neighborhood-oriented restaurant from chef Michael Schwartz offers down-to-earth fun food in a comfortable, casually stylish indoor/outdoor setting. Fresh, organic ingredients are emphasized, but dishes range from cutting-edge (crispy beef cheeks with whipped celeriac, celery salad, and chocolate reduction) to simple comfort food: deviled eggs, homemade potato chips with pan-fried onion dip, or a whole wood-roasted chicken. There's also a broad range of prices and portion sizes to encourage frequent visits. Michael's Genuine also features an eclectic, affordable wine list and a full bar. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

Mignonette 210 NE 18th St., 305-374-4635

From Day One this Old Florida/New Orleans fusion oyster bar, from Blue Collar's chef/owner Danny Serfer and food blogger Ryan Roman, received myriad raves for its cuisine and informed service. All manner of oysters (roughly six superb selections available raw daily, and cooked choices including subtly brandy-sauced oysters Bienville), plus other superb seafood and Blue Collar's famous veggie creations — even a dynamite prime rib — is of a caliber that catalyzes its own neighborhood gentrification, rapidly. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

Mike's at Venetia 555 NE 15th St., 9th floor, 305-374-5731

This family-owned Irish pub, on the pool deck of the Venetia condo, for more than 15 years has been a popular lunch and dinner 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 frites 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)

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

NOA Café 2711 NE 2nd Ave., 305-573-2557

Originally just a catering company, tiny NOA (initials of Israeli-born chef/owner Adi Kafri's three daughters) gradually became a "best-kept secret" lunch spot for its budget-friendly fresh focaccia sandwiches, plus perfectly dressed full-meal MediterAsian salads. The cute Edgewater oasis now serves dinner, too. Highly recommended: the big, beautiful Middle Eastern mezze platter (with falafel balls, silky hummus, tahini, grape leaves, heaps of grilled veggies, more), or lavishly veg-studded pad Thai (with an unusual lemongrass/orange peel-spiked sauce), either enough for two to share over wine. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

OTL 160 NE 40th St., 786-953-7620

Coffee, breakfast, sandwiches, and yoga, anyone? Yes, there's now such a place, and it's naturally in the Design District. OTL is an ambitious concept pushing light bites and strong coffee, courtesy of an auspiciously motley troika of influencers, including the team behind The Smile NYC, LIV impresario David Grutman, and Miami

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Design District braintrust Craig Robins. Coffee shops are oftentimes the beating hearts of creative hubs, and OTL is no different; expect to see plenty of over-caffeinated designers, artists, developers, and retail employees on their lunch breaks. The place is bright and clean, and could double as a white cube gallery with its pastel chairs, light wood accents, blue chip artwork, and upstairs multipurpose space reserved for performance and pop-ups. The food, while flavorful, is mildly overpriced, but it's an afterthought when you realize that good coffee has finally arrived in the Miami Design District. \$\$\$ (AM)

Ono Poké Shop 2320 N. Miami Ave., 786-955-6894

A casual, clean, and vibrant little eatery, Ono Poké Shop is the latest eatery to catch the trending "poké fever" that's hit some of Miami's most up-and-coming neighborhoods. Greatly influenced by traditional Japanese cuisine, the menu consists of tried and true combinations, such as spicy ahi tuna tossed in a spicy soy dressing, as well as flexible options to customize your own poké bowl to taste. Quality ingredients and fresh fish make for a satisfying, healthy meal when lunch o'clock rolls around. \$\$ (AM)

Palatino 3004 NW 2nd Ave., 786-360-5200

When longtime favorite Jamaican joint Clive's fell victim to gentrification, few expected to find similarly skilled old-school Caribbean-American soul food in Wynwood again, especially not at old-school prices. But that's what this small, super-friendly mom-and-pop spot serves up: breakfasts like ackee and salt fish, fried dumpling and callaloo, or an egg/maple sausage/cheese grits combo; plates (with sides) of oxtails, curry goat, jerk chicken; richly crusted piquant chicken or meat patties that contend with Miami's best. Surprises include homemade pastries, and \$1 ice cream cones in tropical flavors like soursop. \$\$\$ (PRB)

Palat Miami 4702 NE 2nd Ave., 786-953-7577

When you're craving Italian food, where do you go? Palat Miami should be on your shortlist. The neighborhood Italian-fusion restaurant is serving flavorful food that hits the spot no matter the occasion. Small bites like piquillo peppers are perfect for splitting with friends over a bottle of wine, whose budget-friendly pricing may tempt you to order a second. Larger appetites are welcome, too, and they can indulge in braised rabbit tagliatelle and other hearty items. \$\$\$ (MFP)

Prohibition 3404 N. Miami Ave., 305-438-9191

Frankly, we don't get why this expansive, high-ceilinged space with enormous front windows and open kitchen is so often described as evocative of a Prohibition-era speakeasy; ambiance here is artfully and amusingly sinful, not secretive. Fare is a fun, familiar mix of modern comfort foods (truffled lobster mac 'n' cheese, NY strip steak with truffled parmesan fries, many other items featuring truffle oil) and retro favorites like meatballs. It's simple, solid stuff served in generous portions to match the menu items that best truly evoke Prohibition times: hefty, old-fashioned, two-fisted cocktails. \$\$\$ (PRB)

R House 2727 NW 2nd Ave., 305-576-0240

A strikingly stylish restaurant that's part art gallery could be 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 servicable. But Sabor's strong suit — and why it has not only survived but thrived (as a recent expansion attests) — is its cooked dishes, always fresh, flavorful, and served in prodigious portions. Our personal fave: jalea (a delicately breaded, crisp-fried mix of tender marinated fish and shellfish, with yucca and criolla onion sauce); one order feeds at least three diners. Note: Open for big breakfasts, as well as lunch/dinner. \$\$\$ (PRB)

Sakaya Kitchen Shops at Midtown Miami, Buena Vista Avenue 305-576-8096

This chef-driven, fast-casual Asian eatery is more an izakaya (in Japan, a pub with food) than a sakaya (sake shop). But why quibble about words with so many more intriguing things to wrap your mouth around? The concept takes on street-food favorites from all over Asia, housemade daily from quality fresh ingredients. French Culinary Institute-trained Richard Hales does change his menu, so we'd advise immediately grabbing some crispy Korean chicken wings and Chinese-inspired, open-faced roast pork buns with sweet chili sauce and homemade pickles. \$\$ (PRB)

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

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

Court outpost that features something for everyone. Sushi (Itamae), fried chicken (Coop), and banh mis (Tran An) are just a few of the market's standouts, all of which pair nicely with a sazerac or another signature cocktail from St. Roch's Mayhaw bar. With so many options available, you'll quickly become a regular. \$\$\$ (MFP)

