

CORAL GABLES

THE MAGAZINE



From Small Print to
BIG SCREEN

MITCH KAPLAN GOES HOLLYWOOD

REAL ESTATE: CORAL GABLES RISING
THE GREAT SIDEWALK EXPERIMENT



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We should be the country of inclusion, not exclusion...

IMPAC Fund founder Mike Fernandez, Chairman, MBF Healthcare Partners

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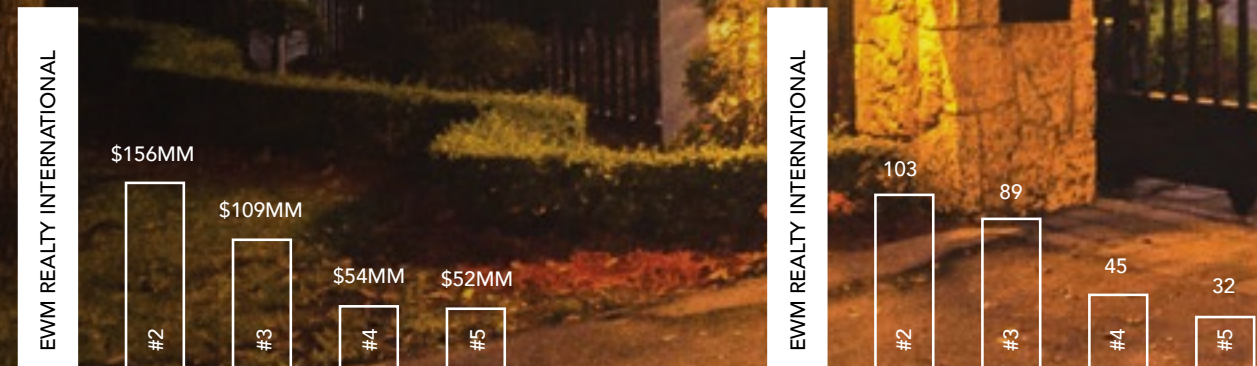
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TOTAL SALES BY DOLLAR VOLUME PAST 12 MONTHS SINGLE-FAMILY HOMES & CONDOS IN ALL PRICE RANGES

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Coral Gables Rising

With more than \$1.5 billion in new mid-rise development, Coral Gables is making its core more dense. But it's doing so in a controlled fashion envisioned by city fathers, creating more of a live-work-play city.



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The Great Sidewalk Experiment

Three years after the city decided to move forward, and 18 months after construction began, the Street-Scape project to transform Giralda Avenue and Miracle Mile is finally complete. Now to see if it



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Kaplan Goes to Hollywood

Mitch Kaplan, the Gables entrepreneur who turned Books & Books into a community institution and the Miami Book Fair into a national event, has gone from the small print to the big screen.



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In the old days, the Mile was dead after hours. People are coming back now...

Peter Iglesias, Coral Gables Assistant City Manager

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Editor's Letter



On the cover: Mitch Kaplan, founder of Books & Books and the Miami Book Fair. Photograph by Jon Braeley

Welcome to the premiere issue of Coral Gables Magazine, the magazine of and for the citizens of an extraordinary community.

If you work, live or just play here, you already know what an amazing city Coral Gables is – a world unto itself, rich in culture, commerce and physical beauty. It's also a city busy reinventing itself.

Our job, as your monthly periodical, is to keep you better informed about how to use and enjoy your city, and to shine a light on citizens who are doing useful and interesting things. We'll be looking at everything from where to hear the best music, to what you should be doing with your home and garden. We'll cover business, politics, real estate and public safety, and we'll report on restaurants, shops, theaters, galleries, bars, cultural events – and places that are off the beaten-path.

In this inaugural issue we look at the latest burst of urban development, which will bring new density to the walkable cores of the Gables without impacting its verdant single-family neighborhoods. We also look at the city's transformation of Giralda and Miracle Mile – how, after a long arduous process, downtown now has walkable boulevards. Our other feature story is the tale of home-grown

literary entrepreneur Mitch Kaplan, creator of Books & Books and the Miami Book Fair, whose new venture takes him from paper to celluloid.

The remainder of the magazine is filled with what we'll bring you every month, intelligence on what's new and interesting in the City Beautiful.

And please remember, this is your magazine. We are here because Coral Gables needs – and deserves – its own magazine, which we'll do our best to deliver. But we'll need input from you, the eyes and ears of the city. So please email your feedback and suggestions about the magazine to editor@thecoralgablesmagazine.com, and please send your letters for publication to letters@thecoralgablesmagazine.com.

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THE CITY OF CORAL GABLES



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

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Dear readers,

On behalf of the City of Coral Gables, I'd like to congratulate Coral Gables Magazine on their premiere issue and welcome them to the City Beautiful!

We are thrilled to have a high quality publication such as this focusing on our beloved city. In this issue, you'll find timely stories that are shaping our future. From finalizing our highly anticipated Miracle Mile and Giralda Plaza streetscape project to creating more green spaces in our neighborhoods, there are many topics that are important to all of us.

This magazine is a delightful addition to our City Beautiful, and we're sure it will continue to highlight all of the wonderful things that our City has to offer. I hope you enjoy this issue, we can't wait to see what Coral Gables Magazine has in store for next month.

Warmest regards,

Raúl Valdés-Fauli
Mayor, City of Coral Gables

Streetwise

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"We put cameras there and the break-ins stopped"

Frank Fernandez, the assistant city manager in charge of public safety

Gables Guns

Free Ride

Power Suit

The Big Sit



Guns in the Gables



Mayor Valdés-Fauli

It was always a symbolic act. At the end of February, the Coral Gables city commission voted to ban the sale of assault rifles anywhere in the city. This was a big deal because Florida law bans any municipality from enacting gun laws. If they do, the governor can fine and fire that city's mayor and its commissioners. "What we did was illegal, but we wanted to send a message," says Mayor Raúl Valdés-Fauli. That message may have been symbolic – there are no gun stores in the Gables – but it was one more pressure point on state legislators. Nine days later the governor signed the state's strongest gun law in decades.

Having said that, at the end of March the city com-

mission voted 3 to 2 to back down. Those who dissented – commissioners Vince Lago, Michael Mena and Frank Quesada – said it wasn't worth exposing the city to millions of dollars in legal fees to fight the anticipated lawsuits. Reminding them of that was former banker Raul Mas Canosa, who said he wanted to open a firearm dealership in the Gables and would sue the city.

Undeterred, Valdés-Fauli voted in favor of the law, along with Commissioner Patricia Keon. He called the Tallahassee lawmakers who passed the 2011 ban on city ordinances against guns "prostitutes" of the NRA. The city will now join other Florida municipalities in an effort to overturn that law.



Free Ride

THE CITY'S DOWNTOWN FINAL TRANSPORT LINK IS JUST AN APP AWAY



Co-founders Speigel and Kimball

Who says there is no such thing as a free ride? Since last July, the denizens of downtown Coral Gables have had the option of taking the Freebee, a six-seat electric car that is gratis to anyone who downloads the app and requests a ride. If you stay within a 1.5 square mile area in the downtown, a Freebee will arrive (average waiting time:

less than 8 minutes) and take you where you want to go.

The Freebee is the brainchild of UM graduates Jason Speigel and Kris Kimball, who co-founded the company in 2012. Their idea: To offer free rides paid for by advertisers who market their brand via the vehicles. Speigel and Kimball started that year with Miami Beach, then went to Brickell,

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Streetwise

Downtown Miami, Wynwood, Key Biscayne, and finally Coral Gables.

In the City Beautiful, Freebee now operates 3 vehicles; as of February, some 35,000 riders had used the service.

“The goal is 65,000 passengers for the first year,” says Kevin Kinney, the city’s parking director, who advocated for Freebee to reduce the number of cars downtown. “People generally love it. The comment I typically get is how come it doesn’t come to my neighborhood.”

Whether the Freebee footprint expands will be determined at the end of year one, this June. Partly it may be a matter of cost. The city paid Freebee \$175,000 for year one, with the proviso that any advertising revenue exceeding \$50,000 for the year goes back to the city. Speigel says he hopes to reduce the city’s cost

by \$65,000 or more.

Part of that advertising appears on the cars themselves; another big part appears on the app, in the form of offers by local businesses to lure new customers – 20 percent off at Miller’s Ale House, for example, or 20 percent off at Swine restaurant. About 30 businesses advertise, says Speigel.

“We look at Freebee as a true form of ‘first and last’ mass transit,” says Speigel. “The goal is to help people live and work in the downtown area without the need of a personal vehicle, or to be able to leave their vehicle in a garage. It’s now part of the public transportation system of the city.”

It’s also part of the city’s branding, with drivers trained to answer questions from riders. “They are up to date on the city messaging, so they become city ambassadors for Coral Gables,” says Speigel.

Coral Gables by Numbers

Source: City of Coral Gables

Number of trees knocked down by Hurricane Irma

1,600

1,000

Number of trees put back by city work crews

Estimated number of cars that don’t park daily in the Downtown thanks to the Coral Gables Trolley

750

11

Number of city employees who’ve taken paternity leave since Coral Gables passed its 2017 ordinance allowing dads to take time off

The Big Sit



They are calling it the largest couch in the world. Whether or not it makes the record books, it will appear by year’s end in Balboa Plaza at the intersection of De Soto, Anderson and Biltmore Way: A giant, oversized stone sofa, the city’s latest foray into public art. “We wanted to do a project that brings a piece of the home into the public

realm,” says artist Roberto Behar. “It also has a kind of fantastic dimension. It’s the land of the colossal.” Behar and R&R Studios partner Rosario Marquardt were commissioned by MG Development to enhance the outdoor space near their latest project. “It will become a point of reference in the city,” says Behar. “We can say, ‘Let’s meet at the grand bench.’”

Power Suit

CITY FILES LAWSUIT TO UPGRADE A FAILING INFRASTRUCTURE

When Hurricane Irma hit South Florida, thousands of Gables residents lost power. A week later, hundreds of homes were still without power. So, in October, the city voted to sue FPL for failing to maintain and upgrade its gear, especially since FPL customers paid surcharges on their bills for just that.

The lawsuit has since been carried forward by new City Attorney Miriam Ramos, appointed in November. FPL dismissed the lawsuit as an act of self-entitlement by a spoiled,

affluent city. A judge will now have to see if it should be dismissed in a court of law, with a hearing this month. If not, it goes forward. The aim of the suit is “to make them do what they are supposed to do,” says Ramos.

The city wants the court to order FPL to keep vegetation trimmed and upgrade their equipment to a higher standard. “Our infrastructure is 60 years old,” says Mayor Raúl Valdés-Fauli. “Remember rotary phones? Our infrastructure is like that.”



Pictured from left to right: PATTI CECCHERINI, CARLA OLIVARES, BLAIR SONVILLE, LILIANA QUINTERO-SIDERIS, BEATRIZ CARDONA, LANI KAHN DRODY, JOHANNA ROLDAN, LAUREN BILLINGSLEA DOWLEN, JJ SNOW HANSEN, CARRIE FOOTE, SUZANNE SANTOS

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Streetwise

But Will J-Lo Be There?

This month you may notice scores of toned and muscular millennials wandering around the intersection of Giralda and Salzedo.

That's because baseball great Alex Rodriguez is opening a massive 11,000-square-foot TruFusion gym there, in the heart of historic downtown, offering 240 different work-out classes a week.

Does this mean he and girlfriend Jennifer Lopez will become citizens of the City Beautiful?

Kudos, Sort Of

Congratulations to Coral Gables, which made it to the 2018 Top 100 Best Places to Live [in the USA] by Livability.com, a research site that ranks cities according to such criterion as housing and amenities. More than 2,100 cities with populations between 20,000 and 350,000 were evaluated, so it's nice to be on the list. And it's no surprise that we're No. 68, behind such celebrated places as Cambridge, Mass., Berkeley, CA., or Charleston, SC.

But to be ranked beneath No. 45 Boca Raton? Can there be any more boring place? At least we rank in the Top 10 Cities for Book Lovers.

Global Gables



Can it be 20 years since WorldCity began tracking international business in Greater Miami? Answer: yes. Founder and CEO Ken Roberts has been reporting on global companies for two decades,

with his annual "Who's Here" database of 1,400 multinationals in Greater Miami.

And how many of those are in the Gables? Most of the heavy hitters, says Roberts. Go to worldcityweb.com to check the list and their event series.



Eye See You

An ounce of prevention, they say, is worth a pound of cure. That is one of the motivations for the city's array of some 45 cameras aimed at ferreting out crime – or better yet, deterring it.

"When I got here a little over two and a half years ago, the city was concerned about high levels of car break-ins and robberies," says Frank Fernandez, the assistant city manager in charge of public safety. "The city manager asked me to put together a comprehensive crime prevention plan." High on the wish list was a technology upgrade, including a web of cameras to detect criminal activity.

At a cost of about \$1.5 million, the city installed 15 LPRs (license plate readers) to track cars that entered the city, and another 30 CCTs (closed-circuit TV cameras) to keep watch on high-crime areas.

The LPRs have created what Fernandez calls a "geo fence" around the city, "so that theoretically we know what is coming in and what is coming out." While especially good at flagging stolen cars, since installation the LPRs have led to a couple of high-profile busts. One was in February, when they caught the plate of a

homicide suspect who had fled New England. He was 'tagged' on U.S. 1 heading south, where county cops – alerted by the Gables – apprehended him.

More pervasive have been the city's 30 CCT cameras, dubbed the "Eye in the Sky." These are placed in high crime areas, or areas where public safety needs to be enhanced.

In terms of public safety, the CCTs can film a public area and, with analytic software at the city's IT center, search for variables – like blue jackets, or tall men with blond hair. They can also go back in time and scan for objects, or look for something in the present, like a backpack left in a public square.

On the prevention front, the results have been dramatic. On U.S. 1, the parking lots behind Denny's and the Shake Shack were plagued with high levels of auto break-ins.

"We put cameras there and the break-ins stopped," says Fernandez. "They provided deterrence, so much so that we've had almost no crime on U.S. 1 in about a year." And the cherry on top? With the new technology, "There's no downtime, no complaints, no overtime, they are always reliable and on the job 24/7," says Fernandez.

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Jae's Jewelers' best-selling designer lines are John Hardy, Montblanc, Roberto Coin, Rebecca, & Alor. The store is also the only authorized dealer in South Florida for Masriera, Mattioli, & Roberto Demeglio.



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Shop

EURO SHOW

p20

EUROPEAN BRANDS MAKE IT TO SOUTH FLORIDA

An Uplifting Fit

LINGERIE SHOP SHAPES LIVES

EURO INFUSED FASHION AT THE CORNER OF LEJEUNE AND MIRACLE MILE



Co-founder Beatriz Carrillo

EURO SHOW

NOT ALL EUROPEAN BRANDS MAKE IT TO SOUTH FLORIDA. UNLESS YOU GO TO POOL LABSHOW

By Kimberly Rodriguez



POOL LabShow
376 Miracle Mile
Coral Gables, FL 33134
786-773-3333



On the corner of LeJeune and Miracle Mile is a euro-infused fashion realm called POOL LabShow, a luxury multi-brand fashion concept store. POOL's mission: showcase a curated selection of innovative and exclusive European designer brands and contemporary labels. It is a breath of fresh air on Miracle Mile, and promises not to disappoint the most discerning of shoppers.

Spanish Co-founder Beatriz Carrillo opened POOL in the spring of 2016 at the intersection opposite the City Hall of Coral Gables. When asked why Coral Gables, she says "Upon moving here from Madrid I was unable to find the brands I loved from back home." Carrillo had worked in luxury brand marketing in Madrid for more than 20 years, so when she landed in the Gables she was surprised at the

Pool LabShow represents the European flair that I would describe with one line: 'Elegance is refusal'...

void of cool European labels. She decided right then to bring that fashion sensibility and innovation to her new home. As for the name, "POOL" means togetherness, while LabShow encompasses the idea of displaying new, edgy designers all collaborating under one roof. "Pool LabShow represents the European flair that I would describe with one line: 'Elegance is refusal,'" says Carrillo. "POOL LabShow

is dedicated to a woman who knows her style and is loyal to it. A woman who is looking for quality, and unique and timeless pieces." Carrillo carries European designer brands that cannot be found anywhere else in South Florida, including those from Cortana, Jorge Vazquez, Mes Demoiselles, and Giada Forte to name a few. The pieces can be whimsical, fancy, casual, chic, and all

are stylish with a quality driven approach to fashion that is distinctly Euro. This spring and summer, her customers will find that the collections flutter from fantasy to classic. "Individuality is expressed through a myriad of trends that are ready and waiting to be worn," she says. POOL LabShow will next expand to Palm Beach, says Carrillo, with a new store at the Royal Poinciana Plaza.

With double the buying power, more European elegance will be heading to South Florida, to reach even more women who are looking for European elegance and a sophisticated approach to dressing. But Palm Beach will be following the lead of Coral Gables. Kimberly Rodriguez is a Personal Stylist and Shopper whose clients include many Coral Gables residents.

AN UPLIFTING FIT

Sometimes the smallest, most intimate shops offer the greatest support: How a local lingerie shop shapes lives

By Julienne Gage

It's wedding and prom season again – time to shop not just for the right gown but the right undergarments. The trend in plunging necklines and backless dresses can make the latter seem especially challenging, and there's only so much that retail chains can do to accommodate. But Coral Gables shoppers are in luck, thanks to the city's old-school lingerie boutique, the Gables Corset Shoppe.

From Chantelle to Pramadonna, its licensed fitters carry world-renowned lingerie collections in every shape and size, and they offer free fittings, special orders, and major alterations – usually included in the cost of the garments. That's right, they can cut plunge lines into a Double D bra, sew two garments into one, pad your buns, and bring contour to chests that have undergone operations both elective and lifesaving.

Coral Gables businessman Peter Gonzalez bought the store – then known as Silvia's Corset Corner – in 2013. Owners Jennifer and John Cosamano retired, but co-owner and master shape-fitter Silvia Valdiva, for whom the shop had been named, stayed on.

Gonzalez, a hair stylist who

owned the next-door business Actua the Salon, decided to invest after helping his mother recover from a mastectomy. "Not every woman is the same shape," he says, adding that his fitters have licenses for a reason.

As for Silvia, after 33 years working as a local lingerie fitter, she knows body shapes better than any Coral Gables tailor. Her first job at age 17 (her family had emigrated from Nicaragua a few years earlier) was fitting lingerie for the legendary Corset Corner on Miracle Mile, which closed in 2005. That's when she started running Silvia's Corset Corner.

"A lot of my customers I've known for so many years that they first come in with a cup of coffee and sit down. Sometimes they're here for an hour or two hours just talking," she says. That familiarity makes it easier to accommodate the life stages of their bodies – the triumphs as well as the traumas. In fact, it's often the fitter who must broach the subject: What medications are you on, have you changed your diet, what's been happening lately?

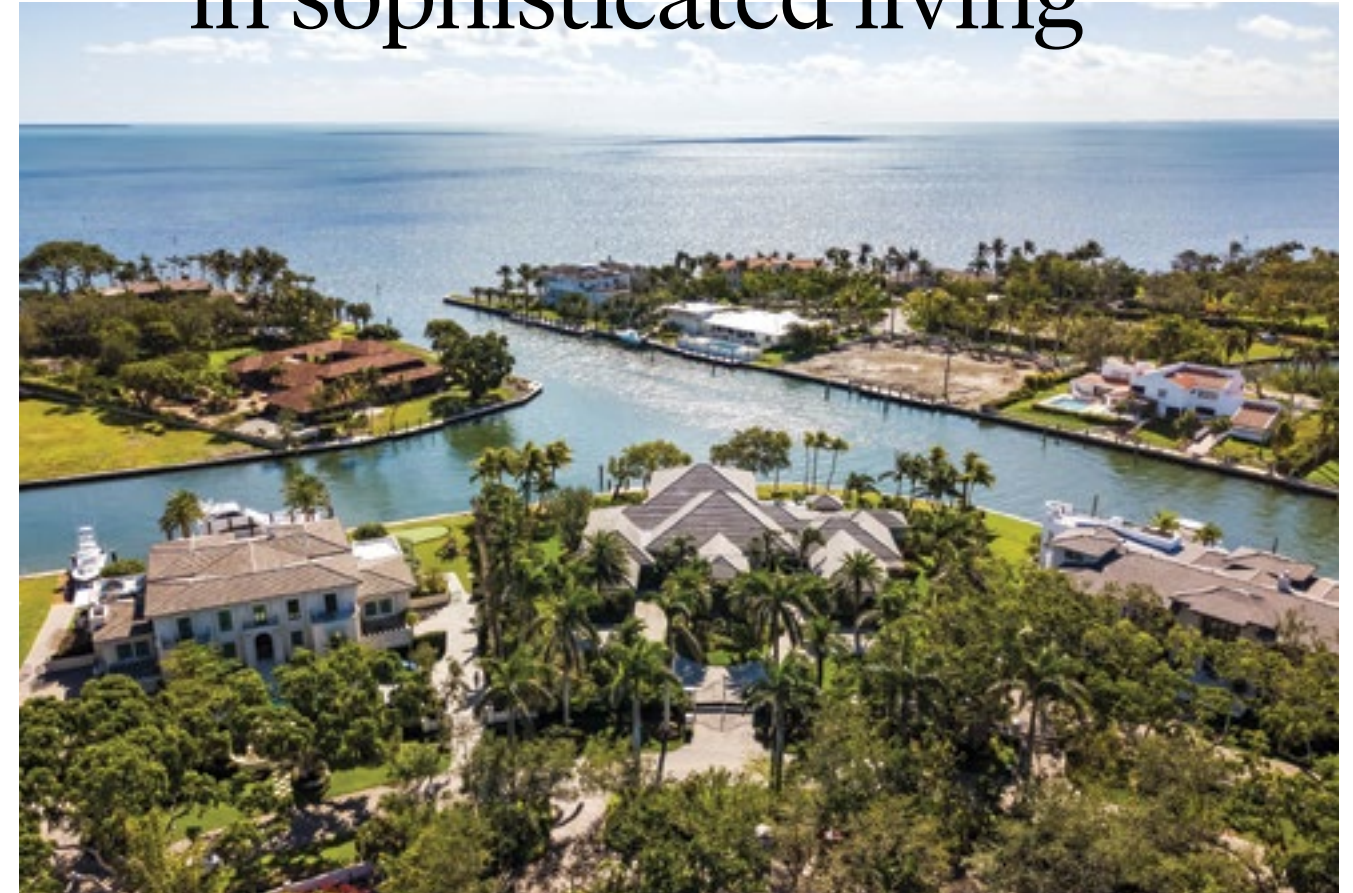
"They feel comfortable enough to say what they've gone through. It's a great feeling," says Silvia.



Silvia Valdiva, co-owner, has worked on Miracle Mile for 33 years as a lingerie fitter

“A lot of my customers I’ve known for so many years that they first come in with a cup of coffee and sit down...”

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Bites

Tea Time **p26**

AFTERNOON TEA ALL DAY

Mucha Bulla!

THE HOUR OF HAPPINESS

A Different Buffet

THE LONG LINES ARE WORTH IT

Made in Coral Gables

HERE COMES THE BEEF

A Latte with that Loan?

GOOD COFFEE AND FINANCIAL ADVICE

THERE ARE TEAS FOR EVERY MOOD AT SMALL TEA ON ARAGAON AVENUE





Tea Time

IT'S A COFFEE-DRIVEN CULTURE – EXCEPT WHERE THEY DRINK TEA ON ARAGON

by Julienne Gage

Between the natural-yet-modern décor and the Euro-styled customers – students decked out in H&M and men in suits sporting mod shoes with bright red soles – a visit to Small Tea on Aragon Avenue can quickly transport you from the South Florida tropics to some cool, cozy place in Scandinavia.

A read through Small Tea's online "treatise," which encourages consumers to break the "big coffee" business habit, suggests that's just the tone founder Daniel Charles Joseph Benoudiz was trying to set.

"We think coffee could really use a cup of tea right about now. And so could you. Along with an elegant, humble place to sit and simply enjoy said tea," it reads.

Benoudiz believes people are ready to sacrifice fast-paced coffee convenience for a calmer, more soothing light fare and beverage experience.

"I actually lived in Coral Gables for many years, so I knew the area, the people, what it needed," he says. "Better tea, better food, better service, better ambience – it pays off."

Indeed, Small Tea pours out its good vibes to a regularly full house. While the treatise also invites its customers to be "gloriously unproductive," something about the shop's beautiful form and functionality, as well as the invigorating taste of multilayered tea and a crisp-crust sandwich, makes you want to delve into deep thoughts with your business associates – or break out your

laptop to write them.

Benoudiz found himself doing lots of that as he traveled up the Eastern Seaboard and to the Pacific Northwest in search of tea makers, interior designers, and other ambience curators to help him create his aesthetic blend.

In addition to an installation of tea crates that helps soften the acoustics, Small Tea's walls are lined with about 80 copper tea canisters stamped with letters and numbers like C03 and A05. Small Tea's "Big Menu," translates these oblique codes, and with them, a tea for every mood – *Vanilla Meet Cinnamon*, *Blossom Buddy*, or *Apple Falls* anyone? Our choice in this cozy bistro: the blooms-of-amaranth-and-nasturtium-infused *Aha! Moment*.

“We think coffee could really use a cup of tea right about now. And so could you...”



Photography courtesy of Tea Time



Mucha Bulla!

THE HORA OF HAPPINESS

Coral Gables' Spanish gastro bar Bulla lives up to its noisy name – in the best way possible. The two-story restaurant has multiple rooms for dining, but its big daily draw is a lively happy hour, weekdays 5 to 7 pm. Last month, Bulla celebrated its five-year anniversary with a packed house.

Upstairs, local Cuban-American soul singer Sol Ruiz

belted Latin hits from the rooftop – literally. Bulla's Costa Rican chef, Diego Solano, concocted his Iberian cuisine with a New World twist, serving ham croquetas with fig jelly, codfish fritters with tartar, and a beet, almond, and goat cheese salad with kale. And to whisk away the after-work doldrums: generous glasses of the house red and white sangrias.

Line Up for Bisque

What does it take to create a line outside a Gables restaurant? Apparently a combination of all-you-can-eat and no-reservations. That's what has them clustering outside of POC at 2121 Ponce (just north of Alcazar). This is no ordinary endless buffet, however.

For \$23 on weeknights and \$26 on weekend nights (\$7 less for weekday and weekend lunch), you can gorge on a vast selection of sushi and 'American Fusion,' which means everything from Black Angus sliders and lobster bisque to Alaskan snow crab and Waldorf salad. Over 160 items served daily.

Photography (top) by Julienne Gage; sushi by Sushi Club

Sunday Drinks

If you want an elegant Sunday brunch, head to the Biltmore. If you want something subdued, there's the Yard House or Brasserie Central in the Shops of Merrick Park, or at Threefold Café or Graziano's on (or just off) the new Giralda pedestrian plaza.

But if you want a more rollicking late morning nosh, head to Tap 42 at the intersection of Salzedo and Giralda. On any given Sunday you'll be joined by 300 other folks, listening to amped up DJ music. The draw? "It's the \$20, bottomless mimosas," the hostess will tell you.



A Different Sushi

Think every sushi place is the same? Not so at the Sushi Club on Miracle Mile. Just 3 months old, the Club is starting to build a following with its fusion of Sushi and Peruvian flavors. Try the dumpling that mixes chorizo and Peruvian flavors. Or the red queen roll with seared tuna and

chipotle sauce. Here, ceviche meets scallops, jalapeño meets crab meat, canchachulpe corn meets nigiri.

The restaurant is designed a bit like a Las Vegas club, but if that's not your scene, the outdoor café seating is open and pleasant on the new Mile.

Made in Coral Gables

SOON TO SERVE AT A LOCATION NEAR YOU, THE PINCHO FACTORY'S COMBINATION OF SHISH KABOB AND GOURMET BURGERS HAS TAKEN SOUTH FLORIDA BY STORM – AND IS ABOUT TO GO NATIONAL

By J.P. Faber

It's not on the brightly lit restaurant-row stretch of Giralda, now a pedestrian plaza, but rather on the quieter part of the street close to busy Douglas Road. It doesn't seem like the optimal place to open a new burger joint, especially in a town where burger places have come and gone.

But for Otto Othman and his two cousins, Coral Gables was the touchstone for their new fast casual food concept, the Pincho Factory. Having nearly failed in their first location on Bird Road in Westchester, Othman and cousins Nedal and Nizar Ahmad decided to roll the dice and open a second location in Coral Gables.

"We actually almost closed in our second year, but I sort of talked my business part-

ners out of it," says Othman of the decision to move into the Gables. "Although not the best real estate, it was an upgrade for us and we kicked ass," he says, doing \$1 million in business the first year there. "After that I quit my marketing job and went into the business full time."

That was six years ago. Today, the Pincho Factory – headquartered in Coral Gables – has 10 locations in South Florida, with more on the drawing board. And they are looking to take the concept big.

"What Shake Shack is to New York and In-and-Out is to California, Pincho is going to be for Florida. We are getting ready now to expand nationally," says Othman.

In many ways, the Pincho Factory is perfectly Florida, and even more perfectly

South Florida, reflecting the area's unique blend of Latin American influences.

For those unfamiliar with the term, a Pincho (the Spanish word for "thorn" or "spike") is traditional bar food from northern Spain. It's like tapas, in the sense of a small bite consumed while drinking, but uses a skewer (usually a toothpick) to spear a few edibles together on a piece of bread. In South America, it is a common form of street food, and the way to serve a shish kabob.

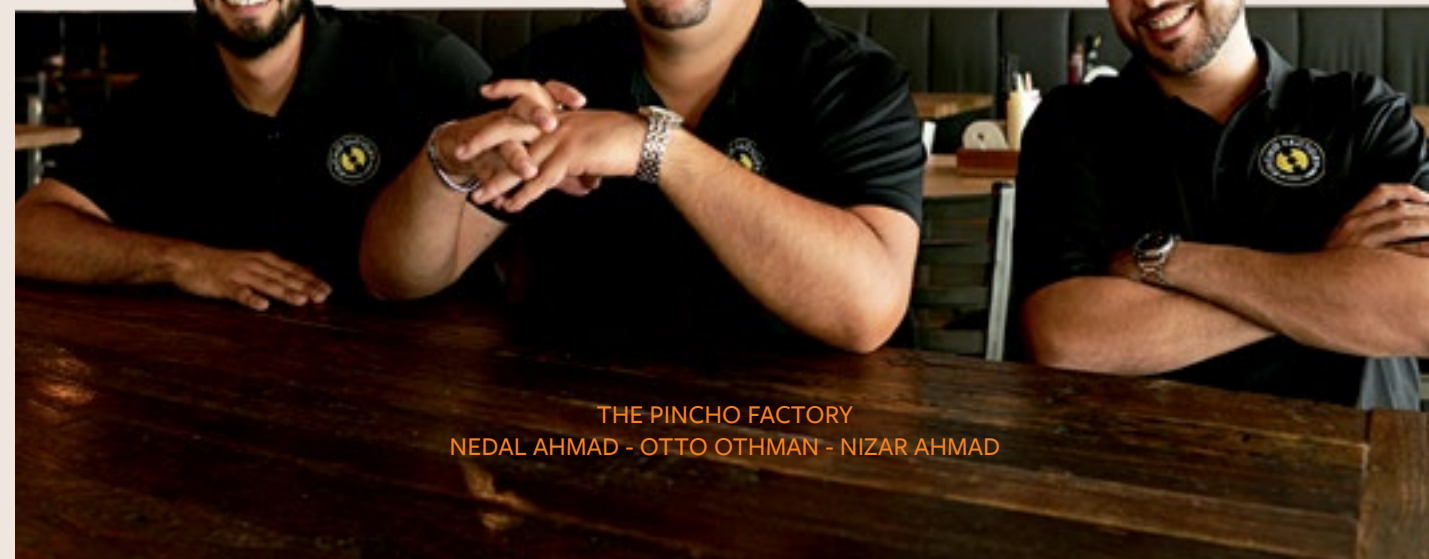
The inspiration for the Pincho Factory came eight years ago, during a 4th of July cookout at the home of Othman's cousin Nedal. Othman showed up with his mom's succulent Middle-Eastern kabobs, which she used to cook for him during his childhood in Brazil, while Nedal was firing up his

special hamburgers that family and friends raved about.

"I remember that barbecue, and how Nedal wasn't happy with his job," recalls Othman. "I said I wish I could eat these pinchos and burgers all the time. I looked at Nedal and said, 'Why don't we start a restaurant? I'll do the marketing and you do the cooking.'"

For months afterward, Othman, Nedal and Nedal's younger brother Nizar (talked into joining them because they needed more start-up money) worked on recipes. They decided that rather than offer an exhausting menu, they would focus on a few key offerings they could make great.

Those focal points are six versions of pinchos (Latin, California, Tex-Mex, etc.), served in a wrap, rice



THE PINCHO FACTORY
NEDAL AHMAD - OTTO OTHMAN - NIZAR AHMAD

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We decided to always be transparent with everything, so that what we eat here is what we would eat at home

bowl or atop a salad, and seven versions of Nedal's burgers (Fritanga, Bacon n Blue, Toston, etc.). The signature Pincho burger, topped with cheese, potato sticks and a secret pink sauce, has already won numerous awards and accolades, from Zagat to the Food Network to a People's Choice Award at the South Beach Wine & Food Festival. And as for the Pincho, with its cilantro, mango and lemon pepper sauces, "we still use my mom's recipe. There is nothing like it," says Othman.