Tap 42 3252 NE 1st Ave. #101, 786-864-0194

With all the growth that Midtown Miami has seen, there's been one type of restaurant sorely missing in the neighborhood: a decent sports bar. Tap 42, which recently took over the short-lived Apeiro location, runs with this idea and complements it with a flavor-forward mentality. The eatery started as a Fort Lauderdale watering hole and has since expanded to Coral Gables — and now Midtown Miami. Staples like the Prohibition burger and Drunken Goat burger make an appearance, but so do location-specific items like the grilled salmon Zen bowl that serves as a lighter alternative for guests. \$\$ (MFP)

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)

Zak the Baker 405 NW 26th St., 786-280-0327

This part-rustic/part-industrial-chic breakfast and lunch spot, located in Zak Stern's bakery, is one certified-Kosher café where neither religious dietary laws nor culinary standards are compromised. Reason: The menu of open-face sandwich "toasts," soups, salads, and small plates doesn't overreach, but stays centered on Zak's substantial and superbly crusty organic sourdough loaves, arguably the best bread in Miami. Varieties range from classic Jewish deli rye to exotic olive & za'atar or All American cranberry/walnut. Toast toppings, sweet or savory, are mainly local vegetable and dairy combos, so non-carnivores, as well as diners keeping Kosher, luck out. \$\$ (PRB)

Upper Eastside

Andiamo 5600 Biscayne Blvd., 305-762-5751

With brick-oven pizzerias popping up all over town the past few years, it's difficult to remember the dark days when this part of Mark Soyka's 55th Street Station complex was mainland Miami's sole source of open-flame-cooked pies. But the pizzas still hold up against the newbie pack, especially since exec chef Frank Crupi has upped the ante with unique-to-Miami offerings like a white (tomato-free) New Haven clam pie. Also available: salads, panini, and a tasty meatball appetizer with ricotta. There's a respectable wine and beer list, too. \$\$ (PRB)

BarMeli 6927 Biscayne Blvd., 305-754-5558

Just east of Liza Meli's defunct Ouzo's Taverna, her similarly rustic-festive tapas and wine bar/market has an extensive, mostly small-plates menu including all of Ouzo's Greatest Greek Hits (refreshingly light and lemony taramosalata carp roe spread, amazingly succulent grilled fresh sardines, her mom's lemon cake, more), plus more broadly Mediterranean creations like an Italian-inspired grana padano flan, uniquely topped crostini and flatbreads, cheese/charcuterie boards. The boutique wine selection focuses on unusual (sometimes virtually unknown, and unavailable elsewhere in town) Mediterranean varietals from family-owned vineyards. \$\$ (PRB)

The Anderson 709 NE 79th St., 305-757-3368

"Come for the drinks. Stay for the food." That should be the sign outside The Anderson, the neighborhood watering hole from the team behind Miami Beach's award-winning bar Broken Shaker. To complement the outstanding drink menu (which is full of South Florida-inspired concoctions), the venue offers a just-as-outstanding list of snacks and mains that includes the likes of smoked wings, queso dip, and a fried chicken sandwich. If you only order one thing, make it that last one — it's heaven on a plate. \$\$ (MFP)

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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

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 spicing) that are applied to sushi rolls and ceviche bowls alike. Additionally there are some popular Peruvian-fusion cooked dishes like Chifa (Peruvian-Chinese) lomo saltado, served traditionally, as an entrée, or creatively in springs rolls). To add to the fun, accompany your meal with a cocktail from Miami's only pisco bar. \$\$\$ (PRB)

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

Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

Blue Collar

6730 Biscayne Blvd., 305-756-0366

Like its predecessor in this space (Michael Bloise's American Noodle Bar), this working-class-themed eatery is helmed by a former fine-dining chef, Daniel Serfer, a Chef Allen's vet who now crafts casual, creative fare at prices all can afford. Dishes are eclectic. The roughly dozen veggie dishes alone range from curried cauliflower purée to maduros to bleu cheese roasted asparagus. Shrimp and grits compete with any in Charleston; pork and beans, topped with a perfectly runny fried egg, beats Boston's best. \$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

Boteco

916 NE 79th St., 305-757-7735

This strip of 79th Street is rapidly becoming a cool alt-culture enclave thanks to inviting hangouts like this rustic indoor/outdoor Brazilian restaurant and bar. Especially bustling on nights featuring live music, it's even more fun on Sundays, when the fenced backyard hosts an informal fair and the menu includes Brazil's national dish, feijoada, a savory stew of beans plus fresh and cured meats. But the everyday menu, ranging from unique, tapas-like pastéis to hefty Brazilian entrées, is also appealing – and budget-priced. \$\$ (PRB)

Café Roval

5808 NE 4th Ct., 786-279-6800

Café Roval's Old World flourishes set the perfect mise-en-scène for magic. Restaurateur Mark Soyka of News Café, the Van Dyke, Andiamo, and Soyka Restaurant made a bold move opening his latest restaurant in the storied pumphouse building just north of his 55th Street Station property. The subtly anachronistic décor casts an 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/cilantro-sprinkled roast duck noodle with Chinese broccoli, and intense pork fat-enriched broth. Other unique specialties include spicy house-cured pork/crispy rice sausages, soy and whisky-marinated steak jerky, swoonfully sinful pork belly with basil sauce, and citrus/curry-tinged fried chicken wings. Arrive early to score the wings. Surprisingly scrumptious tofu and veggie preparations, too. \$-\$\$ (PRB)

Cream Parlor

8224 Biscayne Blvd., 786-534-4180

Don't let the name fool you: This eclectic eatery is a lot more than just ice cream. At this cozy neighborhood spot, you can enjoy breakfast items all day or nosh on house specialties like the grilled smashed potato – the name says it all – for lunch or brunch. Dessert is a must at Cream Parlor, and first-timers need to experience Unicorn Poop ice cream (much more appetizing than it sounds). Even if you're not hungry, stop in to admire the vintage décor and crack a smile. Check out the patio in back. \$-\$\$ (MFP)

Doggi's Arepa Bar

7281 Biscayne Blvd., 786-558-9538

MiMo residents, rejoice: Doggi's Arepa Bar has brought its Venezuelan street food offerings up north. The restaurant's second location features everything that regulars have come to know and love about the place: giant portions, reasonable prices and an extensive menu. If it's your first foray into this type of cuisine, start with the shredded beef arepa – essentially a corn flour pocket of flavor. The cachapa – a corn pancake with cheese and cream – is another beloved specialty that's not to be missed. \$-\$\$ (MFP)

Dogma Grill

7030 Biscayne Blvd., 305-759-3433

Since opening, this hot dog-PLUS (capital letters intended) joint has had several owners and menu changes. Currently it's in a "Best of" phase. Main draw remains 100% beef dogs with numerous regionally inspired topping combos (our favorite: the elaborate, authentic Chicago), but vegetarians can again enjoy the original menu's veggie franks, absent for several years, topped identically. More recent adds worth sampling are regional specialty sandwiches, like New Orleans shrimp po'boys. And though there's no indoor seating, current owner Diego Villamedia has expanded the outdoor area and spruced up its landscaping for better insulation from Boulevard traffic, making picnicking more pleasant. \$ (PRB)