Patrons apparently agree. "This is like Latin comfort food," said one patron at their Gables location. "I eat here all the time." Among the reasons for their popularity is the chain's obsession with

ingredients. Rather than spend on lavish interiors, theirs are Spartan – white tile walls, exposed duct-work ceilings, an open kitchen, and a wall-sized blackboard that reads "Never Settle" in large, scripted letters.

"In any restaurant, I really want to know what I'm eating. We decided to always be transparent with everything, so that what we eat here is what we would eat at home," says Othman, who got the idea for the name of the restaurant during a trip to India, when he saw a place called The Kebab Factory.

In addition to climbing aboard the fresh-ingredient movement, the Pincho Factory is also recognized by such food industry publications as QSR

to be a pioneer in what's called 'fast casual' food. Whereas fast food is low quality, low price, the fast-casual category is high quality, moderately priced, and in a better setting.

"Fast casual is the answer to the question, 'How do we democratize fine food?'" says Othman. "We consider ourselves fast-casual 2.0, because in addition to high quality and moderate price, we are in a cool setting, with cool music, super high-ingredients that are hormone free, and sustainable, like using real silver wear instead of disposables. We are getting closer and closer to casual food, so our competition is going to be Applebees and Chili's, not Chipotle." Shake Shack, eat your heart out.



A Latte with that Loan?

GOOD COFFEE AND FINANCIAL ADVICE

With the new Miracle Mile evolving quickly towards a Café Society identity, can it be any wonder that banks would follow suit? Banks? Now comes Capital One Café, a marriage between Peet's Coffee and Capital One Bank. Located at 50 Miracle Mile, the latest evolution in retail banking is part of a nationwide rollout in select cities.

The concept: Come on in, order a coffee, and lounge around on some comfy-looking couches while talking personal finance with a cool, Capital One banker. Yes, these days just about everybody

wants to bank digitally. But they also want the personal touch. "They want a human connection," says Mike Friedman, the Capital One Marketing Lead for Florida, Virginia, and Philadelphia, explaining that Capital One Cafes gives people – including gun-shy millennials – a more relaxed environment for just that.

"They are a place where people can recharge their bank accounts, devices and lives while learning new ways to manage their money, try out new digital and financial tools, or simply grab a great cup of coffee or local pastry," he says.

Living

April Calendar p36

WHAT'S ON DAY AND NIGHT

Homage to Wes Anderson

Birthday Bash for a Jazz Legend

Tropical Art

Designing History

Opera Salon

THE OPEN STAGE JAZZ SERIES PRESENTS
LEGENDARY TRUMPETER AND SAXOPHONIST IRA SULLIVAN

Homage to Wes Anderson

LOVABLE DOG STORY WITH A BITE



Fans of the quirky and highly original filmmaker Wes Anderson will be pleased that the Coral Gables Art Cinema is running his latest film “Isle of Dogs” for a week in April – following a quick jam session of five of the master’s flicks at the start of the month. For those lucky enough to find the time, the Cinema is showing “Moonrise Kingdom,” “The Grand Budapest Hotel,” and “Rushmore” on April Fool’s day (Sunday, April 1), followed by “Fantastic Mr. Fox” and “The Royal Tenenbaums” April 2-4.

Then comes “Isle of Dogs,” a stop-motion romp (think “Wallace and Gromit,” but with bigger production values) set in a future Japan, in which all dogs of Magasaki City are banned to a vast garbage dump

called Trash Island. Naturally a boy (12-year-old ward of corrupt Mayor Kobayashi) steals a plane to reach the island in search of his beloved bodyguard-dog. Pulling from the popular success of using the voice of George Clooney as fantastic Mr. Fox (and Meryl Streep for Mrs. Fox), Anderson has lined up a stunning array of Hollywood vocal chords, including those of Scarlett Johansson, Frances McDormand, Harvey Keitel, Edward Norton, Bill Murray, Jeff Goldblum and many more (even Yoko Ono). CNN calls it “a bit like ‘60s TV specials on psychedelics.”

*Isle of Dogs, April 6-12
Coral Gables Art Cinema
260 Aragon Ave.
www.gablescinema.com
786.472.2249*



Birthday Bash for a Jazz Legend

Now in its fifth year, the Open Stage Club in downtown CG continues its commitment to quality jazz with its Monday night Miami Jazz Coop series. Thanks to enlightened club owner Juan Della Torre, “we present world class jazz every single week,” says Rick Katz, the Coop’s executive director. “Sometimes I have to pinch myself because of some of the people we put on.”

Adding to the list of such jazz luminaries as Sammy Figueroa, Maria Rivas, Ed Calle, Joe Donato, and Dave Liebman, this month the Open Stage jazz series will

present legendary horn man Ira Sullivan, for a bash that will honor his 87th birthday. Chicago-born Sullivan, who has played with such jazz greats as Art Blakey and bop trumpeter Red Rodney, is a long-time fixture in the South Florida music scene, where he has worked with other notable locals Jaco Pastorius and Pat Metheny. Make a reservation to see the legend wail.

*April 30 (Mon.), 7 pm & 9 pm
Advance ticketing \$10 to \$25
Open Stage Club, 2325 Galiano St. 305.441.7902*

Tree Top Art

WITH THE GREATEST OF EASE

If the plants at Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden could talk, they’d tell you, life is a balancing act. The garden’s latest series of sculptures would say the same thing. Dangling high in the tree canopy with no safety nets below, nine heavy bronze statues of trapeze artists defy gravity as they rock and

spin in the breeze. The creations of Polish sculptor and painter Jerzy Kędziora, “The Art of Balance” is the latest in a series of art exhibits for Fairchild. Since 2005 the gardens have featured works by more than a dozen world-renowned artists, including Fernando Botero, Dale Chihuly, Roy Lichten-

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Living



stein, and even Yoko Ono.

For Kędziora, the sculptures represent his own experience of finding a delicate balance while coming of age in

Poland as it transitioned from Soviet rule. The Art of Balance runs through April 30th, and is included in the garden's general admission fees.

Designing History

DEERING ESTATE TRANSFORMED FOR CHARITY



The Junior League of Miami, based here in Coral Gables, is giving the historic Deering Estate a makeover to increase awareness and raise money for the 91-year-old non-profit to continue its work helping at-risk families.

The League, working with the Deering Estate Foundation, has invited dozens of interior designers to temporarily decorate the rooms of the former home of industrial magnate Charles Deering. Working within historic preservation standards, "This will be a turning point for us as we reach new audiences and

activate spaces in the historic homes," say Jennifer Tisthammer, director of the estate. The Junior League's last showhouse event, held at the Kampong in 2016, raised \$350,000. The 1,000-woman volunteer organization was founded in 1926, 4 years after Deering began living at the estate, and one year before his death.

April 14 to 29 (Tues.-Sun., 11 am-5 pm)
Tickets: General Admission \$40 (\$250 Gala Night 4.14)
The Deering Estate, 16701 SW 72nd Ave. Palmetto Bay
miamishowhouse.org

Opera Salon

CULTURE KLATCHES FOR THE GABLES ERUDITE



This month the Florida Grand Opera is holding a series of lectures in Coral Gables that use the company's mainstage production of Daniel Catán's "Florencia en el Amazonas" as the platform for discussions. At each of the three, free lectures, music will enliven the conversation, all set against the magical realism of the first Spanish-language opera commissioned by a major U.S. opera company (Houston Grand Opera, 1996).

Metamorphosis: Journey of the Human Spirit

An exploration of the timeless themes of love, loss and self-discovery, featuring voices from the Florida Grand Opera Studio and spoken words from scholars at the FIU Green School.
April 7 (Sat.), 6pm
Coral Gables Congregational Church, 3010 De Soto Blvd.
305.448.7421

Spoken and Sung: A Collaboration with Gables Stage

Inspired by the magical realism of "Love in the Time of Cholera," this conversation pairs "Am-

azonas" excerpts sung by Florida Grand Opera Studio artists with performances by actors.
April 11 (Wed.), 7:30pm
Gables Stage at the Biltmore
1200 Anastasia Ave.
305.445.1119

Ecology of the Rainforest

This collaboration brings experts from Fairchild to discuss preserving the world's largest, most diverse rainforest, followed by "Amazonas" highlights sung by Florida Grand Opera Studio artists.

April 17 (Tues.), 7:30pm
Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden, 10901 Old Cutler Road.
305.667.1651

If after these talks you want more, the Café at Books and Books in the Arsht Center will hold an opera-themed farm-to-table dinner April 23, from 6pm to 8pm, prepared by Chef Allen Susser. *Chef Allen's Monday Night Farm to Table Dinner: Opera Edition - Daniel Catán's "Florencia en el Amazonas"* will cost \$25 per person + \$14 optional wine. To RSVP, email Keith Green: keith@booksandbooks.com

APRIL CALENDAR



April 25 An Intimate Evening with David Foster

DANCE

Apollo
Miami City Ballet's performance of Balanchine's first great masterwork
April 13, 14, 15 (Fri., Sat., 8pm; Sun. 2pm)
Tickets \$25 to \$105
Arsh Center (Ziff Ballet Opera House)

Che Malambo
Argentine percussive dance and music spectacle
April 15 (Sun.) 8pm
Tickets \$30 to \$75
Arsh Center (Knight Concert Hall)

I Am Tango
The evolution of Tango over time, by dance company Tango Lovers
April 21 (Sat.) 8pm
Tickets \$35 to \$65
SMDCAC (Main Stage)

Spotlight on Contemporary Female Choreographers
Dimensions Dance Theater of Miami performs 21st century ballet
April 21 & 22 (Sat. 3:30pm, 7:30pm; Sun. 3:30pm)
Tickets \$45 (\$65 VIP)
SMDCAC (Lab Theater)

MUSIC

Jazz Vocal Showcase
Marva Lewis, Ashley Pezzotti, Melinda Rodriguez
April 2 (Mon.) 7pm
Cover \$10
Open Stage Club

Alto Madness III
Alto Sax men Joe Donato and Jesse Jones, part of the South Dade Jazz Wednesday series
April 4 (Wed.) 8pm
Tickets \$20 in advance, \$25 day of
SMDCAC (Black Box Theater)

Monica Mancini and the Frost Mancini Orchestra
Part of the Design District Performance Series produced by Emilio Estefan
April 6 (Fri.) 6-9pm.
Free
Palm Court, Miami

Edmar Castañeda & Gregoire Maret Duo
Harp vs Harp, unusual combination of harp and harmonica
April 7 (Sat.) 7:30 and 9:30pm
Tickets \$35 in advance, \$40 day of
SMDCAC (Black Box Theater)

JJ Hairston and Youthful Praise
Gospel Music. Part of the Free Gospel Sundays series
April 8 (Sun.) 5pm
Free (reserve online)
Arsh Center (Knight Concert Hall)

UM Frost Studio Jazz Band
Part of the Monday Night Jazz Coop Series
April 9 (Mon.) 7pm and 9pm
Cover \$10
Open Stage Club

Music on the Mile
UM Frost School of Music Professors John Redmond & Raina Murnak
April 10 (Tues.) 6-8pm
Free
The Plaza at 150 Miracle Mile

Noches de Guataca
Venezuelan composer and cuatro player Hector Molina
April 12 (Thurs.) 7pm
Cover \$20
Open Stage Club

Cendrillon
Frost Opera production of Jules Massenet's Cinderella story, in French (w subtitles)
April 12 & 14 (Thurs. & Sat.) 7:30pm
Tickets \$25 (seniors \$20)
UM Gusman Concert Hall

Jazz with Roxana Amed
Argentine vocalist and songwriter
April 13 (Fri.) 8pm
Tickets \$15 general admission
WDNA Jazz Gallery

Raul di Blasio Live
Argentine pianist, part of the Design District Performance Series produced by Emilio Estefan
April 14 (Sat.) 5pm.
Free
Palm Court, Miami

90s Retro Night, featuring Project Soul
Part of the Design District Palm Court Performance Series produced by Emilio Estefan
April 14 (Sat.) 5pm.
Free
Palm Court, Miami

La Bohème
Miami Lyric Opera performs Puccini's classic tale of love in 19th century Paris
April 14 & 15 (Sat. 8pm, Sun. 4pm)
Tickets \$35
SMDCAC (Main Stage)

John Hart CD Release Event
(w. Adam Scone on the Hammond B3 Organ) Part of the Monday Night Jazz Coop Series
April 16 (Mon.) 7pm and 9pm
Cover \$10
Open Stage Club

Symphonie Fantastique
The South Florida Symphony Orchestra performs the Berlioz classic, plus Ravel and Borenstein
April 18 (Wed) 7:30pm

Tickets \$44 to \$129
Arsh Center (Knight Concert Hall)

Ed Calle Special
The legendary local saxman
April 18 (Wed) 6pm, 8pm
Cover \$10-\$15
Open Stage Club

Chucho Valdés: Irakere 45
The most influential figure in Afro-Cuban Jazz, part of the Jazz Roots series
April 20 (Fri) 8pm
Tickets \$45 to \$125
Arsh Center (Knight Concert Hall)

Jon Secada Live
Part of the Design District Performance Series produced by Emilio Estefan
April 20 (Fri.) 6-9pm.
Free
Palm Court, Miami

Martin Bejerano Presents: Cuban American
Award-winning jazz pianist and composer
April 23 (Mon) 7pm and 9pm
Cover charge \$10
Open Stage Club

Silk Road Ensemble with Yo-Yo Ma
Renowned cellist Yo-Yo Ma performs music inspired by the Silk Road
April 23 (Mon) 8pm
Tickets \$50 to \$160
Arsh Center (Knight Concert Hall)

An Intimate Evening with David Foster
The piano 'Hitman Tour' by the musician, songwriter and composer (16

Grammys)
April 25 (Wed.) 8pm
Tickets \$39 to \$125
Arsh Center (Knight Concert Hall)

Plastic Soul: Beatles Tribute
Pretend you're back in the clubs of Hamburg with the boys
April 26 (Thurs.) 7pm, 9pm
Cover \$10-\$15
Open Stage Club

Miami Downtown Jazz Festival
Return of the annual bash, music at five concert stages
April 26-28 (Thurs.-Sat.)
Mostly Free
Locations at:
www.MiamiDowntownJazzFestival.org

Dr. Lonnie Smith and Kurt Elling Master
Jazz organist and Grammy-winning jazz vocalist
April 27 (Fri), 7pm
Tickets \$25-\$100
Olympia Theater (Miami Downtown Jazz Fest)

April 28 (Sat.) 8pm
\$32-\$52
Bayfront Park Amphitheater (Miami Downtown Jazz Fest)

Florida Grand Opera:
Florenca The magical story of a Brazilian soprano's emotional journey back home
April 28-May 5 (Tues., Fri. 8pm, Sat. 7pm, Sun. 2pm)
Tickets \$23 to \$179
Arsh Center (Ziff Ballet Opera House)

The Hidden Love of Clara & Johannes
The Miami Symphony Orchestra performs Brahms (Symphony 1) and Schumann
April 29 (Sunday) 6pm
Tickets \$35 to \$122
Arsh Center (Knight Concert Hall)

Ira Sullivan's 87th Birthday Party
Honoring the jazz saxophonist great
April 30 (Mon.), 7pm and 9pm
Advance ticketing \$10 to \$25
Open Stage Club

"5' 6", 7, 8! Lamentations of Two Broadway Bound Showgirls"
An evening of classic Broadway song and dance
April 7 (Saturday), 7:30pm, tickets \$10 to \$25
Area Stage Company

Gloria
2016 Pulitzer finalist for drama, fast-talking look at office politics
April 7-May 6 (Thurs., Fri, Sat. 8pm, Sun. 2pm, 7pm)
Tickets: \$45 to \$60 depending on day
Gables Stage at the Biltmore

Fun Home
Recent Tony Award winner for Best Musical about growing up with a volatile, brilliant dad
April 12-May 13 (Wed.-Sat. 7:30pm, Sat. 3pm, Sun. 4pm)
Tickets: \$55, general admission
Arsh Center (Carnival Studio Theater)

The Other Mozart
True story of the forgotten Maria Anna Mozart, sister of Amadeus



April 13-15
The Other Mozart

THEATER

Miso Live in Palm Court
Part of the Design District Performance Series produced by Emilio Estefan
April 27 (Fri) 6-9pm.
Free
Palm Court, Miami

Arturo Sandoval
The jazz trumpet legend, plus jazz vocalist Lizz Wright, jazz violinist Regina Carter