East Side Pizza

731 NE 79th St., 305-758-5351

Minestrone, sure. But a pizzeria menu with carrot ginger soup? Similarly many Italian-American pizzerias offer entrées like spaghetti and meatballs, but East Side also has pumpkin ravioli in brown butter/sage sauce, wild mushroom ravioli, and other surprisingly upscale choices, including imported Peroni beer. As for the pizza, they are classic pies, available whole or by the slice, made with fresh plum tomato sauce and Grande mozzarella (considered the top American pizza cheese). Best seating for eating is at the sheltered outdoor picnic tables. \$ (PRB)

Ferraro's Kitchen

1099 NE 79th St., 786-534-2136

Seasoned restaurateur Igor Ferraro, who's honed his chef chops here and abroad in Italy, has opened a new eatery for those seeking two of life's tastiest pleasures: pasta and wine. The inviting dining room is also spacious, and you'll find ample room at the bar as well; saddle up to the latter for a better view of the kitchen, where Chef

meats; cookbooks, kitchen utensils, more. But highlights are locally produced fare: Mimi's famed raviolis; Roc Kat's tropical ice creams; chef/restaurateur Ken Lyon's prepared foods, including daily-changing dinners for two; Zak the Baker's crusty sourdough breads, plus sandwiches on same. Best-kept secret: While there's no official café component, comfie counter seats enable on-premises breakfasting, lunching, and coffee/pastry breaks. \$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

Firito Taco

1071 NE 79th St., 305-793-6676

Nestled between Tap 79 and Royal Bavarian Schnitzel House, this low-key taco shack features two sections – one for eating and one for playing bocce. The menu is limited to ten overstuffed tacos (two per order), quesadillas, desserts like churros and paletas, and floor-to-ceiling fridges of ice-cold beer. The most popular tacos are the carne asada with tomato, onion, cheese, garlic chili aioli, and cilantro and the Tinga Club with chicken, avocado cream, bacon, tomato, queso, garlic chili aioli, and scallions. \$\$ (MB)



Bringing Asian delights and authenticity to Aventura with exotic Japanese and tasty Thai dishes. Open daily for lunch and dinner starting at 12pm

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KENDALL: 11768 North Kendall Drive PH: 305-275-9003

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)

Fiorito

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

While owners Max and Cristian Alvarez's description of their eatery as "a little Argentinean shack" is as charming as the brothers themselves, it conveys neither the place's cool warmth nor the food's exciting elegance. Dishes are authentically Argentine, but far from standard steakhouse stuff. Chef Cristian's background at popular pop-up The Dining Room becomes instantly understandable in dishes like orange and herb-scented lechon confit (with pumpkin mash, pickled cabbage salad, and Dijon mojo) or sopa de calabaza, derived from Argentina's peasant stew loco, but here a refined, creamy soup. Many more surprises – even steaks. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

Flavorful 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

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 Pittzza – an award-winning Neopolitan pizzeria; mouthwatering wood-oven crusts; vegetarian/vegan and gluten-free toppings. But the expanded menu, including impeccable cured meat options, is a vast improvement. Especially recommended: housemade porchetta; nduja Calabrese (salami spread); the Regina pizza with prosciutto crudo, buffalo mozzarella, perfectly ripe tomatoes, and arugula; involtini (stuffed pizza rolls); an unusual carciofi salad with pine nuts and mint slivers. \$\$ (PRB)

Jimmy's East Side Diner

7201 Biscayne Blvd., 305-754-3692

Open for more than 30 years and still regularly packed with locals, Jimmy's respects the most important American diner tradition: breakfast at any hour the place is open – though that's only through mid-afternoon. Menu highlights include pecan waffles, biscuits with sausage gravy, and eggs any style, from old-school western omelets to trendy frittatas. Among sides, truly crispy hash browns are neighborhood legend, with creamy grits a satisfying second. For those who like lunchier fare, hot open-faced

turkey sandwiches feature the real deal, not gelatinous deli-type turkey roll. \$ (PRB)

Loba

7420 Biscayne Blvd., 786-536-6692

As suggested by this comfie gastropub's interactive literary 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 Argentinean meal and a cholesterol test in the same month. While traditional parillada dishes are tasty, they're meat/fat-heavy, basically heaps of grilled beef. Here the grill is also used for vegetables (an unusually imaginative assortment, including bok choy, endive, and fennel), two of which are paired with your protein of choice. You can indulge in a mouthwateringly succulent vacio (flank steak), and walk out without feeling like you're the cow. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

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-José Andres Bazaar chef Goncalo Costa does include vegetarian/vegan dishes but ranges far beyond: deceptively decadent-tasting eggs Florentine (with tomato and avocado hollandaise); Portuguese bacalhau cakes with black-eyed pea salad; big juicy certified-organic burgers with smoked truffe 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)

Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

Paulie Gee's Miami 8001 Biscayne Blvd., 786-558-8315

New York City-style pizza is the stuff of culinary lore. Whether it's the flour, the mineral content, or the microscopic copepods found in NYC tap water that lend this pie its *je ne sais quoi* is the subject of fervent debate; but, it's safe to say that NYC-style pizza is king. Restaurants often go so far as to outsource its water to offer guests a genuine slice of the Big Apple. Paulie Gee's Miami is one such place that goes to great lengths to re-create the formidable magic of its flagship Brooklyn-based pizzeria, and the results are astounding. The pizzas are heavy on attitude: not only are the flavors bold yet balanced, the names themselves tend to be comically creative. Most of the pizzas are major hits, including the vegan pies, so much so that they render everything else on the menu a mere afterthought. \$\$-\$\$\$ (AM)

Pinch 8601 Biscayne Blvd., 305-631-2018

Small bites, big impact, hence the name, Pinch. Chef-partners Rene Reyes and John Gallo have fun with a freestyle menu incorporating the cuisines of Asia, Italy, and Spain for an eclectic mix that is a welcome addition to the neighborhood. Seared Maine scallops with piquillo sauce, parsnip, and squid ink, and Pinch Salad with brassica greens, shaved veggies, ricotta salata, and cucumber-oregano vinaigrette are served on stoneware plates. Simple items like eight-ounce flat iron steak and organic half chicken are classic standards done right. A unique wine list takes a departure from the typical Chardonnays and Malbecs. There's also a great brunch, including brisket sliders, stuffed French toast, and eggs Benedict. \$\$\$ (MB)

Phuc Yea! 7100 Biscayne Blvd., 305-494-0609

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 gourmands, 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)

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 garliowurst) 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., 786-419-2722

Don't let the cute name fool you. Sandwich Where? takes its namesake 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 (sriracha chiles, fish sauce, lime) and Japanese green tea noodles. \$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