The Bodyguard
Musical based on romantic thriller of a bodyguard protecting a superstar
April 3-8 (Tues.-Sat. 8pm, Sat. 2pm, Sun. 1pm, 7pm)
Tickets \$29 to \$105
Arsh Center (Ziff Ballet Opera House)

April 13-15 (Fri. & Sat. 8:30 pm, Sat. & Sun. 3pm)
Tickets \$35
SMDCAC (Main Stage)

Pirates of Penzance
The Gilbert & Sullivan classic
April 19-28 (8pm all days except Sun. & Mon., 2pm Sat. & Sun.)
Tickets \$12 to \$27
Jerry Herman Ring Theatre (UM)

Thoroughly Modern Millie
Tony Award-winning Best Musical, about a small town girl in New York
April 27-May 6 (Fri. & Sat. 7:30pm, Sun. 5pm)
Tickets \$10 to \$25
Area Stage Company

You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown
Musical based on the Charles M. Schultz "Peanuts" comic strip
April 28-May 19 (Saturdays, 2pm); tickets \$20
Actor's Playhouse

ART/MUSEUMS

Sheltering Survivors
Explores how forcibly displaced populations resettle with innovative shelters
Through May 27; admission \$7, \$5 children
Coral Gables Museum (Felwell Gallery)

Cross Pollination: Honeybees and Murano Glass
Sculpture by Judi Harvest from the Venice Biennale
Through May 2; admission \$7, \$5 children
Coral Gables Museum (Abraham Family Gallery)

Antillean Visions: Maps & the Making of the Caribbean
Nearly 200 rare, beautiful, and historically significant maps of the Caribbean
Through May 27; admission \$12.50, \$8 students and seniors
Low Art Museum

"Year of Glass"
Installation of 150+ pieces from Palley collection of studio art glass
All year; admission \$12.50, \$8 students and seniors
Low Art Museum (Myrna and Sheldon Palley Pavilion)

Dignity: Tribes in Transition
Photographer Dana Gluckstein's homage to indigenous peoples
Through April 22; admission \$12.50, \$8 students and seniors
Low Art Museum

The World's Game:
Fútbol and Contemporary Art
Contemporary art devoted to the beautiful game
April 13-Sept. 2; admission \$16, \$12 students and seniors
Pérez Art Museum Miami

Now's the Time:
Narratives of Southern Alchemy
Works by painter, photographer, sculptor William Cordova

Living

April 27-Oct. 7; admission \$16, \$12 students and seniors
Pérez Art Museum Miami

INDIE FILM

Go Grandriders
Chinese Film Series (with subtitles)
April 4 (Wednesday) 6pm
Free
Dooley Memorial, UM campus

Isle of Dogs
Latest from director Wes Anderson, star-studded stop-motion animation
April 6-May 3
Tickets \$11.75 (\$10 seniors, students)
Gables Art Cinema

Look & See
Documentary of rural America seen through the eyes of farmer Wendell Berry
April 13 (Fri.) 8:30pm
Tickets \$12
SMDCAC (Classroom)

Landfill Harmonic
Story of the Recycled Orchestra, where Paraguayan trash-dump kids create music
April 14-15 (Sat.-Sun.) 11am
Tickets \$11.75 (\$10 seniors, students)
Gables Art Cinema

Le Challat de Tunis
French Film Series (with subtitles)
April 18 (Thursday) 7pm
Free
Dooley Memorial, UM campus

Julius Ceasar
From fame to assassination, buy UK's National Theatre Live, with star-studded ensemble
April 20-22 (Sat.-Mon.) Noon
Tickets \$20
Gables Art Cinema

Pretty Guardian Sailor Moon
Japanese anime comes to live in Sailor Moon's final battle to save the galaxy
April 28 & 29 (Sat.-Sun.) Noon
Tickets \$11.75 (\$10 seniors, students)
Gables Art Cinema

READING
(Books & Books)

Michael Finkel//Stranger in the Woods
Story of the last true hermit
April 12, 8pm

Debra Dean//Hidden Tapestry:
Jan Yoors, His Two Wives, and the War

That Made Them One
Story of Flemish American tapestry artist Jan Yoors
April 15, 6pm

David Grann//Killers of the Flower Moon
True-life murder mystery by best-selling New Yorker staff writer
April 23, 8pm

Mary Gordon//There Your Heart Lies
Story of an American woman's experiences during the Spanish Civil War
April 25, 8pm

Mohammed Al Samawi: The Fox Hunt
A Refugee's Memoir of Coming to America. A young man's harrowing

escape from civil war in Yemen
April 28, 7pm

Charles Frazier//Varina: A Novel
Frazier returns to the time and place of Cold Mountain during the American Civil War
April 30, 8pm



Ends May 27
Maps & the Making of the Caribbean at the Lowe Art Museum

VENUES

Actors Playhouse
280 Miracle Mile
www.actorsplayhouse.org
305.444.9293

Area Stage Company
1560 S. Dixie Highway, Suite 103
www.areastagecompany.com
305.666.2078

Arsht Center for the Performing Arts
1300 Biscayne Blvd., Miami
www.arshtcenter.org
786.468.2000

Bayfront Park Amphitheatre
301 N. Biscayne Blvd.
www.bayfrontparkmiami.com
305.358.7550

Books & Books
265 Aragon Ave.
www.booksandbooks.com
305.442.4408

Coral Gables Art Cinema
260 Aragon Ave.
www.gablescinema.com
786.472.2249

Coral Gables Museum
285 Aragon Ave.
www.coralgablesmuseum.org
305.603.8067

Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden
10901 Old Cutler Road
www.fairchildgarden.org
305.667.1651

Gables Stage at the Biltmore
11200 Anastasia Ave.
www.gablestage.org
305.445.1119

Gusman Concert Hall (UM)
1314 Miller Drive
305.284.2438

Jerry Herman Ring Theatre (UM)
1312 Miller Drive, UM Campus
305.284.3355
www.as.miami.edu/ringtheatre/boxoffice

Lowe Art Museum (UM)
1301 Stanford Drive
www.lowe.miami.edu/
305.284.3535

Olympia Theater
174 E. Flagler St., Miami
www.olympiatheater.org
305.374.2444

Open Stage Club
2325 Galiano St.
www.openstageclub.com
305.441.7902

Palm Court
140 NE 39th St., Miami
www.miamidesigndistrict.net

Pérez Art Museum Miami
1103 Biscayne Blvd., Miami
www.pamm.org
305.375.3000

SMDCAC
(South Miami-Dade Cultural Arts Center)
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www.smdcac.org
786.573.5316

WDNA Jazz Gallery
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People

Camillo Ricordi, MD

UM DIABETES RESEARCH SCIENTIST

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Yanik Ariste

CORAL GABLES HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR

Mike Fernandez

CHAIRMAN, MBF HEALTHCARE PARTNERS

Camillo Ricordi, MD

DIRECTOR OF THE UM DIABETES RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Camillo Ricordi is recognized as one of the world's leading researchers in regenerative medicine (he most recently addressed the prestigious World Stem Cell Summit on "Stem Cell Innovations That Will Change the World"). His Nobel Prize-worthy discovery is how to transplant insulin-producing islet cells from a donor pancreas into the liver of recipients with Type 1 diabetes, reversing the disease. A 10-year FDA trial validating the procedure was completed last year.



“*The ultimate cure will be to induce immune tolerance*”

LATEST ENDEAVOR

Working to expand the cure he developed for Type 1 diabetes

WHAT HE SAYS

“The biggest challenge now is to overcome the auto-immune reaction, so right now we are limited to the most severe cases,” he says. “The ultimate cure will be to induce immune tolerance. If you can do it without anti-rejection drugs, there will be huge demand,” he says, including 1.2 million Americans with Type 1 diabetes, a genetic disorder that prevents

the pancreas from producing insulin. As a leading advocate for regenerative medicine, he believes there may be a way for patients to heal themselves. “We are also doing research to induce the production of islets from the patients themselves, to regenerate new cells. That will be a healthcare economic revolution...”

Reported by JP Faber
Photo courtesy University of Miami



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3911GRANADABLVD.COM \$1,499,000

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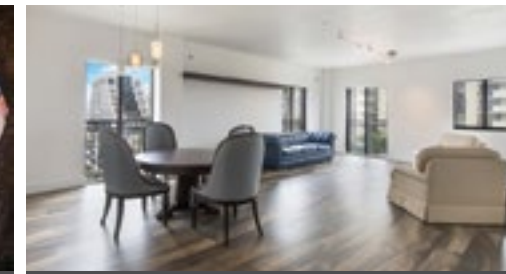


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Yanik Ariste

CORAL GABLES HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR

Ariste won the HHF Business and Entrepreneurship category for her combination of smarts, skills, and strategic vision. With a 4.0 GPA, she is actively involved in the Future Business Leaders of America, the International Baccalaureate Honor Society, and the National Spanish Honor Society. But what won over the HHF committee was a series of essays she submitted on insurance and risk management in health care.



We may not have all the experience that an older person may have...

LATEST ACHIEVEMENT

One of seven National Youth Awardees (out of 10,000 applicants) recently honored by the Hispanic Heritage Foundation.

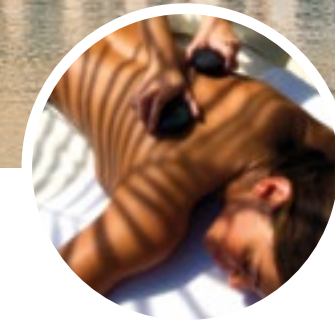
WHAT SHE SAYS

“We all go to the doctor and we all are going to go a lot in our lifetime, but [risk management] is something we know nothing about,” she says. Risk management, she explains, is an objective way for people and businesses to protect themselves from catastrophes ranging from natural disasters to shaky financial markets, adding

that insurance is the best way to mitigate that risk. This led her to zero in on healthcare. “We may not have all the experience that an older person may have, but teens are putting themselves out there... I’m going to prepare myself, [because] one day I want to be able to impact the community. One day I want to lead.”

Reported by Odalis Garcia
Photo by Matias J. Ocner

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Mike Fernandez

CHAIRMAN, MBF HEALTHCARE PARTNERS

Mike Fernandez is one of the most successful self-made entrepreneurs in the history of Florida, let alone his home base of Coral Gables, where he lives and has been involved with 27 startups. The billionaire businessman turned philanthropist made his fortune creating healthcare companies. Now he mostly tries to make the world a better place.



LATEST ENDEAVOR

Created the IMPAC Fund last year to bring together area leaders to support sensible immigration policies. This year he is creating a \$50 million PAC to support politicians in favor of immigration reform.

WHAT HE SAYS

“We should be the country of inclusion, not exclusion,” says Fernandez. “When I left Cuba, I was undocumented. But I am as guilty as anyone else when it comes to the issue of immigration. Once we get here we forget where we came from.” Fernandez says his PAC will “support politicians who are for humanizing deportation and immigration.” Fernandez

believes anti-immigration advocates are fear mongers. “We don’t have criminals coming here. People are coming here because they want to work. And they sustain their communities back home, which is good for us, because it stabilizes their government too... immigration is the single issue that most represents America’s future and past, and where we are today.”

Reported by JP Faber
Photo by Matias J. Ocnor



I am as guilty as anyone else when it comes to the issue of immigration

Welcome to the Neighborhood,

CORAL GABLES MAGAZINE!

BEST WISHES FOR A SUCCESSFUL LAUNCH OF AN INSPIRING AND INFORMATIVE PUBLICATION FOCUSED ON THE CITY'S PATH TO A BEAUTIFUL FUTURE.



GIRALDA PLAZA
Courtesy BID Coral Gables

CORAL GABLES
THE CITY BEAUTIFUL

Coral Gables Rising

By Doreen Hemlock

WITH MORE THAN \$1.5 BILLION IN NEW MID-RISE DEVELOPMENT, CORAL GABLES IS MAKING ITS CORE MORE DENSE. BUT IT'S DOING SO IN A CONTROLLED FASHION ENVISIONED BY CITY FATHERS, CREATING MORE OF A LIVE-WORK-PLAY CITY



THE PLAZA CORAL GABLES
2901 Ponce de Leon Boulevard



Coral Gables Rising

1 With an investment likely near \$550 million, Mexico-linked developer Agave Ponce plans a mixed-use project spanning several blocks on Ponce de Leon Boulevard on the same property where Coral Gables planner George Merrick kept his office nearly a century ago. Merrick's original building will be a centerpiece.

The Mediterranean-style project features a semi-circular design anchored by two Class-A office towers, each at least 12-floors high. Set further back around a central, leafy plaza will be a 14-story luxury hotel with 240 rooms, a residential tower with 136 rental units, and multi-level parking for some 2,250 vehicles. The plaza will offer mostly ground-floor retail, including

food, beverage and entertainment venues. It will integrate with the public park across the street, a two-acre green space that could add cultural events to draw more families to the plaza area, said Carlos Beckmann, Agave Ponce's director of operations.

Agave spent more than \$50 million to buy the nearly seven-acre site that had been idle for years. It aims to start construction in May and finish mid-2021. The project will seek eco-friendly LEED certification.

The Agave group includes members of the family behind the Jose Cuervo spirits business in Mexico. Its real-estate portfolio includes the Class A-office building at 396 Alhambra that hosts such top multinationals as Tiffany and HBO.

THE PLAZA CORAL GABLES

2901 Ponce de Leon Boulevard (nearly 7 acres)



In all his years living and working in Coral Gables, William Holly of Patton Real Estate Group can't remember a time when he's seen so much multi-story development in the city. Holly recalls years when there was one or maybe two major projects, but now there are more than half a dozen. They include what may be the city's largest yet: The Plaza Coral Gables, set to cost almost \$550 million and feature apartments, offices, retail, a hotel, townhouses and garages, all just a stroll from Miracle Mile.

"This wave of development is transformative," says Holly, because it expands the city's existing core of live-work-play neighborhoods, creates new ones, and knits more of those vibrant communities together. "Twenty years ago, that existed really just in downtown Coral Gables."

Many of the projects tear down smaller, single-use structures and replace them with taller, mixed-use complexes on the same lot. New buildings typically offer ground-floor retail, with residences or offices above, plus multi-story parking. Planners hope the mixed-use hubs will lure more people to live in the neighborhood, and encourage workers and other visitors to forgo their cars when in the area. More people walking – or using local transit – to shop and eat should also keep local traffic in check.

Over the next five years, at least \$1.5 billion in mixed-use projects are planned across Coral Gables, interviews with developers reveal. And that does not count some just finished residen-

tial projects, such as the Biltmore Parc condo on Valencia Ave, with 32 luxury units starting at \$1.2 million more than half sold, according to Alirio Torrealba, who leads Coral Gables-based MG Developer.

But the City Beautiful is pursuing urban development in its own unique way – not like Miami's Brickell Avenue and Downtown neighborhoods, where skyscrapers stand shoulder to shoulder and often top 70 floors. Coral Gables maintains strict codes that limit heights to 190 feet, or roughly 16 floors, and then only in buildings in its elegant Mediterranean style.

"The average building in Brickell is twice as tall as the tallest building in Coral Gables. The scale is completely different," says Coral Gables' director of planning Ramon Trias. What's more, the 190-foot buildings in Coral Gables are set for commercial areas that offer varied transit options, including the central business district and on major thoroughfares such as South Dixie Highway, near Metrorail stations.

The rising live-work-play neighborhoods are attracting multinationals and other major firms who want walkability from Class-A office space without the traffic headaches of Brickell or Downtown Miami. They're also luring empty-nesters and Millennials, who are willing to pay a premium to live in apartments or condos that allow them to stroll to shop, dine, exercise or see cultural events nearby. Retailers stand to gain, as more people

2 Real estate heavyweights The Allen Morris Company and The Related Group are finalizing details on an estimated \$250 million project behind Miracle Mile that they aim to make an icon, complete with an arch the size of France's Arc de Triomphe. "I believe it will be the most photographed location in all of Miami. It will be so dramatic," said Allen Morris, who calls himself "obsessive" about design and detail.

The project entails demolishing two city garages at 245 and 345 Andalusia Ave. and replacing them with ground-floor retail and more modern parking topped with an office tower and an apartment tower, each in a different Mediterranean style

and, hopefully, with public "sky parks" on upper floors.

Plans call for at least 300 upscale apartments for rent, 140,000 square feet of Class A-office space, 20,000 square feet of retail (mainly in a covered arcade), and pedestrian alleyways that link to Miracle Mile. New garages will offer more than 1,300 parking spaces as well a "smart parking" system that will show available spots and allow reservations through an app.

Developers hope to break ground by early 2019. Construction should take about 30 months. The architect is John Cunningham of Zyscovich, who worked with Morris on his signature Alhambra Towers as well as other projects.