Sherwood's Bistro & Bar 8281 NE 2nd Ave., 786-359-4030

Little Haiti isn't exactly known for its culinary options, but the new food hall at The Citadel will change that perception by year's end. Until then, Sherwood's Bistro & Bar is doing its part in filling the neighborhood's void. Expect larger-than-life plates like rabbit pot pie, gnocchi with oxtail ragu, and bouillabaisse at this comfort-food-centric restaurant. The word "homey" immediately comes to mind: Sherwood's could literally be someone's house

(we're fairly certain it 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 1999, Mark Soyka's namesake restaurant has often been credited with sparking the Upper Eastside's revival, providing the neighborhood's first comfortably gentrified gathering place — and simple but satisfying comfort food. Old fans needn't fret; the signature hummus platter remains, but much of the menu, like the neighborhood, is more sophisticated, with fare ranging from shareable snacks (fried Brussels sprouts with pecorino and parsley, smoked salmon/dill deviled eggs) and salads (mango/quinoa with almonds) to hearty retro-modern entrées (slow-roasted short ribs with balsamic/fig reduction). \$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

Sushi Siam 5582 NE 4th Ct., 305-751-7818

On the menu of sushi-bar specialties plus a small selection of Thai and Japanese cooked dishes, there are a few surprises, such as a unique lobster maki that's admittedly huge in price (\$25.95), but also in size: six ounces of crisp-fried lobster chunks, plus asparagus, avocado, lettuce, tobiko (flying fish), masago (smelt) 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)



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 touting 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 closeup. Save some calories for dessert: There are more than ten to choose from. \$\$-\$\$\$ (MFP)

Winewood

7251 Biscayne Blvd., 305-754-8282

Along the Upper Eastside's Biscayne Corridor best known for its historic MiMo architecture, this darkly wooden and quirky neighborhood wine bar stands out. Although a lucky few will appreciate the tiny rustic dining area, the majority of guests will sit outdoors at the mercy of Miami's grueling summer heat. The menu leans heavily upon Argentinean staples and Italian cuisine, echoes of Devita's Restaurant and Che Soprano, which previously occupied this space. Entrées such as lomito, seafood tablas, and fresh pastas and stuffed raviolis are generously portioned and delicious. Exploring the wine menu will take patience as the list promotes a thoughtfully diverse terroir from regions all over the world. Those reeling from weekend withdrawal can opt for a glass of wine with a side of live entertainment beginning Tuesday through Saturday. \$\$\$ (AM)

Via Verdi Cucina Rustica 6900 Biscayne Blvd., 786-615-2870

After years of critical acclaim cooking the cuisine of their native Piedmontat ultra-upscale Quattro, on Lincoln Road, twin brother chefs Nicola and Fabrizio Carro decided to work for themselves, hands-on renovating the former space of MiMo District pioneer Uva 69. Cuisine here is similarly authentic, with creative twists. But there are important differences: emphasis on local, rather than mostly imported, ingredients; inspiration from all Italian regions; and best, astonishing affordability. Housemade spinach/ricotta gnudi baked in an ocean of burrata is a delight, but it's hard to go wrong here. \$\$-\$\$\$ (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. Cswy., 305-763-8468

From the masterminds of Morgans in Wynwood comes this snug eatery that serves an all-day menu full of comfort food favorites. Blink, and you'll miss this intimate addition to North Bay Village's dining scene: The only signage outside is the restaurant's namesake animal. Starting at 9:00 a.m. every day, you can indulge in sizeable brunch dishes like the Dutch Baby and the chicken and waffle, which pack as much flavor as they do calories. Lunch and dinner entrées like the duck tacos and short rib pot pie are just as filling. Here, your diet starts tomorrow. \$\$ (MFP)

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

This cozy, romantic spot started back in 1989 as a pasta factory (supplying numerous high-profile restaurants) as well as a neighborhood eatery. And the wide range of budget-friendly, homemade pastas, made daily, remains the main draw for its large and loyal clientele. Choices range from homey, meaty lasagna to luxuriant crab ravioli with creamy lobster sauce, with occasional forays into creative exotica such as seaweed spaghetti, with sea scallops, shitakes, and fresh tomatoes. \$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

Shuckers Waterfront Grill 1819 NE 79th St. Cswy., 305-866-1570

Sometimes accidents can lead to better things. Case in point, this North Bay Village waterfront institution is back with their casual, no-fuss service, cheap beer, special grilled wings (that require no sauce), and raw oysters. The revamped space makes the entire experience just a little fresher and a little happier. Speaking of happy, their happy hour deals are still as good as ever. \$\$ (MB)

Sushi Siam 1524 NE 79th St. Cswy., 305-864-7638

(See Miami / Upper Eastside listing) (PRB)

Tacos vs Burritos Cantina 1888 79th St. Cswy., 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 fiocchi rapera (pear/cheese-filled pasta

purses with truffled prosciutto cream sauce), an unlikely (soy sauce and parmesan cheese?) but luscious Italian/Japanese fusion tuna carpaccio, and fresh-fruit sorbets. But traditionalists needn't worry. All the old favorites, from the café's famed beef carpaccio to eggplant parm and pastas sauced with Argentine-Italian indulgence, are still here and still satisfying. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

MIAMI SHORES

Côte Gourmet 9999 NE 2nd Ave., #112, 305-754-9012

When it comes to Miami's dining scene, neighborhoods like Wynwood and Brickell tend to get all of the attention. Côte Gourmet, however, is putting Miami Shores on the map. This locals spot specializes in appetizing French cuisine, such as staples like escargots and foie gras. Brunch is a highlight, featuring more casual cuisine like crêpes and a decadent croque madame to fill you up. Regardless of whether you visit for brunch, lunch, or dinner, expect reasonable prices, service with a smile, and oh-so-satisfying food. \$\$-\$\$\$ (MFP)

PizzaFiore 9540 NE 2nd Ave., 305-754-1924

Owned by Arcoub Abderrahim, who opened South Beach's original PizzaFiore way back in 1996, this café serves the kind of nostalgic, medium-thin crusted, oozing-with-goey-cheese pizzas reminiscent of our childhood pies in northern NJ Sopranos' territory, except now there are options for today's toppings — sundried tomatoes, buffalo mozzarella, etc. But there's also a full menu of Italian-American classics, including antipasto salads, subs, and particularly popular, pastas. Garlic rolls are a must, but we didn't have to tell you that. \$\$-\$\$ (PRB)

NORTH MIAMI

Alaska Coffee Roasting Co. 13130 Biscayne Blvd., 786-332-4254

When people speak of the West Coast as the USA's quality coffeehouse pioneer territory, they're thinking Seattle — and then south through coastal California. North to Alaska? Not so much. But owner Michael Gesser did indeed open this hip place's parent in Fairbanks back in 1993, after years of traveling through every coffee-growing country in the world. Brews like signature smooth yet exotic Ethiopian Yirgacheffe don't even need cream or sugar, much less frappe, froo-froo. 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 forges the usual pomp of upscale eateries and focuses on simple, delicious, and effective French cuisine. The middling décor and surrounding sunbleached strip malls leave something to be desired, but all is easily excused when the food is this good. The morel dishes — large, spongy mushrooms in a fragrant sauce served with meat or pasta — steal the show, and are worth the considerable uptick in price. Meanwhile, everything from the pasta to the seafood is fresh, and the service makes

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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 Soreauto has made it near impossible to resist the pastries, all baked on-site daily. They will leave visions of coffee éclairs, tarts, macarons, and Napoleon cakes dancing through your mind for days to come. Très bon! \$\$\$ (AM)

Cane à Sucre 899 NE 125th St., 305-891-0123

From the Vega brothers (who pioneered the Design and MiMo districts with, respectively, the original Cane A Sucre and UVA 69), this charming artisanal sandwich bar is the perfect breakfast/lunch stop before or after ingesting visual arts at nearby MOMA. Actually, creations like El Fig (fig confit, gorgonzola cheese, walnuts, and honey on an authentically French crisp-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 earthily aromatic from achiote, tangy from bitter oranges, and meltingly tender from slow cooking in a banana leaf wrap. To accompany, try a lime/soy/chili-spiced michelada, also authentically Mexican, and possibly the best thing that ever happened to dark beer. \$\$\$ (PRB)

KC Healthy Cooking 11900 Biscayne Blvd. #103, 786-502-4193

Hidden inside an office building across from Home Depot, this family-friendly spot has no fancy features — such as a sign outside. But walk through the corporate lobby and you'll find truly heartfelt, health-conscious, homemade dishes, some surprisingly sophisticated. There's no red meat on the globally influenced menu, but there are poultry and fish, along with many vegetarian or vegan choices: organic pumpkin soup, zingy Thai curried veggie soup, an elegantly layered, molded tuna/avocado/quinoa "cupcake," a real Bundt cake — vegan (no dairy) but remarkably tasty. \$\$ (PRB)

Pastry Is Art 12591 Biscayne Blvd., 305-640-5045

Given owner Jenny Rissonne's background as the Eden Roc's executive pastry chef, it's not surprising that her cakes and other sweet treats (like creamy one-bite truffle "lollipops") look as flawlessly sophisticated as they taste — perfect adult party fare. What the bakery's name doesn't reveal is that it's also a breakfast and lunch café, with unusual baking-oriented fare: a signature sandwich of chicken, brie, and caramelized peaches and pecans on housemade bread; quiches; pot pies; even a baked-to-order Grand Marnier soufflé. The pecan sticky buns are irresistible. \$\$ (PRB)

Petit Rouge 12409 Biscayne Blvd., 305-892-7676

From the mid-1990s (with Neal's Restaurant and later with Il Migliore), local chef Neal Cooper's neighborhood-oriented Italian eateries have been crowd-pleasers. While this cute 32-seat charmer is French, it's no exception, avoiding pretense and winning fans with both classic and nouvelle bistro fare: frisée salad with lardons, poached egg, and bacon vinaigrette; truite Grenobloise (trout with lemon/caper sauce); consommé with black truffles and foie gras, covered by a buttery puff pastry dome; perfect pommes frites, and equally perfect apple or lemon tarts for dessert. \$\$\$ (PRB)

Piccolo Pizza 2104 NE 123rd St., 305-893-9550

Pizzas at this spin-off from family-owned Il Piccolo impress even NYC visitors, thanks to recipes proprietor Hubert Benmoussa learned from an authentic Neapolitan pizzeria. Other favorites here include subs on homemade baguettes and, surprising for a pizzeria, delightfully custardy quiche (Benmoussa is part French). But it would be unthinkable to miss the pies, especially our favorite Italia: subtly sweet tomato sauce, fresh tomatoes, mozzarella, onions, plus mixed greens and uncooked prosciutto on top — both pizza and salad. There are also nicely priced catering trays of finger subs, quiche squares, pizza bites, more. \$\$\$ (PRB)

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

Pinecrest Bakery has opened up shop in North Miami and brought an extensive selection of Cuban specialties to the other side of town. As you'd expect, pastelitos, empanadas, and other traditional delights are on the menu, but the bakery also doubles as a café. This means you'll also find sandwiches galore, including staples like the Cuban sandwich (ham, pork, swiss cheese, pickle) as well as Philly cheesesteaks and turkey melts. And of course, there's no shortage of cafecito. \$ (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)



St. Ben
Cuban Restaurant

Happy hour Tues. – Fri. 4 to 7pm
Glass of wine or beer served with a chef's special board: \$12

Wednesday: Mussels Day
Large serving of Prince Edward Island mussels with glass of house wine, Pinot Noir or Pinot Grigio: \$24

Breakfast and Brunch
Sat. – Sun. 8am – 4pm. Complimentary mimosa.

Biscayne Boulevard at NE 24th Street | 786-615-4820
Tues. – Fri. 11 am – 11 pm, Sat. 8 am – 11 pm, Sun. 8 am – 4 pm

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

At the end of a debauched night of excess, some paper-thin designer pizza with wisps of smoked salmon (or similar fluff) doesn't do the trick. Open till 3:00 or 4:00 a.m., Steve's has, since 1974, been serving the kind of comforting, retro pizzas people crave at that hour. As in Brooklyn, tomato sauce is sweet, with strong oregano flavor. Mozzarella is applied with abandon. Toppings are stuff that give strength: pepperoni, sausage, meatballs, onions, and peppers. \$ (PRB)

Sushi Lucy 1680 NE 123rd St., 786-391-2668

One of the worst parts about dining out is the wait. At North Miami's Sushi Lucy, waiting for your food is a foreign concept. The Asian eatery sends out items by the boatload — literally — so guests pick out their dishes as they pass by on a conveyor belt. If you're not in the mood for sushi, rest assured you won't leave hungry. Hot kitchen entrées like the shrimp dumplings, salmon rice bowls, and chicken skewers round out the establishment's extensive menu. \$\$\$ (MFP)

Tatore 15180 Biscayne Blvd., 305-749-6840

Meet the fugazzeta, a regional Argentinian specialty that is essentially a white pizza with mozzarella, onions, and oregano. And although simple, it's hard to come by in town. FYI: You can find it here. An ample outdoor space is popular on the cooler days, and inside, the great red oven takes center stage. You can go traditional with your pizza or try the Nicanora, which has caramelized onions and bacon. The restaurant opens early enough to serve the breakfast of champions — empanadas. \$\$\$ (MB)

Tomato & Basil 653 NE 125th St., 305-456-1193

This rustic Italian eatery with reds, whites, and lots of light wood, will instantly transport you to the carefree streets of Italy, Vespa included — so will the thin pizza,

creamy polenta, and carefully curated wine list. Their complimentary rolls with homemade tomato sauce are extra heavenly. Delivery available, but if you decide to dine in, there is plenty of free parking. \$\$ (MB)