CORAL GABLES CITY CENTER

245 Andalusia Ave. and 345 Andalusia



Continued on page 56

Coral Gables Rising

3 Developer NP International expects to break ground this quarter on its nearly \$300 million Gables Station venture along South Dixie Highway, across from the Shops at Merrick Park and a short walk from Metrorail's Douglas Road Station.

The residential-retail project features three 155-foot towers with roughly 440 rental apartments, 60 extended-stay hotel units, 125,000 square feet of retail space, and a central plaza. NPI tries to nurture communities it builds by creating gathering spaces through a concept it calls "Urban Living Room." The project has received top certification from the Transit Oriented Development Institute.

Apartments at Gables Station are aimed at Millenni-

als and others who want to live near shops and public transit, said Brent Reynolds, CEO of NP International, and is expected to include a full-service grocery store and large health-wellness center. NP International bought the narrow, 4.3-acre site for \$60.25 million from a group that considered a big-box shopping center there. The property had hosted a car dealership. Bank of the Ozarks provided a \$158.4 million construction loan. Completion is expected in late 2020.

Combined with NP International's \$172 million Paseo de la Riviera project underway about two miles farther south, developer Reynolds said, "We look at these projects as the architectural landmarks that will bookend the city on the South Dixie Highway corridor."

GABLES STATION

251 South Dixie Highway (4.3 acres)



5 Only its traffic circle will sit inside Coral Gables, but the transit-oriented Link at Douglas will bring some of the tallest buildings yet to the greater Gables area. Five new towers will rise at least 19 stories each – one may be 35 floors – just beyond the city's edge in unincorporated Miami-Dade County.

A public-private partnership, The Link is slated for 7.5 acres of county-owned land at the Metrorail's Douglas Road station. The site is now a parking lot for Metrorail riders. Development partners Adler Group and 13th Floor Investments have a lease on the land for 90 years. They'll add multi-level parking and upgrade the station.

The \$500 million-plus project also features 1,375 rental units, including small

apartments for workforce housing; 280,000 square feet of office space; and 60,000 square feet of retail. Plans call for big screens to show public transit schedules, plus areas for bike rentals, ride-sharing and autonomous vehicle drop-offs. "We want to be a transit-oriented development of the future," said Aaron Stolear, an executive with 13th Floor Investments.

Developers aim to break ground this year and finish by 2025, working with Corwil Architects of Coral Gables. "What makes a project of this scale viable is the structure of the public-private partnership," said Stolear. The county gets a Metrorail ridership boost and a percentage of rents. Developers get to build without buying the land.

THE LINK AT DOUGLAS

At Douglas Road and U.S. 1 (7.5 acres)



4 Across Las Olas Boulevard from the pedestrian-only Giralda Plaza, developers are putting the finishing touches on the Giralda Place office-residential-retail project. The roughly \$70 million venture spans a city block and includes the addition of a nine-story complex of street-level retail, Class A office space and 33 luxury residences.

Prices for the new condo units start in the low \$900,000s. Each unit features 11-foot ceilings, custom Italian cabinetry and some of the largest private terraces downtown. Condo residents also have access to a full floor for leisure facilities that include a pool, day beds and a wet bar. B+G Design of Fort Lauderdale is handling interiors for common areas. Some units have been

sold to relocating New Yorkers.

Giralda Place Developers, led by Heidi Eckes-Chantre, Kim Tabet and Christopher Brown, also finished renovation on an existing seven-story office-retail complex on the east side of the property. Office-sharing chain We Work has rented multiple floors in that section, its first foray into Coral Gables. In all, the development offers 101,300 square feet of office space, plus 420 parking spaces.

Construction on Giralda Place began in April 2016. John Fullerton of the Fullerton Group Architects of Coral Gables handled design. Completion is expected mid-year on what co-developer Brown calls "one coveted address that can be enjoyed by buyers, tenants and the community."

GIRALDA PLACE

2222 Ponce de Leon Boulevard



6 The office-condo building in downtown Coral Gables called Ofizzina is set for completion in mid-2018, and it's already more than 80 percent sold, according to Miami-based developer TSG Group.

The 16-story project offers 54 Class-A offices spanning some 97,000 square feet, plus three retail spaces on the ground floor and more than 300 parking spots. Investors have purchased offices ranging from about 700 square feet to entire floors of some 9,000 square feet. Prices have topped \$750 per square foot. Among those buying: banks and wealth-management firms, including some from Europe and South America. "Buyers can either purchase a space for end use or opt to lease that of-

rice," said Camilo Lopez, CEO and managing partner of TSG Group. TSG and partner BF Group co-developed the office-condo with amenities often found in residential condos, including a rooftop lounge, fitness room, espresso bar and charging stations for electric cars. They worked with Corwil Architects of Coral Gables, contractors Beauchamp-Ocean, plus New York-based interior designer MKDA, which has a Miami office.

An affiliate of TSG Group paid nearly \$7 million for the roughly 32,000 square foot property in 2014. Developers later secured a \$10.5 million construction loan from an offshore entity. They broke ground in September 2016. Selling out the development should bring in some \$80 million, TSG said.

OFIZZINA

1200 Ponce de Leon Boulevard



Coral Gables Rising

7 Miami-based Roger Development Group plans to break ground this year on its 10-story boutique condo Laguna House at 4220 Laguna Street, directly across from the Shops at Merrick Park. The mixed-use project features 13 upscale condos and three street-level retail spaces. Each floor is set to include two residences averaging 3,000 square feet each, while the penthouse spans a full floor. Units are priced from about \$1.5 million to \$2.2 million and the penthouse at \$3.2 million, said Oscar Roger Jr., who runs the family business alongside his father.

The roughly \$15 million project, designed by architect PGAL, is slated to take 18 months to build. The compa-

ny also is working in Coral Gables on the residential Villa Biltmore project at 1228 Anastasia Ave. on the Biltmore golf course, which Roger calls the “the only multi-family project allowed on the golf course in that area.” The venture includes 11 luxury condos in two 3-story buildings, with one or two units per floor. Each unit averages about 2,800 square feet and has private elevator access. Each also comes with three parking spaces, “a huge plus and very rare” amenity among luxury condos, said Roger Jr.

Also designed by PGAL architects, the \$15 million Villa Biltmore project likely will break ground by mid-year and be completed by late 2019, according to Roger Jr.



LAGUNA HOUSE

4220 Laguna Street

8 Coral Gables-based developer The Astor Companies expects completion late this year on Merrick Manor, a 10-story Mediterranean-style building with 227 upscale condominiums and 19,000 square feet of ground-floor retail at 301 Altara Avenue by the Shops at Merrick Park.

More than 55 percent of the project’s one- to five-bedroom units already are under contract, with the remaining residences priced from the \$500,000s to \$2.5 million, the company announced.

Led by founder, president and CEO Henry Torres, Astor broke ground on Merrick Manor in January 2017 and topped off construction ahead of schedule in October despite Hurricane Irma. Jaxi Builders is general contractor. Florida

Community Bank provided a \$59 million construction loan.

Among amenities, Merrick Manor will offer 24-hour valet parking, 24-hour front-desk service, a business center, fourth-floor club lounge, fitness center, and a pool with barbecue facilities. Building architects are Behar Font & Partners, with landscape design from Witkin Hults Design Group. Astor has opened a sales gallery at 4200 Laguna Street showcasing a one-bedroom unit with designs from Interiors by Steven G. The pitch to buyers: Live near shops, cafes, restaurants, wine bars, art galleries, and theaters for a lifestyle reminiscent of European villages.

Said Torres: “We are seeing a lot of interest from the Northeast, and the brutal winter up there will only intensify demand.”



MERRICK MANOR

301 Altara Avenue

9 On the site of a former Holiday Inn hotel on South Dixie Highway across from the University of Miami, developer NP International broke ground this January on its \$172 million Paseo de la Riviera project, designed to feature two towers around a public plaza with restaurants, shops and art.

The much-discussed venture highlights a 10-story hotel with 241 rooms, a 12-story residential building with 204 apartments above retail and parking, some 34,000 square feet of commercial space and 636 parking spaces. Apartments are expected to rent for about \$3 per square foot, according to Brent Reynolds, NP International’s chief executive officer.

Offering greater density than previously allowed in

the area, Paseo de la Riviera apartments aim to appeal to urban professionals, who seek the convenience of shopping, entertainment and other amenities within walking distance. The project also will link to a pedestrian bridge across South Dixie Highway to access to the nearby Metrorail station as well as city and university trolley systems.

Developers bought the 2.66-acre property for \$44 million in 2016. Completion is expected in early 2020.

With offices in Minnesota, Miami, New York and Costa Rica, NP International is a fourth-generation family business. Its mixed-use projects also include a 64-acre venture at the University of Florida that features a transit hub, parks, plus biking and walking paths.



PASEO DE LA RIVIERA

1350 South Dixie Highway (2.66 acres)

10 Coral Gables-based developer Codina Partners and its affiliate CC Residential are close to finishing a luxury apartment-office project at 2020 Salzedo in downtown Coral Gables, a block from Ponce de Leon Boulevard. The venture features a 16-story residential tower with 213 luxury rentals, a seven-floor parking garage with 566 spaces, plus offices and retail in a six-floor building.

The Class-A office space – nearly 50,000 square feet – is almost fully leased. Tenants include architectural design firm HKS, tech-enabled learning firm Illumno Management, law firm Stearns Weaver, plus the headquarters for Codina Partners and its affiliates. Blanca Commercial Real Estate is the exclusive leasing agent for the offices.

BC Architects of Coral Gables designed the Mediterranean-style tower. Facchina Construction is general contractor. Regions Bank provided a \$53.5 million loan. Codina paid more than \$6 million for parcels to assemble the roughly 1.6-acre property in the city core, executives confirmed.

Developers broke ground on the project in April 2015 and expect completion by mid-2018. One retail tenant drawing buzz: pastry chef Antonio Bachour. He plans a bakery, restaurant and pastry academy in 5,200 square feet of street-level space, which includes a courtyard. The locale will be the first in Florida for the noted Puerto Rican chef who has been working at the St. Regis Bal Harbour resort.



2020 SALZEDO

2020 Salzedo Street (1.6 acres)

nearby bring more customers night and day – without driving.

Jennifer and Kenneth Garcia embrace the live-work-play lifestyle. The couple moved to downtown Coral Gables from Michigan straight out of college a decade ago. As the area has become more urban and transit options have multiplied, they've given up their car. They now usually walk or bike to work, ride city trolleys or take ride-sharing services like Lyft for shorter trips, and occasionally, rent cars for longer excursions. The couple enjoys being car free and developing relationships with shopkeepers and restaurateurs in their neighborhood.

“Being small town-ish people – I’m from Kansas City and Kenneth is from Costa Rica – Coral Gables has that mid-size city character we like,” says Jennifer Garcia, on why the pair of urban planners opted against a more vertical, denser community.

While the projects don't represent an explosion in development, they are significant for a city of some 51,000 residents. In new condos, for example, Coral Gables is “is punching above its population size,” says Peter Zalewski, founder of CraneSpotters, which focuses on pre-construction condos. In the 2011-2017 period, Cranespotters tallied 1,166 new condos proposed for the city. Still, that was just 2.5 percent of the total proposed in coastal South Florida and ranked the city No. 9 among 34 markets studied.

“It's very balanced,” says Ron Shuffield, CEO of brokerage EWM International Realty, of the city's development. Unlike parts of Miami-Dade County that have been overbuilt, Coral Gables has a manageable inventory of luxury condos and luxury homes, and its offices and retail space command premiums. One indicator of the city's allure: The median price for a condo sold in the last quarter of 2017 was about \$379,000, about 65 percent more than the \$230,000 paid countywide, said Shuffield.

Perhaps the biggest change afoot is mixed-use development planned South Dixie Highway, aka U.S.1. Long-time Coral Gables architect Victor Dover, of Dover, Kohl & Partners Town Planning, is working on designs for the thoroughfare, where many parking lots and fences now face the street. He foresees new complexes that “are street-oriented and will bring an architectural positivity on that corridor.” That density is in line with the design of the city's original planner George Merrick, says Dover.

“The city is allowing growth to take place in the areas where Merrick [and subsequent city planners] always envisioned denser growth, not allowing it to invade the single-family homes, to protect them from any dramatic impact, but allowing for growth where the transportation options are most plentiful,” explains Dover. “U.S.1 is congested at peak hours ... Therefore, we should get on with the business of creating better spaces that can use walking, bicycles and mass transit.”

This survey of 10 major projects in Coral Gables, including the \$500 million-plus Link at Douglas over the city's edge by the Douglas Road Metrorail station. The largest project: The Plaza Coral Gables, rising on the same property where Gables planner Merrick kept his office nearly a century ago.

Cernuda Arte
Cuban and Latin American Art




IMAGE DETAIL : CUNDO BERMÚDEZ (1914-2008)
King and Queen, (Rey y Reina) 1969
mixed media on paper laid down on board, 51 x 35 inches

Provenance: PepsiCo, Inc. Collection.
Exhibited at Sotheby's Important Latin American Paintings,
New York, New York, May 28, 1985, lot number 395.
This artwork is illustrated in the book, *Cundo Bermúdez*,
Cuban American Endowment for the Arts,
Miami, Florida, 2000, page 191.
Illustrated on the cover of *Cien años de identidad:*
Introducción a la literatura latinoamericana del siglo XX,
Kelly Comfort, Georgetown University Press,
Washington D.C., 2018.

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THREE YEARS AFTER THE CITY DECIDED TO MOVE FORWARD, AND 18 MONTHS AFTER CONSTRUCTION BEGAN, THE STREETScape PROJECT TO TRANSFORM GIRALDA AVENUE AND MIRACLE MILE IS FINALLY COMPLETE. NOW TO SEE IF IT PAYS OFF.

By Julianne Gage

FINALLY IT'S DONE.

The process of tearing up Miracle Mile to widen and beautify its sidewalks, which began in the summer of 2016, is now complete. In place of damaged sidewalks that were a mere 8-foot wide, the main promenade of downtown Coral Gables is now truly that: a tree-lined boulevard with 23-foot-wide sidewalks where people can walk, stroll, saunter or – and this is key – enjoy the pleasures of an outdoor café.

“It’s the way it was supposed to be, like a pedestrian plaza, a new experience for being indoors and outdoors,” said Coral Gables Business Improvement District (BID) Executive Director Taciana Amador. “People want to have a wonderful walking and shopping experience, they want to have sidewalk cafes. That’s what’s

going to draw them in.”

If there were any doubts about the effect that widening the sidewalks will have on Miracle Mile, just go there on a Friday night. At Tarpon Bend, where the proprietors cried foul during the construction process, there are hundreds of handsomely dressed millennials pouring onto the sidewalk in a massive singles scene that would have been impossible a year earlier.

On the other side of the street, the music is throbbing at Copper 29 and nearby at Plomo, both packed. And up and down the boulevard clusters of café tables are emerging from restaurants like the heads of shy turtles, peeking out to see if it’s okay to emerge. Tables now sit outside The Red Koi, Ortanique, Loui’s, the Sushi

THE GREAT SIDEWALK EXPERIMENT

“In the old days, the Mile was dead after hours. People are coming back now...”

Peter Iglesias, Coral Gables
Assistant City Manager

Club, etc., all being filled by diners happy to see that the sidewalks now belong to them and not to the backhoes, tractors, and traffic barriers that have haunted the street for longer than anyone cares to remember.

At last, Coral Gables' Streetscape strategy, a \$21 million construction project aimed at updating Miracle Mile and creating a pedestrian mall on nearby Giralda Avenue, is coming to fruition, and signs of new life are everywhere. This is especially apparent on Giralda's block-long pedestrian mall, completed months before Miracle Mile, its outdoor restaurant tables now bustling with diners. But the effect will be even more profound on Miracle Mile, the city's core downtown avenue, which was literally breaking apart before its current revamping.

AN OVERDUE MAKEOVER

"The Mile was in not in good shape for quite some time. The trees had uplifted the sidewalks, the tile was broken, we had some additional tile but that was used up in the repairs," says Coral Gables Assistant City Manager Peter Iglesias, who, as the director of operations and infrastructure, oversaw the project for the city. "It just looked very, very shoddy, and we were actually using asphalt to take care of some of the elevation differences, which caused trip hazards."

City leaders have been aware of the need to upgrade for years, even decades. Current Mayor Raúl Valdés-Fauli remembers how in his first term in office (1993 to 2001) the city was able to improve the street with a median strip and turning lanes, but not the sidewalks. Those came under scrutiny a decade later, in 2008, when city planners grew tired of merely repairing the ongoing damage caused by events like Hurricane Katrina.

"You can only patch up so much," said Jillian Hornik, sales manager and graduate gemologist at her family's 73-year-old business on Miracle Mile, Jae's Jewelers. "Water was pooling and coming into storefronts every time it rained, and in some blocks the water was well over a foot deep."

Around that same time, the millennial generation started growing up and demanding a new urban lifestyle based not on the car, but on public transport and



walkability. Baby Boomers likewise wanted to grow old gracefully in more walkable, age-friendly communities.

Those trends got city planners to put together a volunteer steering committee and reach out to the University of Miami's School of Architecture to create some studies. But before the project could get underway, the Gables got hit with another storm: the recession. It would take six more years for the economy to recover and for city planners to feel confident enough to move forward. By then, the Mile was yet another decade older and more tattered.

Finally, in 2014, the city hired New York architecture firm Cooper-Robertson to conceptualize a redevelopment program that would repair and widen sidewalks buckled from time, flooding, and the roots of old trees, turn angled parking spaces into parallel ones, and update the landscaping and lighting. The city then hired construction company Ric-Man to execute those designs, with the goal of finishing the work by the fall of 2017.

What the city anticipated was something akin to what happened on Ocean Drive, a kind of build-it-and-they-will-come experiment. In the case of Ocean Drive, Miami Beach's decision in the 1990s to widen the sidewalks there by moving the street closer to the ocean by 20 feet led to an overnight explosion in street-side cafés.

"At last we'll have enough space for people to happily stroll, and more strolling is exactly what you'll see," noted Coral Gables urban planner Victor Dover, author of *Street Design: The Secret to Great Cities and Towns*. "I think of the good advice Fred Kent gives, 'When you design a city for cars and traffic, you get cars and traffic. When you design for people and places, you get people and places.' We're about to see Miracle Mile reflect a much healthier balance."

Donald Clinton, a lead partner in Cooper-Robertson, says the natural stone mosaics of the wide, curb-less walkways – multicolored swirls on Giralda and a gray and white motif on Miracle Mile – encourage strolling, while the modern stone benches give opportunities for resting and socializing. Extra flora and fauna give the area a lush, South Florida feel, while retaining some of the old-growth trees "establishes this kind of grand scale for the landscaping," he says.

A LONG AND BUMPY ROAD

But getting to the new Miracle Mile and Giralda Plaza was a long struggle, full of literal and metaphorical potholes. Like it or not, growing pains were inevitable, says Assistant City Manager Iglesias.

"It's never a good time to do something like this because you're tearing down the street, you're taking away parking, construction's very messy," says Iglesias. Some of that parking would never return; a key element in the re-design was to completely remove parking from Giralda, now a pedestrian mall, and to eliminate the space-eating angular parking on Miracle Mile, replacing it with limited parallel parking. Shoppers will now have to adjust to the idea that a nearby parking garage is the best solution for shopping the Mile.

The construction process also took longer than expected, rolling right past the completion target of August 2017 and into the holiday season. It would be October before Giralda was complete, and it was not until March 2018 that the city announced the Miracle Mile Streetscape Project close to completion, with only "punch list" items – minor corrections, touch-up work – remaining.

The drawn-out process, which closed streets during construction, literally drove some of the merchants out of business. And while most remained, there were plenty of complaints – especially when you consider that property owners will be paying 40 percent of the price tag (via a 22-year bond) for the improvements.

At Tarpon Bend, the restaurant's owner and operator, Wayne Eldred, was livid. Last August, the former Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce member told *The Miami Herald* that he'd lost between \$800,000 and \$1 million during Streetscape's construction, calling a project he once supported a "Shakespearean tragedy," and adding "The majority of this work was never supposed to hurt the businesses and it's done exactly that."

Other merchants echoed Eldred's complaints. Wolfe's Wine shop owner Jeffery Wolfe posted on his website, "The Mile is a construction mess... The pedestrian traffic is way down and vehicular traffic at least on the south side is down to one lane and careful the backhoe does



At last we'll have enough space for people to happily stroll, and more strolling is exactly what you'll see...

Victor Dover, Coral Gables urban planner



— DURING —

GIRALDA AVENUE TRANSFORMING TO A PEDESTRIAN MALL



— AFTER —

OUTDOOR DINING IS NOW A BIG HIT ON GIRALDA AVENUE



FRANCESCA VALDES: NEW MARKETING FOR MERCHANTS
AFTER THE GRAND STREETSCAPE OPENING

not smack your windshield while you're heading northeast."

Getting the project from design to completion was admittedly a learning process for both designers and contractors, says Clinton of Cooper-Robertson.

"It's a pretty innovative paving system with the beautiful natural stone – a different system on Giralda than on the Mile – so there was a kind of learning curve for how that should be solved," he said, explaining that the curb-less sidewalks also required a less conventional, continuous drainage system to make the walkways more expansive and easier for stepping. "A lot of that in the early months slowed everybody down. Construction went very slowly and people got very anxious."

Even installing the heavy stone benches and chairs – all carefully crafted in Spain – was a tedious process. "It took a while to figure out how to make the foundation for them," Clinton said.

MAINTAINING MOMENTUM

To ease tensions, the city offered rent abatement to retailers housed in its own buildings, parking vouchers to shops and restaurants, and subsidized garage parking of \$1 an hour. The city also put up \$5 valet parking stands throughout the downtown, making it possible to drop the car on one street and pick it up on another. This is in addition to the downtown trolley and the Freebee which operates like an Uber or a Lyft within the downtown area, free of charge.

City officials also tried to help the merchants with marketing. In late 2016, they hired business development specialist Francesca Valdes to prepare merchants for the grand Streetscape opening they were expecting the following August. Valdes got to work coordinating a series of marketing workshops on everything from social media to visual merchandising for storefronts. "We brought in a top consultant from the field. We held a free seminar for retailers on small things you can do to really amp up your storefront," she explains. "That could be as simple as changing the lighting, or a change in height in the riser in your window."

"During seminars, the city invited attendees to apply for \$500 in small business development grants to help merchants

make these alterations. It also gave them the option of purchasing store 'blade signs' that stick out from under a building's awnings.

These incentives certainly helped, says Hornik of Jae's Jewelers, but it didn't solve everything. She feels fortunate that her shop didn't lose as much business as some.

"We have the longevity, we have the client base for new businesses," she says. But as retail lead for the BID's Board of Directors, she has been vocal that restaurants will gain the most from Streetscape, since the expanded sidewalk can be used for outdoor dining. That extra space might also work for a few retail shops that hope to set up sidewalk sales, but certainly not for the area's high-end merchandise like fine jewelry and wedding gowns.

Regardless, Hornik says just about all downtown business owners recognized the need for upgrades. "Coral Gables is going through a badly needed renovation, reviving for the next generation," she said, adding that many of stores that went out of business during construction were heading in that direction before the project started.

"This was the straw that broke the camel's back," she said, noting that flexibility has been key for everyone else. "Obviously, with any type of construction there's going to be delays, there's going to be hiccups. Everybody voices their concerns and their frustrations, but we try to stay positive because it's something that we wanted. We did want this renovation. We did want to attract more people to Miracle Mile."

She says she's already starting to see that happen; in recent months, her bookkeepers have noted a sudden uptick in new customers. "They're people who were just walking by and saw something that they liked, who had never set foot in the store before, and that's very encouraging for the future," she says.

THE CITY BEAUTIFUL, ONCE AGAIN

Today, Miracle Mile's new drainage system is designed for a 100-year return period with overflows into major trench systems on Lejeune, Ponce de Leon, and Galiano. Replanting the trees ensured their roots wouldn't pull up the new sidewalk, or, worse yet, fall over during a storm. The gray-blue



Obviously, with any type of construction there's going to be delays, there's going to be hiccups....

Hornik of Jae's Jewelers

and white tiles along Miracle Mile were meant to reflect Florida's sunny skies, while on Giralda those same colors intermingle with hues of charcoal, brown, and black, offering a modern Mediterranean feel.

"It has that European, Italian plaza feel, which is very Coral Gables, with our unique touch because we're still modern," says city Public Affairs Manager Maria Higgins Fallon.

And now, with the project complete, the crowds are doing what lead architect Clinton envisioned: "spilling out onto the sidewalks" of stores and restaurants, including the temporarily-depressed Tarpon Bend Raw Bar & Grill. And despite the painful delays, on one item city officials are confident: Streetscape's official April 14th inauguration.

"Certainly, there's a big sense of accomplishment – because we worked so long as an organization to achieve this and seeing the reality of it come to life," says Amador, remembering how even last year folks who wanted outdoor weekend dining would have to take a table in a parking lane. "The meters were still there, the bushes were still there, the sidewalk was very small – it was a street."

Indeed, the efforts are already having their desired effect, says Iglesias, who notes a sudden increase in downtown shoppers and diners.

"I've lived in the Gables for a long time, and in the old days, the Mile was dead after hours," he says. "People are coming back now."

Kaplan Goes HOLLYWOOD

Books & Books

Store owner Mitchell Kaplan was attending a conference in New York City when a well-known editor handed him a manuscript and asked, “How are we going to make this into a bestseller?” Kaplan read the novel, loved it, and saw potential for a great movie. He asked his sister, a TV producer, for help. She recommended a film-producer friend, Paula Mazur, who read the book and loved it too. Soon, the duo secured the option to make the World War II story into a film. A Hollywood studio quickly signed up, with big name talent to boot. Kaplan was thrilled, figuring the movie business must be easier than he’d ever imagined. Then, like so many Hollywood deals, it suddenly fell apart.

Now, nearly 10 years later, Kaplan and Mazur are set to debut the finished film this April in London, based on the now best-selling novel they optioned, “The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society.” It’s a widely anticipated premiere in the United Kingdom, backed by Europe’s Studio Canal, directed by Mike Newell of “Four Weddings and a Funeral” fame, and starring Lily James, known for her roles in “Downton Abbey” and “Darkest Hour.”

For Kaplan, a fervent movie fan as well as a lifelong lover of books, the London debut is a sign of how far he has come in the filmmaking business. The movie is actually the second theatrical release for he and Mazur, following the November debut of “The Man Who Invented Christmas.” That film, based on a book by South Florida’s Les Standiford about how author Charles Dickens wrote “A Christmas Carol,” featured actor Christopher Plummer (best known as the father in “The Sound of Music”) as Ebenezer Scrooge. The movie met critical success, earning an 80 percent rating on Rotten Tomatoes from both critics and viewers. In all, the partners have more than a dozen books now under option that they aim to turn into movies or TV series.

For Kaplan, film offers yet another powerful channel to connect audiences with writers. For decades, the South Florida native has been building communities with authors, both as the



the booklover has

“The biggest challenge in film is everything,” Kaplan said with a laugh during a chat at his flagship Coral Gables store. “You can have someone putting up the money, but you’re not finding the right director or the right actors. Or you find them, and something is taking too long, so you lose them because of their window of opportunity. Anything collaborative like that is challenging. Just look at sports teams or our government.”

Kaplan seems to take the obstacles in stride. Modest with the passion of an eternal college student, he emphasizes the joy of working with creative people on projects they all believe in. He’s quick to honor his teammates, calling Mazur “brilliant” and Guernsey co-producer Graham Broadbent “the sweetest guy.”

“At this point, I really believe that the journey is more important usually than anything else. I do things because I enjoy them, so I surround myself with people I really like, who share the same

owner of the independent Books & Books stores (which host more than 500 writers yearly) and as co-founder of the Miami Book Fair International (now the country’s largest literary festival). But film requires far more costly, complex and timely collaboration, learned.



MITCH KAPLAN, THE CORAL GABLES ENTREPRENEUR WHO TURNED BOOKS & BOOKS INTO A COMMUNITY INSTITUTION, HAS NOW GONE FROM THE SMALL PRINT TO THE BIG SCREEN

By Doreen Hemlock



MOVIE PROJECTS BY THE MAZUR/KAPLAN COMPANY

THE MAN WHO INVENTED CHRISTMAS
by Les Standiford

The six fever-pitched weeks in which Charles Dickens wrote and self-published "A Christmas Carol." Susan Coyne wrote the adaptation, Dan Stevens and Christopher Plummer star, Bharat Nalluri directs. Partner is Bleeker Street Films. Released November 2017.

**THE GUERNSEY LITERARY AND POTATO PEEL
PIE SOCIETY**
by Mary Ann Shaffer and Annie Barrows

The unexpected bond that journalist Juliet Ashton forms with the residents of Guernsey after World War II. Don Roos and Tom Bezucha wrote the adaptation, Lily James and Michiel Huisman star, Mike Newell directs. Partner is Studio Canal. To premiere in April 2018 in London.

THE SILENT WIFE
by A.S.A. Harrison

A psychological thriller that tracks a marriage headed for catastrophe. Billy Ray wrote the adaptation, Nicole Kidman will star.

CROOKED LETTER
by Tom Franklin

Two estranged childhood friends who reunite years later when a girl disappears, as one is accused of the crime and the other investigates it. George Tillman will direct.

OTHER BOOKS OPTIONED:

ALL THE BRIGHT PLACES
by Jennifer Niven

Offers a young-adult love story about a girl who learns to live from a boy who intends to die.

MAJOR PETTIGREW'S LAST STAND
by Helen Simonson

About the unlikely friendship between a retired and widowed British army major and the Pakistani woman who runs their rural village's convenience store.

COUNTING BY 7'S
by Holly Goldberg Sloan

A 12-year-old genius coping with the loss of her adoptive parents and the community of people that rise to become her surrogate family.

THE PRINCE OF LOS COCUYOS
by Richard Blanco

A poet's life growing up in Miami's Cuban immigrant community.

This page: Dan Stevens stars as Charles Dickens and Christopher Plummer stars as Ebenezer Scrooge in director Bharat Nalluri's *The Man Who Invented Christmas*, a Bleeker Street release.

(credit: Kerry Brown / Bleeker Street)

Opposite page: Mitch Kaplan and Paula Mazur on the film set



vision," he says. "I know it takes a village to make things happen."

As book-to-film producers, The Mazur/Kaplan Company handles the gamut of what it takes to make things happen. But it partners with others on tasks that can run from finding funds to selecting talent and securing distribution. Guernsey co-producer Broadbent, for example, came with a string of credits that included the Exotic Marigold Hotel series and "Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri," which just won Oscars for best leading actress and best supporting actor.

As for Mazur, she was intrigued when Kaplan approached her and said, "I read books that I think might make good movies." She'd been producing films mainly from plays and books, working independently, without steady partners. She figured Guernsey was a one-off project, but she and Kaplan bonded. She likes his literary taste, how fast he learns, and above all, his ethics in what can be a "back-stabbing" industry. "He never pretends to know what he doesn't know, which I'm not used to in this business," said Mazur, chuckling.

The Mazur/Kaplan Company has developed a blueprint for choosing books to option among thousands they peruse, including many Kaplan gets months or even years before publication. The four-member team looks for a distinctive story that "we would want to spend the years that it takes to get it made," says Kaplan. Just as importantly, they determine "if there's a path to get it made – if we can really find the necessary collaboration and resources to bring it to the screen," he says. "It's what I've done in buying for the store, where it doesn't quite matter what it is, as long as it's elevated, not snobby, and it hits its mark in what it's trying to do."

THE VIRTUE OF PATIENCE

The partners' first theatrical release took eight years to complete. Les Standiford, the South Florida author of 23 books who leads the creative writing program at Florida International University, waited patiently for the film version of his novel, "The Man Who Invented Christmas," which portrays how Charles Dickens quickly wrote and self-published "A Christmas Carol" to keep his family from bankruptcy. The project passed through various hands in Hollywood, Canada and English TV before becoming an independent production shot in Ireland. "I never thought there'd be a movie about a book about a guy writing a book anyway," Standiford joked.

Kaplan's budding success in film doesn't surprise Standiford. He recalls meeting Mitchell almost 40 years ago when Kaplan was opening Books & Books and already had grand plans for a book fair "that was going to close down all central Miami," he says. "Five hundred authors were going to come, and there would be a street fair and cooking demonstrations and on and on. And this was 1981, mind you. I saw a lot of guys driving fast-boats with their shirts open and their navels showing. I didn't see a lot of people reading in Miami, and all I could think was, 'Mitchell, I hope you know what you are getting into.'"

Standiford left town and returned in 1985 to find the bookstore flourishing and the book fair a reality. "That told me that when Mitchell Kaplan decides that something is worth doing, then he's going to make it happen. He has that kind of drive and possesses a charisma that makes other people buy into his vision."