Top Notch Bistro 2210 NE 123rd St., 786-452-0398

Bolivian food is hard to find in Miami, but Top Notch Bistro does its part to fill that void — and then some — by mixing it with American influences. Saltenas, the eatery's Bolivian baked empanadas, are an essential starter for any order. From there, you can pick from an extensive selection of gourmet hot sandwiches, juicy burgers, and big platters with proteins like beef medallions and pulled pork. Wash all of that down with their craft beer selection, which leans local. \$\$\$ (MFP)

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 dateworthy-cute spot features "Modern Indian" cuisine — both North Indian-type traditional favorites interpreted without the oiliness and heavy sauces typical of westernized curry houses, plus refined reinventions using authentic (though heat-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-crustured salmon. A welcome surprise: The bistro is also a bakery, so don't overlook the mouthwateringly buttery croissants, plumply stuffed empanadas, or elegant berry tarts and other homemade French pastries. \$\$\$ (PRB)

O'Lima Signature Cuisine 1052 Kane Concourse, 305-864-4392

From the moment you enter the dining area to the first bite of the irresistible lomo saltado flambéed in pisco, everything about this upscale Peruvian fusion eatery exudes an understated elegance. The food, a confluence of classic Peruvian cuisine with Japanese zest, tastes just as good as it sounds (delicious). All of the classics from both regions are here — saltados, ceviches, and sushi — modified slightly to incorporate some experimental flavors. Since it's within proximity of ritzy Bal Harbour, the meals are priced slightly higher than your typical casual Peruvian joint. However, considering the atmosphere and chef German Gonzalez's expertise, O'Lima manages to outshine its peers and justify costing a prettier than average penny. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$ (AM)

Open Kitchen 1071 95th St., 305-865-0090

If we were on Death Row, choosing a last meal, this very chef-centered lunchroom/market's PBLT (a BLT sandwich with melt-in-your-mouth pork belly substituting for regular bacon) would be a strong contender. Co-owners Sandra Stefani (ex-Casa Toscana chef/owner) and Ines Chattas (ex-Icebox Café GM) have combined their backgrounds to create a global gourmet oasis with a menu ranging from light quiches and imaginative salads to hefty balsamic/tomato-glazed 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

Aji Carbón 16978 NE 19th Ave., 786-955-6894

Embracing a decidedly contemporary take on traditional Peruvian dishes, Aji 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 Fellhauer, for 28 years executive chef at Continental fine-dining spot La Paloma. Additions to the predominantly seafood menu include chateaubriand or rack of lamb for two, both carved, with old-school spectacle, tableside. Owner Michael Choido has also renovated the interior dining room, and added the Yellowfin Lounge, which features an extensive selection of artisan beers. \$\$\$ (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

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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)

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 diningware 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, but is affordable, too. Eat Green succeeds at paying respect to the earth while soothing the body, soul, and wallet with equal aplomb. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (AM)

El Gran Inka 3155 NE 163rd St., 305-940-4910

Though diners at this upscale Peruvian eatery will find ceviches, a hefty fried-seafood jalea, and Peru's other expected traditional specialties, all presented far more elegantly than most in town, the contemporary Peruvian fusion creations are unique. Especially recommended are two dishes adapted from recipes by Peru's influential nikkei (Japanese/Creole) chef Rosita Yimura: an exquisite, delicately sauced tiradito de corvina, and for those with no fear of cholesterol, pulpo de oliva (octopus topped with rich olive sauce). \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

Empire Szechuan Gourmet of NY 3427 NE 163rd St., 305-949-3318

In the 1980s, Empire became the Chinese chain that swallowed Manhattan — and transformed public perceptions of Chinese food in the NY metropolitan area. Before: bland faux-Cantonese dishes. After: lighter, more fiery fare from Szechuan and other provinces. This Miami outpost does serve chop suey and other Americanized items, but don't worry. Stick with Szechuan 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, escobar, surf clam, snow crab, and more. But there are also steam-tabled hot Japanese and Chinese dishes; an array of cold shellfish and salads with mix-and-match sauces; and desserts. Selections vary, but value-for-money is a given. \$\$ (PRB)

Hiro Japanese Restaurant 3007 NE 163rd St., 305-948-3687

One of Miami's first sushi restaurants, Hiro retains an amusing retro-glam feel, an extensive menu of both sushi and cooked Japanese food, and late hours that make it a perennially popular after-hours snack stop. The sushi menu has few surprises, but quality is reliable. Most exceptional are the nicely priced yakitori, skewers of succulently soy-glazed and grilled meat, fish, and vegetables; the unusually large variety available of the last makes this place a good choice for vegetarians. \$\$ (PRB)

Hiro's Sushi Express 17048 W. Dixie Hwy., 305-949-0776

Tiny, true, but there's more than just sushi at this mostly take-out spin-off of the pioneering Hiro. Makis are the mainstay (standard stuff like California rolls, more complex creations like multi-veg 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 vegan to settle on steakhouse salads of ill repute and other questionable dishes. Today, after years of compromise, we have another vegan restaurant in town: Holi Vegan Kitchen, a fast-casual oasis of plant-based treats intended to satisfy the minds, bodies, and souls of earth's most conscious foodies. Expect vegan and

gluten-free options for breakfast, lunch, and early dinner, as well as a selection of wine, beer, cold-pressed juices, and delectable plant-based desserts. \$\$\$ (AM)

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)

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 pancakes. Regardless of what you order, a Jelly Coffee is warranted — the mix of espresso, milk, and Nutella is addicting. \$ (MFP)



King Palace 330 NE 167th St., 305-949-2339

Specialties here are authentic Chinatown-style BBQ (whole ducks, roast pork strips, etc., displayed in a glass case by the door), and fresh seafood dishes, the best made with the live fish swimming in two tanks by the dining room entrance. There's also a better than average selection of seasonal Chinese veggies, like delicate sautéed pea shoots. The menu is extensive, but the best ordering strategy, since the place is usually packed with Asians, is to see what looks good on nearby tables, and point. Servers will also steer you to the good stuff, once you convince them you're not a chop suey kinda person. \$\$ (PRB)

Laurenzo's Market Café 16385 W. Dixie Hwy., 305-945-6381

It's just a small area between the wines and the fridge counters — no potted palms, and next-to-no service in this cafeteria-style space. But when negotiating this international gourmet market's packed shelves and crowds has depleted your energies, it's a handy place to refuel with eggplant parmesan and similar Italian-American classics, housemade from old family recipes. Just a few spoonfuls of Wednesday's hearty pasta fagirole, one of the daily soup specials, could keep a person shopping for hours. And now that pizza master Carlo is manning the wood-fired oven, you can sample the thinnest, crispiest pies outside Napoli. \$\$\$ (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 satisfying Asian take on a classic mojito, made with sake instead of traditional rum. Lettuce & Tomato deserves credit for crafting an unpretentious menu that doesn't skimp on quality or inventiveness. A most welcome surprise. \$\$ (AM)