"The Man Who Invented Christmas" showed in some 800



Clockwise from top left: Mitch Kaplan in front of the movie poster; a scene from the movie, *The Man Who Invented Christmas*; the flagship Books & Books is located at 265 Aragon Avenue; inside the bookstore, which has grown considerably since it opened in 1982.

cinemas at its peak and could become a holiday staple on TV. Standiford hopes the movie will encourage producers to turn more of his books into films and present his stories to wider audiences. But there is a caveat: Standiford wants good films made, like Mazur/Kaplan's. An earlier movie of his book "Spill" made by a different group left him embarrassed. That action film never got the big budget it needed, so "watching Spill is sort of like staring into the sun for 103 minutes. That's how bad it is," Standiford said. In contrast, he proudly touts the Christmas film as a calling card for folks who've never read his books.

Of course, some of Mazur/Kaplan's projects may never reach the big screen. On his last trip to California, Kaplan met with Netflix, Hulu and Apple streaming services to explore film and TV ventures. He'd earlier worried about movies debuting online without cinema releases but has since reconsidered. Netflix recently premiered a film it financed called "Bright" and racked up 11 million viewers within days. Had that movie been in theaters, its numbers would likely have made it the highest-grossing release that weekend. "The world is changing," says Kaplan. "So, we are adapting."

Kaplan's push into film – on top of work for some half-dozen book stores, several cafes and the annual book fair – might stress out others. But the 63-year-old says he learned long ago

when opening a store in the Cayman Islands "how to delegate and allow people to run things in a style of their own, with me giving them direction." When things get hectic, he tries to slow them down and dissect the problems. To stay sharp, he keeps up with news, exercises to music, and watches what he eats: "I've been a vegetarian, but I eat fish. I call myself a stone crab-atarian. I could not live without stone crabs." To relax, he often types out poems he likes on one of the manual typewriters he collects. He also keeps scores of poems on his cellphone, including William Carlos Williams' *Winter Trees*: "All the complicated details of the attiring and the disattiring are completed! ... the wise trees stand sleeping in the cold," he reads aloud.

Kaplan says he doesn't measure success in his ventures only in dollars. He finds value in building communities, especially where writers and audiences connect. And though he'll do the business tasks required, like pushing publishers for discounts and sticking to budgets, "I'm not a business person per se," he says. "I grew up thinking that being an artist and being an author was the highest calling you could have. When I realized that I wasn't going to be a writer, maybe I transferred that creative edge into the producer in me – being a producer of spaces, events, films, book stores and book festivals."

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GET INTO THE KITCHEN

The Coral Gables Community Foundation showcases some of the city's hottest kitchens and tastemakers

By Robin Shear
Photos by Ella Aire

What happens when you bring hundreds of people to a dozen knockout kitchens and kitchen showrooms? Lots of good eating, drinking and appliance envy! The Coral Gables Community Foundation's 9th Annual Tour of Kitchens sold a record 750 tickets this year to culinary voyeurs anxious to peek inside some of Coral Gables' toniest private kitchens.

The day-long event kicked off on a Saturday morning in February with mimosas and breakfast snacks in the showroom of presenting sponsor, Infiniti of Coral Gables.

From there, participants followed a self-directed itinerary that included eight private kitchens and three designer-kitchen stores.

At some of the stops, participants were given cooking lessons and demonstrations, all in the name of good food; proceeds from the event (tickets were \$60 each) went toward scholarships at Coral Gables High School's culinary academy (see sidebar, page 74).

The Foundation's first Tour of Kitchens, back in 2009, had about 150 people, recalls Allison Ortiz, showroom

manager of Snaidero Kitchens and Design. This year, Snaidero, a tour sponsor since the beginning, hosted a cooking demo with Chef José Ramirez-Ruiz. Ramirez-Ruiz showed his white-wine-sipping students how to make his signature zucchini squash blossoms stuffed with rock shrimp.

Completed samples – topped with a passion fruit sauce and plated with a nest of cucumber salad – made it clear why Ramirez-Ruiz made headlines (and earned a Michelin star) at his former tasting-menu restaurant Semilla, located in Brooklyn, New York.

“The Coral Gables Foundation is one of the most critical things Coral Gables provides. I’m so glad I could contribute and be a part of its Tour of Kitchens,” said Venny Torre, who is in his third year as chair of the event.

Torre and his wife, Coco, hosted one of the stops on the tour in their new three-story townhouse located at 450 Valencia Avenue, part of a group of residences near downtown Coral Gables developed by Torre’s company. Guests wore hospital-blue booties to protect the house’s stunning expanse of European oak flooring — a minimalist space brightened by natural light. “I like the clean airiness,” said Torre, of the large open-plan kitchen that flows effortlessly between dining room and informal seating overlooking

the back patio.

While his role in the kitchen leans more toward foraging for his favorite treats in the Miele side-by-side fridge-freezer, his wife is the family culinary wizard, making good use of her induction cooktop, and convection and combi-steam ovens, all integrated into the matte-white Stosa Cucine cabinetry. A gorgeous gold-flecked gray quartz island provides ample prep space. (Styling by Pure Project Home; food by Coral Gables Senior High culinary arts academy students.)



Top: Antique KitchenAid mixer adds a retro-look to the modern decor

Right: European oak flooring enhances the kitchen’s grey-quartz island.

Opposite: Coco (left) and Venny Torre, point out details to a tour participant.

1 450 Valencia Avenue





CULINARY INSPIRATION

Looking confident in her black hospitality coat and red apron, 11th grader Amanda Mayendia serves up tasty morsels for the lineup of hungry guests strolling through the home of Venny and Coco Torre for the 9th annual Tour of Kitchens.

"I'm learning little by little," said Mayendia, who joined the Academy of Culinary Arts and Operations at Coral Gables Senior High just a few weeks before the February event.

Instructor Michael Flores-Interiano supervised Mayendia and two other members of the academy as they created and plated an attractive and delicious amuse-bouche of mini corn cakes topped with cheese, mushroom ragout, and a lime crème fraiche.

"I love it. It feels great to be back," said Chef Flores Interiano, himself a 2008 graduate of Gables High. He went on to obtain culinary degrees from Johnson & Wales University and FIU; in addition to his work with Gables High, he also teaches at the Biltmore Culinary Academy.

Revenue from the Tour of Kitchens helps support the culinary arts program at Gables High, says Mary Snow, executive director of the Coral Gables Community Foundation.

Support has included scholarships for students to attend Miami-Dade College's Culinary Institute and Johnson & Wales University, industrial kitchen equipment for the classroom, plants for a campus vegetable garden, and trips to state cooking competitions.



The home of Sidney and Monique Lazard at 644 Altara Avenue is a landmark within the Italian Village of Coral Gables.

Built in 1925 by three-time presidential candidate William Jennings Bryan, the kitchen, which opens onto a fountain-lined courtyard, practically screams mangia! The Italian farmhouse vibe here is strong – from embellished hand-carved woodwork and stone-topped island to the ceiling coffer with hanging copper pans and a copper sink with oil-rubbed faucets and spout.

But the appliances – a Bosch dishwasher with Fisher & Paykel dishwasher drawers, side-by-side Sub-Zeros, and Wolf cook-top, stacking double ovens and warming drawer – are anything but rustic. (Styling by Victoria's Armoire; food by Ruth's Chris Steak House.)

Above: A bronze sea serpent watches over the tranquil courtyard
Opposite: Rustic farmhouse furniture combines with modern appliances



2 644 Altara Avenue

3

524 Hardee Road



Stuart and Bobbi Rosenberg spent over a year transforming their 1926 home at 524 Hardee Road, in the French Country Village of Coral Gables.

“We even raised the ceiling,” said Stuart. Still, Bobbi wasn’t sold on the kitchen, “but my husband promised he would make it so I could cook.” Out went the dark mahogany cabinets; in came the solid white counter, all-white cabinets, two under-counter KitchenAid ovens; a Miele refrigerator, freezer, dishwasher, and induction cooktop; a Zephyr exhaust hood; and a beautiful mosaic backsplash to tie the classic French styling all together.

Bobbi now has plenty of room to bake and cook for her large family. And knowing the Tour of Kitchens would aid budding chefs made her happy to participate. “It’s a great cause,” she said. (Styling by Plume; food by House: A Town Kitchen & Bar.)



Top: The kitchen, with mosaic backsplash and Zephyr exhaust hood

Left: Stuart and Bobbi Rosenberg enjoying the fruits of their hard work



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4

3701 Toledo Street



Antique treasures from Morocco, Istanbul, and Spain bring the world to 3701 Toledo Street, the 1925 home of Gary Cohn and Catalina Pérez, designed by H. George Fink, George Merrick’s cousin.

They made the kitchen “completely and absolutely” the heart of the home, said Pérez. “We’re always entertaining.”

The space’s showstopper is a black and white encaustic tile flooring that Pérez, principal of the graphic design studio Inkberries, fine-tuned with her eagle eye. For the custom cabinets, which are inset with quatrefoil brass screens, she looked through almost enough shades of navy to make a movie sequel, but it paid off.

“I just love that color,” she purrs. “It’s dark but happy at the same time – and it’s always elegant.” Offsetting all the drama is a simple marble countertop and matching backsplash in white. The look is complete with a stainless steel Bertazzoni range and matching exhaust hood, and a KitchenAid French door refrigerator/freezer. (Styling by Polished

Top: The kitchen, with pattern tile flooring and KitchenAid French door fridge and freezer

Left: Gary Cohn and Catalina Pérez with daughter Mia Cohen

THE FRENCH MEDITERRANEAN LIVES IN CORAL GABLES



Le Provençal Restaurant was established in 1988 with the simple goal of bringing the flavors of the French Mediterranean coast to Coral Gables.

Now, three decades later, Le Provençal has become a multi-generational restaurant and landmark in the City Beautiful.

Following a significant and striking redesign in 2018, Le Provençal continues to maintain its tradition while simultaneously drawing a new generation of diners.

Le Provençal aims to stay true to its Mediterranean culinary roots and strive to bring gastronomic innovation to Miracle Mile with the use of local and sustainable ingredients.

Lunch: Tues-Sat 12:00 – 3:30p
Dinner: Tues-Thu 6:00–10:00p
Dinner: Fri-Sat 6:00-11:00p
Brunch: Sunday 12:00-3:30p
Dinner: Sunday 6:00-9:00p

266 Miracle Mile, Coral Gables 33134

+1 (305) 448-8984

www.leprovençalrestaurant.com

What \$2.5 Million Will Buy in Coral Gables

Coral Gables has some of the most valuable real estate in South Florida, with a median price per square foot (\$423) that is almost twice that of the Miami/Fort Lauderdale area. Average prices over the last five years have risen 43 percent.

To see what \$2.5 million would buy today, we asked four real estate agents to submit one of their homes for sale in that price range – give or take a few hundred thousand dollars. Here is what they came up with, in different Gables locations.

Historic Gables

647 N. GREENWAY DRIVE

Listing Price
\$2.69M



5 bed/3.5 bath; 4,562 sq. ft.

Landmark 1938 Mediterranean/Art Deco home designed by Keihnel & Elliot, renovated in 2015. Guest cottage with 1 bed/1 bath; 2-car A/C garage; pool; walkable to downtown; across from Granada Golf Course.



Listing Agent: Audrey Ross (Compass Realty), 305.206.4003

Inside Cocoplum

7185 E. LARGO DRIVE

Listing Price
\$2.42M



5 bed/4.5 bath; 4,790 sq. ft.; 20,000 sq. ft. lot
Hollub-built home in private, guard-gated Cocoplum. Pool, master suite with sitting room and walk-in closets, family room with custom built bar, community amenities include clubhouse, tennis, volleyball, basketball, pool.



Listing Agent: Toni Schragger (Brown Harris), 305.338.9000
Courtesy: Brown Harris

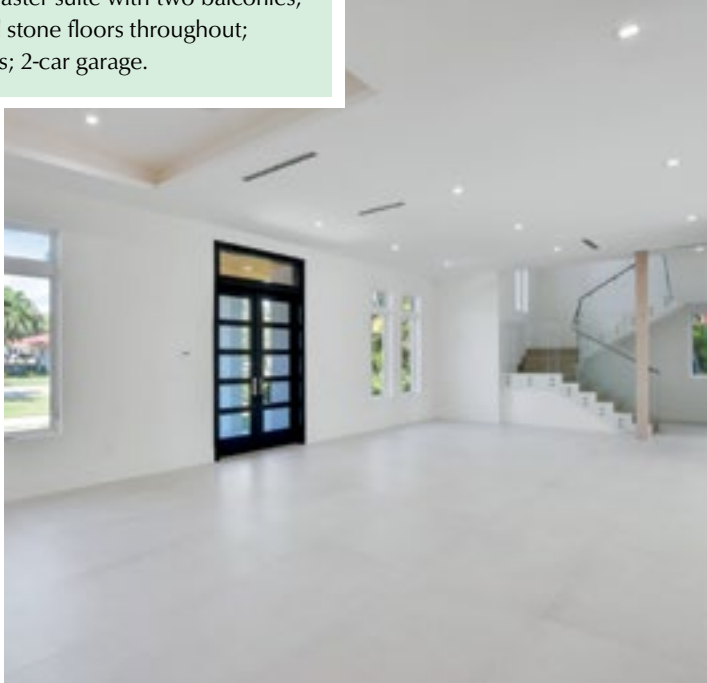
South Gables

6511 MAYNADA ST.

Listing Price
\$2.75M



5 bed/5 bath; 4,985 sq. ft.
New home walkable to University of Miami, Sunset Elementary and Shoppes at Sunset. Master suite with two balconies; saltwater pool; wood and stone floors throughout; Wolf appliances; 2-car garage.



Listing Agent: Maria Mejia (Coldwell Banker), 305.305.2109
Courtesy: Miami Real Estate Photographers

Modern Plantation

5545 RIVIERA DRIVE

Listing Price
\$2.65M



4 bed/4.5 bath; 4,677 sq. ft.; 12,000 sq. ft. lot
Plantation-style two-story surrounded by lush gardens and mature live oaks. Keystone fireplace; white oak floors; master suite with 2 walk-in closets; three upstairs bedrooms with private baths; heated pool w waterfall.



Listing Agent: Judy Zeder (EWM), 305.613.5550



Left to right:
Zucca is located in the St. Michel on Ponce.
Fiori di Zucca Ripieni Di Mozzarella
Chef Simone Mua working his magic
Ossobuco con Risotto Alla Milanese
Below: Cocktail bar in the dining room

ITALIAN CHIC

Zucca restaurant, with its northern Italian focus, pulls off the delicate balance between simple fare and sophistication

By Andrew Gayle

There is something in the modern Italian sensibility – a subtlety of design, an understatement of elegance – that elevates the simple to the sublime. Whatever that magic is, it is in full force at Zucca, which is celebrating its one-year anniversary in the hallowed haunts of Restaurant St. Michel’s old digs on Ponce de Leon and Alcazar.

For those of you who remember the Restaurant St. Michel, it was an icon of Coral Gables romantic dining. It closed five years ago, and its replacements have fallen short – until now. Zucca brings back to the brick-and-vine Hotel St. Michel a cuisine worthy of its predecessors, albeit from

a different ethnic tradition.

The cuisine of Zucca is northern Italian. More specifically it comes from the Lombardy region around Milan, where Chef Simone Mua was raised and where he learned to cook from his family at an early age. The result is authentic, artisanal food from a region of Italy that specializes in slow braising and stewing, and where rice and polenta are the dominant starches rather than pasta. “I cook simple food” he says. “I grew up with food. Both of my parents were excellent cooks and I learned from them.”

This is immediately evident in the signature dishes on the menu, including a slow-cooked Ossobuco con





Ri-
sotto
Alla Milanese
– oxtail with saffron
risotto. A tad pricey, but a huge portion
that is delightfully flavorful as it falls off
the bone. We also tried a risotto with
mixed greens, unusual but refreshingly
light and creamy.

If you want pasta, of course Chef Mua
– who previously served as chef at Miami
Beach’s famed Casa Tua – has plenty to
offer, all well priced. Our waitress recom-
mended the pasta with fillet mignon and
sun-dried tomatoes, which was perfectly
prepared al dente. It was like a family
meal in Milan, a comfort country dish.
Equally pleasing was a tagliatelle al funghi
misti – homemade pasta sautéed with wild
mushrooms. Rich and delicious, and not
suffering from too much salt, the crutch of
chefs less accomplished than Mau.

Of course, no meal should go without
Zucca’s ultimate signature dish, from
which the restaurant derives its name: The
Fiori di Zucca Ripieni Di Mozzarella –
fried zucchini flowers stuffed with mozza-
rella cheese. The chef does a variation with
ricotta cheese and lemon zest, which is a
little lighter. We preferred the first varia-
tion, which included anchovies: crunchy
and creamy all at once, filled with flavor.

Also not to be missed are some of the

The other elements
of the cuisine package
are of equal quality, from
the bread with olive
paste to the dessert menu
(don’t miss the ricotta
cheesecake, left). But of
nearly equal importance is
the décor of Zucca.