Little Saigon 16752 N. Miami Ave., 305-653-3377

This is Miami's oldest traditional Vietnamese restaurant, but it's still packed most weekend nights. So even the place's biggest negative — its hole-in-the-wall atmosphere, not encouraging of lingering visitors — 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 must-try. But if you're looking for something a little more traditional, the piled-high causas and Ceviche Clasico are mainstays. \$\$\$ (MB)

Moon Thai Intracoastal Mall 3455 NE 163rd St., 305-974-5129

The original Moon Thai opened in Coral Gables in 2000, and the restaurant has since expanded with Kendall, Coral Springs, and Weston locations (to name a few). One of its newest outposts is in North Miami Beach, where guests can dig into a variety of Thai and Japanese specialties. Whether you choose the organic Japanese menu or the organic Thai menu, there's no shortage of options for any palate. If you're only a little bit hungry, then the à la carte seafood selections are the way to go. Otherwise, the noodles and curries are your best bets. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (MFP)

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 in Aventura 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 bundtlet 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 veal massaman curry, Chilean sea bass curry, and sizzling filet mignon with basil sauce. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

Panya Thai 520 NE 167th St., 305-945-8566

Unlike authentic Chinese cuisine, there's no shortage of genuine Thai food in and around Miami. But Panya's chef/owner, a Bangkok native, offers numerous regional and/or rare dishes not found elsewhere. Plus he doesn't automatically curtail the heat or sweetness levels to please Americans. Among the most intriguing: moo khem phad wan (chewy deep-fried seasoned pork strips with fiery tamarind dip, accompanied by crisp green papaya salad); broad rice noodles stir-fried with eye-opening chili/garlic sauce and fresh Thai basil; and chili-topped Diamond Duck in tangy tamarind sauce. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

Paquito's 16265 Biscayne Blvd., 305-947-5027

From the outside, this strip-mall Mexican eatery couldn't be easier to overlook. Inside, however, its festivity is impossible to resist. Every inch of wall space seems to be covered with South of the Border knickknacks. And if the kitschy décor alone doesn't cheer you, the quickly arriving basket of fresh (not packaged) taco chips, or the mariachi band, or the knockout margaritas will. Food ranges from Tex-Mex burritos and a party-size fajita platter to authentic Mexican moles and harder-to-find traditional preparations like albóndigas — spicy, ultra-savory meatballs. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

PhoMi2Go 17010 W. Dixie Hwy., 786-916-2790

Run — don't walk — to this hidden North Miami Beach gem that boasts a bevy of Vietnamese staples like pho and bahn mis. 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)

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 nuta — mixed with scallions and dressed with habit-forming honey-miso mustard sauce. Other favorites include goma ae (wilted spinach, chilled and dressed in sesame sauce), garlic stem and beef (mild young shoots flash-fried with tender steak bits), or perhaps just-caught grouper with hot/sweet/tangy chili sauce. Open till around 3:00 a.m. \$\$ (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 tiramisu, 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, cherry-picked and mixed to surprising effect. Chayhana Oasis, a bold mid-size restaurant that manages to look opulent without seeming gaudy, showcases Uzbekistan's diverse cultural heritage in its food, which has a comforting, understated simplicity to it. Vegetarians might have trouble navigating the menu, which skews heavily in favor of carnivorous appetites. If you're game for a meaty dish, try the deliciously authentic pilaf, the Eastern salad made with cucumbers and fried beef, the lamb filled 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 raviolis in truffle cream sauce are irresistible, and perfectly tenderized veal parmigiano, the size of a large pizza, makes a great take-out dinner...for the next week. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ (PRB)

Dining Guide: RESTAURANTS

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 shakshuka (nicknamed "eggs in purgatory"; the spicy eggplant version will explain all). \$\$\$ (PRB)

Saffron Indian Cuisine 18090 Collins Ave. #T-22, 786-899-5554

Saffron Indian Cuisine makes us happy. Miami is lacking in Indian food, 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 well have been served in Sunny Isles before this longtime neighborhood favorite opened, but Sumo was the neighborhood's first sushi bar to double as a popular lounge/hangout as well as restaurant. Ladies' nights are legend. While Thai and Chinese dishes are available, as well as purist nigiri, few can resist the truly sumo-wrestler-size maki rolls, the more over-the-top, the better. Our bet for biggest crowd pleaser: the spicy Pink Lady (shrimp tempura, avocado, masago, cilantro, and spicy Juneo, topped with rich scallop-studded "dynamite" sauce). \$\$\$ (PRB)

Sushi Zen & Izakaya 18090 Collins Ave. 305-466-4663

In an area with no lack of Chinese, Japanese, and Thai cuisine, it's hard for yet another Asian restaurant to stand out. But Sushi Zen & Izakaya succeeds by offering variety — and lots of it. Name any traditional dish, and they probably have it here: ramen, fish balls, udon, pad thai, tuna poke ... the list goes on (and on). Don't miss their Japanese lunch specials. At \$12-\$14 for a sizable Bento Box, you'll leave with your stomach and wallet full. \$\$ (MFP)

Timo 17624 Collins Ave., 305-936-1008

Since opening in 2003, the inventive yet clean and unfussy Italian/Mediterranean-inspired seasonal food at this hot spot, created by chef/owner Tim Andriola (at the time best known for his stints at Chef Allen's and Mark's South Beach), has been garnering local and national raves. Don't bother reading them. Andriola's dishes speak for themselves: a salad of crisp oysters atop frisée, cannelloni bean, and pancetta; foie gras crostini with a subtle caramelized orange sauce; a blue crab raviolo with toasted pignolias and brown butter; or a wood-oven three-cheese "white" pizza. \$\$\$ (PRB)

AVENTURA / HALLANDALE

Amaize 19129 Biscayne Blvd., 786-279-2260

You come to Amaize for one thing only: an arepa. At this fast-casual establishment, the popular Venezuelan/Columbian 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)

Anthony's Coal Fired Pizza 17901 Biscayne Blvd., 305-830-2625

When people rave about New York pizzas' superiority, they don't just mean thin crusts. They mean the kind of airy, abundantly burn-bubbled, 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: flagels. And no, that's not a typo. Rather these crusty, flattened specimens (poppy seed or sesame seed) are the ultimate bagel/soft pretzel hybrid — and a specialty at this bustling Jewish bakery/deli, which, since 1988, opens at 6:30 a.m. — typically selling out of flagels in a couple of hours. Since you're up early anyway, sample elaborately garnished breakfast specials, including unusually flavorful homemade corned beef hash and eggs. For the rest of the day, multitudes of mavens devour every other delectable deli specialty known to humankind. \$\$ (PRB)

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Bourbon Steak 19999 W. Country Club Dr. (Turnberry Isle Miami), 786-279-0658

At Bourbon Steak, a venture in the exploding restaurant empire of chef Michael Mina, a multiple James Beard award winner, steakhouse fare is just where the fare starts. There are also Mina's ingenious signature dishes, like an elegant deconstructed lobster/baby vegetable pot pie, a raw bar, and enough delectable vegetable/seafood starters and sides for noncarnivores to assemble a happy meal. But don't neglect the steak — flavorful dry-aged Angus, 100-percent Wagyu American "Kobe," swoonworthy grade A5 Japanese Kobe, and butter-poached prime rib, all cooked to perfection. \$\$\$ (PRB)

Christine Lee's 653 900 Silks Run Rd. (Gulfstream Park), 954-457-6255

From the Golden Strand Hotel to a Sunny Isles strip mall and now the racetrack, this iconic restaurant has been revived by Christine Lee's daughter Mary. With floor-to-ceiling windows, intricate Dale Chihuly chandeliers, and comfy leather seating, the restaurant overlooks all the action. And while the menu offers Continental options and sushi, stick to the Chinese fare — house specialties are the spare ribs and dumplings. Wash it all down with their signature Lycheetini. \$\$\$ (MB)

Corsair 19999 W. Country Club Dr. (Turnberry Isle Resort) 786-279-6800

Celeb chef Scott Conant has moved on, but Corsair remains a lively place. Lately they've been promoting their Saturday and Sunday brunches, every week of the year, along with special events tied to holidays. But any day of the week, the restaurant's patio is the place to be, with its sweeping views of Turnberry Isle's lushly landscaped golf course. Full review coming soon. \$\$\$ (MFP)

CVI.CHE 105 19565 Biscayne Blvd., 786-516-2818

CVI.CHE 105 has made its way up north, opening a location inside Aventura Mall's latest expansion. This is the Peruvian brand's third restaurant, and it follows a tried-and-true formula: "Don't mess with a good thing." The ceviches, tiraditos, and other Peruvian fare that diners have fallen in love with are available here, including the ever-popular lomo saltado. The one major difference: Diners up north no longer have to make the trek to Brickell or Miami Beach. \$\$ (MFP)

Dr. Smood 19501 Biscayne Blvd., 786-334-4420

It's no secret that dining out adds up — both in terms of calories and costs. Dr. Smood is focused on controlling the former by providing customers with "Smart Food for a Good Mood." That healthy motto has gotten the company far. This beautiful Aventura branch follows successful openings in Wynwood and South Miami. While Dr. Smood is mostly known for its juices and detox programs, this branch at Aventura Mall also provides visitors with grab-and-go grub befitting its setting. The free wireless internet here is the icing on the cake. \$\$\$ (MFP)

Etzel Itzik 18757 W. Dixie Hwy., 305-937-1546

Though this homey kosher oldtimer, self-described as a deli but really more of an Israeli/Mediterranean restaurant (think kebab on pita, not pastrami on rye), opened in 1997, it's still something of a locals' secret due to its location in a nondescript strip mall. But it's worth seeking out even by diners not restricted by religious laws; food is both highly flavorful and hugely fun — starting with the array of free veg appetizers that appear before you even order: herbed chickpeas, pickled salads, more. Especially recommended: shakshuka (eggs poached

Mo's Bagels & Deli 2780 NE 187th St., 305-936-8555

While the term "old school" is used a lot to describe this spacious (160-seat) establishment, it actually opened in 1995. It just so evokes the classic NY delis we left behind that it seems to have been here forever. Example: Lox and nova aren't pallid, prepackaged fish, but custom-sliced from whole slabs. And bagels are hand-rolled, chewy champions, not those machine-made puffy poseurs. As complimentary pastry bites suggest, and the massive size of the succulent, sufficiently fatty pastrami sandwiches confirm, generous Jewish Mo(m) spirit shines here. \$\$ (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 glopplily sauced, Americanized-Cantones chop sueys here. Cooking is properly light-handed, and seafood specialties shine (try the spicy/crispy salt and pepper shrimp). For adventurers, there's a cold jellyfish starter. Even timid taste buds can't resist tender fried shrimp balls described this way: "With crispy adorable fringy outfit." \$\$\$ (PRB)

Poke + Go 2451 NE 186th St., 305-705-3784

It seemed like only yesterday that South Florida suffered from a lack of decent poke restaurants. In just one year, though, the diced raw-fish specialty has popped up everywhere — including here. Poke + Go's fast-casual vibe is perfect for scarfing down the flavorful Hawaiian seafood bowl, which can feed at least two people here. Mix and match to your tastes or opt for a combo like the Slammin' Salmon, which features the namesake fish and adds Asian slaw and white garlic sauce for good measure. Either way, you'll leave full. \$\$\$ (MFP)

Pubbelly Sushi Market Aventura Mall 19501 Biscayne Blvd. #069, 786-522-7889

The Pubbelly empire is trying its hand at a more casual concept: Pubbelly Sushi Market. This new Aventura Mall tenant takes the restaurant group's popular sushi gastropub and scales it down into a "grab-and-go" eatery. Menu staples like the butter krab roll and tuna pizza make an appearance, but there are also poke bowls and other light fare better suited for a lunch crowd. Prefer to dine in? Seating is limited, so an off-hour visit boosts your chances of finding a spot. You can also have your meal delivered. \$\$\$ (MFP)

ROK:BRGR 800 Silks Run Rd. (Village at Gulfstream Park), 954-367-3970

Though northern Miami-Dade County has become something of a "better burger" capital, this third location of Rok:Brgr "burger gastropub" chain, just north of the Broward County border, offers attractive upgrades, including nightclub/bar ambiance instead of a fast-casual feel, and food with more dramatic devotion to artisan and/or local ingredients (deviled local eggs; sourced Duroc pork belly) as well as cheffy taste trends: candied bacon, a bacon jam-topped burger, chicken 'n' waffles with bacon/bourbon syrup). More than 40 craft beers, too. \$\$\$ (PRB)

Serafina 19565 Biscayne Blvd., #1944, 786-920-0989

New York's Serafina is now open at Aventura Mall, and this location is a pizza lover's dream. Pies are a big part of the menu, which also includes a bevy of Italian classics and more creative fare. Skip the basic margherita and get the tartufo nero with black truffles — your sense of adventure will pay off with this pizza that's the very definition of richness. Also, save room for the panna cotta, whose simple description hides some mind-blowing flavor. \$\$\$ (MFP)

Sr. Ceviche 2576 NE Miami Gardens Dr., 786-440-7851

While northern Miami-Dade County has other Peruvian places, none serve award-winning ceviches like those of chef/co-owner Alonso Jordan, who took top honors at the first International Day of Ceviche festival. Varieties range from traditionally based (albeit with distinctive personal tweaks) flash-marinated raw fish preparations to contemporary creations like Lima-style fried ceviche, crisp-coated like jalea but sauced/garnished in ceviche's more complex style; sampler platters feature several choices, and serve a small army. Also a standout on the full Peruvian menu: pescado a lo macho, precision-fried whole fish showered in an unusually luxurious assortment of seafood. \$\$\$ (PRB)

Sushi Siam 19575 Biscayne Blvd., 305-932-8955 (See Miami / Upper Eastside listing)

Whole Foods Market 21105 Biscayne Blvd., 305-682-4400 (See Brickell / Downtown listing.)



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