Deep green, chocolate
brown and silver grey are
the dominant three colors
– moss green columns and
forest green velvet curtains that
balance the smoky brown walls
and a silver-grey leather banquet
that runs the length of the long wall
fronting Ponce.

The seating wraps around a large
open bar in the center of the room, which
glows from banked lighting above and
copper colored lamps hanging down. Each
table of black stained wood is lit by a baby
spot from above which allows you to read a
held-out menu while softening to darkness
for the diners.

The overall effect, like the food, is a
fusion of simple elements that manages
to be worldly, refined, and cultivated

an-
tipasti
dishes, in-
cluding a terrific
grilled “Portuguese” octopus
which might well win over diners not
used to eating such fare. It was just right,
tasty but not rubbery, served with string
beans, potatoes, olives, cherry tomatoes

“I grew up with food. Both of my parents were
excellent cooks and I learned from them

Chef Simone Mua

and a parsley pesto sauce. So Mediterra-
nean: rustic elements of top quality, the
mixture creating a savory undertone. An
even greater burst to the palate came from
the Vitello Tonnato, thinly sliced veal ten-
derloin served over a tuna reduction with
capers that gave it a nice, salty punch.

Not to be underestimated is Zucca’s
wine selection, from their glass-enclosed
1,000-plus bottle wine cellar. Somelier Di-
ego Rech is superbly knowledgeable about
his wines, ready with a recommendation
and even an anecdote about the vineyard.
We stayed with Italian wines, enjoying
first a delightful 2013 Amarone della Val-
policella Chianti and then falling in love
with a rich 2011 Guilia Negri Barolo.

without being pretentious. It has attitude,
but quiet attitude, with just the right
amount of noise from diners’ chatter –
some of it in Italian, always a good sign.

Sitting in Zucca makes you feel like
you are in modern Milan, a city known
for its excellence in modern design. Like
the cuisine of Chef Mau, it is elementa-
ry yet sophisticated. Zucca promises to
age well, and to become as iconic as the
famed St. Michel itself.

ZUCCA is located at 162 Alcazar Ave-
nue, Coral Gables. For reservations, call
786.580.3731



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TOP RESTAURANTS IN CORAL GABLES

Coral Gables is a moveable feast, a veritable mecca of fine dining. It has the highest density of quality restaurants for any city in South Florida – close to 100 good dining establishments. The restaurants do cluster near the main street of Miracle Mile, but are also spread throughout the Gables. This is not the sort of town where one wanders about in shopping malls, but nonetheless there are some hidden gems in the larger malls and even out-of-the-way strip malls.

Dining hours in the Gables stretch from the early evening – when it is common to see people dining at restaurants close to where they work – until

late at night, when it's not unusual go to a restaurant at 10 pm and find the place packed, even with children. Restaurants in Coral Gables do well, and in many cases are world-class. But the culinary scene is also changing. Where once the top-flight, traditional dining spots catered to lawyers, bankers, businessmen and diplomats, there is a new crop of edgier places, with young chefs and new tastes, and more millennials eating out.

What follows is our list of the tried and true, and the innovative and new. We dine at all locations anonymously, and we list only the places where we love to eat.

| | |
|----------|-------------|
| \$ | Under \$25 |
| \$\$ | \$25-\$40 |
| \$\$\$ | \$35-\$75 |
| \$\$\$\$ | \$70-\$100+ |

Approximate prices per person for appetizer and entrée, without tax, tip or drinks.

Aromas del Peru

The shrine for ceviche, with a wide range of choices – 18 ceviches at last count – for great prices. Haute Peruvian appetizers and good fish dishes, right up to the whole fried snapper. And don't miss the pisco sour soup. Comfortable leather seats, too.
1930 Ponce de León Blvd. // 305.476.5886
\$\$ Peruvian

Bellmónt

Modern décor meets traditional Spanish dishes. Their house specialty is the roast suckling pig. If you want the whole pig (\$230 for 4) you need to order 4 hours in advance. If it's just you (\$49) you'll need to wait just 50 minutes. As for the rest: authentic Spanish cuisine, with great seafood dishes, fantastic paella.
339 Miracle Mile // 786.502.4684
\$\$\$ Spanish

Caffè Abbracci

A Gables icon, Nino Perneti's Italian restaurant is both a power lunch favorite for the business elite and a cozy evening gathering place for families and couples. Closely shepherded by the welcoming Perneti, Abbracci is quiet, elegant and flavorful. The food is so consistently good that Perneti had to publish his own cookbook.
318 Aragon Ave. // 305.441.0700
\$\$\$ Italian

Bulla Gastro

As valued for its cocktails as for its tapas, Bulla's is also something Coral Gables needs – an informal, smart neighborhood hangout with a young, boisterous vibe. Great 'small plates' and refreshing sangria. Yes, it is a national chain, but it still feels local.
2500 Ponce de Leon Blvd. // 305.441.0107
\$\$ Spanish

Brasserie Central

Secretly owned by Pascal of Ponce fame, the restaurant is half inside, half in the courtyard of the Shops.

A typical French bistro with wonderful onion soup, fresh bread, and a superb paté. Everything on the menu is fresh, French, and all you would expect from Pascal. Lots of little French touches.
Shops at Merrick Park // 786.536.9388
\$\$-\$\$\$ French

Bricktop's

Massive bar, lots of booths and an indoor/outdoor area with a fire pit all add to the traditional chop house and seafood Americana feel of Bricktop's. The place to go for Lobster bisque, grilled grouper or blackened rib eye. Good bites for happy hour (4 to 7 pm).
2418 Ponce de Leon Blvd. // 305.443.9992
\$\$ American

Caffè Violetto

Two brothers, managing to keep sibling rivalry at bay, have concocted a menu of upscale Latin food that is consistently changing and interesting. Yuca, mofongo (garlic flavored mashed plantains), and other Caribbean and Latin flavors make for a delightful evening and an out of the ordinary experience. Reservations required, always full.
4019 LeJeune Rd.
\$\$\$ Cuban/Latin

Christy's

Touted as Coral Gables oldest steakhouse, Christy's was long the power lunch go to – until it stopped serving lunch except on Fridays. Still, its aged steaks are consistently excellent, as are the seafood entrees. And their classic Caesar salad is still the best in town.
3101 Ponce de Leon Blvd. // 305.446.1400
\$\$\$ Steakhouse

Eating House

Groovy place with inventive ever-changing menu, with dishes like nutmeg risotto, pumpkin tiradito, and fried brussel sprouts. Dynamite free-range fried chicken. Simple artsy décor but superb food, excellent presentation, great value.
804 Ponce de Leon Blvd. // 305.448.6524
\$\$ Innovative American

Fleming's Prime Steakhouse

Fantastic aged steaks, a seafood tower that won't quit, and a wine cellar that appears to have no end of its depth. A place for special celebrations.
2525 Ponce de Leon Blvd. // 305.569.7995
\$\$\$ Steak & Seafood

Fratellino

Small, family run, with a fanatically loyal fan base, brilliant Italian comfort food. The long narrow set up with tile floors, wooden chairs and tablecloths makes it feel like New York's Little Italy. Their calamari, in any variation, is superb, and fettuccine with prosciutto, mushrooms and green peas? To die for.
264 Miracle Mile // 786.452.0068
\$\$\$ Italian



Grilled Octopus at Zucca

Frenchie's Diner

It looks like an all-American diner (which it once was) but this pure French cooking. Frenchie himself is usually there. Some items on the menu can get pricey (duck confit, \$32) but the onion soup (\$9) and escargots (\$11) are great values, and the croquet-monsieur (\$12) for lunch is a meal unto itself.
2618 Galiano St. // 305.442.4554
\$\$ French

Graziano's

This large, bustling Gables mainstay is true Argentine. A deep selection of Argentina wines (which line every wall) to go with churrasco meats slowly roasted over a quebracho wood fire, old school style. They have seafood and pasta, empanadas and salads, but

five diamond dazzle



The Biltmore's signature French restaurant presents fine dining at its best with a devotion to quality that is matched by a dedication to providing guests with the highest level of service. Helmed by Michelin starred Chef Gregory Pugin, Palme d'Or has received top honors from Zagat and the coveted Five Diamond Award from AAA. Overlooking the hotel's world-renowned pool, the intimate Palme d'Or dazzles the eye and the palate with beguiling cuisine!

1200 Anastasia Avenue - Coral Gables, Florida 33134 | Reservations: (855) 534-9017 | www.biltmorehotel.com

Dining Guide

come here for the meat, the selection of which will stun even hardcore carnivores.
394 Giralda // 305.774.3599
\$\$\$ Argentine

La Taberna Giralda

Routinely rated among the top tapas places in South Florida, La Taberna brings the added twist of a chef from Galicia, who puts his own regional spin the dishes. It's a small place with a neighborhood vibe, orange walls, string lights and live flamenco on the weekends (\$5 cover), so reservations are a must.
254 Giralda Avenue // 786.362.5677
\$\$ Spanish

Ichimi

This off-Mile eatery has developed a cult following, with diners content to wait and stand and stare, just for the opportunity to eat Ichimi's Japanese noodles and rice bowls. And the wait is worth it. Delicious, rich and faraway flavors in dishes you can't find just anywhere, in a raw, cool space.
2330 Salzedo St. // 305.960.7016
\$-\$\$ Japanese

John Martin's Irish Pub

Where else in the Gables can you find a relaxed Irish pub with excellent pub comfort food like shepherd's pie, bangers & mash, and fish & chips? Answer: nowhere. Which is why this long-established eatery and bar is so beloved by its clientele. Lots of America staples as well, from hot pastrami on rye to their

signature Pub Burger, music on weekends.
253 Miracle Mile // 305.445.3777
\$ Pub Food

La Dorada

Regarded by many to be the finest restaurant devoted to seafood in the Gables, La Dorada is traditional Spanish cooking with a deep-sea focus (and a pleasant, ocean-deco décor). The house specialty is baked whole fish crusted in sea salt, but don't miss the traditional Mediterranean seafood stews or the shellfish prepared Galician style.
177 Giralda // 305.446.2002
\$\$\$\$ Spanish Seafood

La Palma

Exquisite setting in a historic building with lovely courtyard dining. For years, La Palma was known for its incredible lunch buffet. At \$13.95 it's still a bargain, but now served only on Tuesdays. For other weekdays, they have an executive lunch for \$17.95. And good to know they always have pasta fagioli, the Tuscan white bean soup.
116 Alhambra Circle // 305.445.8777
\$-\$\$\$ Italian

La Provençal

This Gables mainstay (30 years in the same location) is under new ownership, so expect some innovations to French standards duck l'orange and steak au poivre – like a Mediterranean grill with octopus, mussels, scallops, black rice and saffron garlic aioli. New side-

walk seating, perfect pre-theater location.
266 Miracle Mile // 305.448.8984
\$\$\$ French Mediterranean

Mariposa

Mariposa floats like a butterfly in a far-off corner overlooking the garden courtyard of the Park. The food is light fare, as one might expect at a Neiman Marcus, with prices not so light. Salads, soups, cocktails – a casual place to rest after having spent far more than you planned.
Shops at Merrick Park // 786.999.1018
\$\$\$ New American

Matsuri

Just over the city line at Bird and Red roads, Matsuri is tucked humbly away in non-descript Red Bird Shopping Center. Yet it serves the world-class sushi, the finest anywhere in South Florida, and has an enormous menu of traditional Japanese food as well. You will need reservations to snag a seat from its devoted clientele.
5759 Bird Rd. // 305.663.1615
\$\$-\$\$\$ Japanese

Mesa Mar

A relative newcomer, though the family has been in the restaurant business for many years. Some of the best seafood in the Gables. Try the golden-fried hognapper accompanied by lobster bisque with whole chunks of Florida lobster. Also serves delicious ceviches.
264 Giralda Ave. // 305.640.8448
\$\$\$ Seafood

Morton's Coral Gables

Morton's in the Gables is not just another Morton's. It's setting in the Colonnades gives it a unique elegance, with outdoor seating under the arches. Dependable quality, prime-aged beef, and excellent salads. Good place to take that important client. Great happy hour with filet mignon sandwiches or short rib tacos for \$8.
2333 Ponce de Leon Blvd. // 305.442.1662
\$\$\$ Steakhouse

Old Lisbon

It's just outside the Gables in South Miami, but if you want great Portuguese food this is the place. The best codfish in town (11 variations), great mussels with a special sauce, and unique dishes like grilled Portuguese sardines and traditional caldo verde (potato and sausage) soup. Good service, and Portuguese wines at good prices.
5837 Sunset Drive // 305.662.7435
\$\$-\$\$\$ Portuguese

Ortanique on the Mile

A long-time favorite on Miracle Mile, Ortanique is named for a tropical citrus fruit (their sister restaurant is in Grand Cayman) and its Caribbean fine dining reflects chef Cindy Hutson's commitment to "cuisine of the sun." A warm and welcoming place.
278 Miracle Mile // 305.446.7710
\$\$ Caribbean

Palm d'Or

The award-winning Palm d'Or is a dining icon in Coral Gables. At once traditional and innovative, the French cuisine created by Chef Gregory Pugin is a work of art, literally. Each serving in his \$115 six-

course meals – or his \$155 chef's tasting menu – is impeccable in taste and appearance.
1200 Anastasia Ave. (at the Biltmore Hotel)
305.913.3200 \$\$\$\$ French

Pascal's On Ponce

Elegant, quaint and delicious, Pascal's is the home and culinary canvas of owner-chef Pascal Oudin, who brings authentic classic French cuisine to the heart of the city. Meticulous in every detail. Oudin excels in seafood, soufflés and desserts. Try the leeks & hearts of palm salad.
2611 Ponce de Leon Blvd. // 305.444.2024
\$\$\$ French

Pincho Factory

One of the few places where you can get really delicious food at a low price in the Gables, this home-grown chain (based here) combines Brazilian shish kabob (served in rice bowls or as wraps) with uniquely flavored hamburgers. A guilty pleasure for the well to do.
30 Giralda Ave. // 305.446.5666
\$ Latin Street Food

Red Koi Lounge

If you like Thai food, then you will love Red Koi, which takes the Asian specialty up a notch. Their Bangkok Shrimp is worth the visit alone, and their cashew curry chicken will make you come back. Hopefully they will be expanding their few outdoor tables soon.

317 Miracle Mile // 305.446.2690
\$\$ Thai

Ruth's Chris Steakhouse

There is a reason that the tables at Ruth's are typically full, even on week nights. This is where the best steaks are sent and where cholesterol is sent to the devil for the sake of extraordinary taste. Lots of wood paneling, wonderful service, and huge wine selection complete the package.
2320 Salzedo St. // 305.461.8360
\$\$\$\$ Steakhouse

Seasons 52

The restaurant for healthy eaters who enjoy quality as well. The menu, changing four times a year with each season, is always full of inventive treatments for fresh veggies, soups and salads. Their fish and meat dishes are great values, and the flat bread menu is really a nice touch. It's a chain, but we forgive them.
321 Miracle Mile // 305.442.8552
\$\$ Healthy American

Swine

Like the name says, this place is about everything porcine, from pork belly salad (\$8) all the way to the suckling pig (\$38). A kind of upscale-rural wood-and-brick feel, and a tad pricey for country fare, but man, do they know their way around a pig – along with other Southern things, like fried chicken.
2415 Ponce de Leon // 786.360.6533
\$\$\$ Southern

Talavera Cocina Mexicana

High ceilings and ceramics make this a pleasant place to dine, but it's the authentic fare that shines. The place for Mexicans home sick for cooking that's not Tex-Mex. The chicken mole poblano is a winner at \$20, and their huarache grill – masa flat breads that are really haute tacos – are great at \$17.
2299 Ponce de Leon Blvd. // 305.444.2955
\$\$ Mexican

Tarpon Bend

Tarpon Bend is full even on off days. Why? Great, fresh fish at reasonable prices, like cedar plank salmon with veggies for \$25 or Asian tuna burger for \$15. Owner Wayne stays on top of quality and it shows. Their daily special features three fish prepared any way you like. Big happy hour scene, loyal followers.
65 Miracle Mile // 305.444.3210
\$\$ Seafood

Zucca

A worthy heir to the hallowed grounds of the old St. Michel restaurant, this one-year-old is a new star in the raiment of Italian eateries in the Gables. Distinctly northern Italian, with the home-taught recipes that chef Simone Mua learned in his native Milan. Modern Italian design, with haute comfort food and great service.
162 Alcazar Ave. // 786.580.3731
\$\$\$ Northern Italian

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Where Has Gibraltar Gone?

INSIDE THE LATEST RESHUFFLING OF BANKS IN THE GABLES



Gables-based Dennis Nason is a long-time banker and executive placement consultant

“The acquisition of Gibraltar by Iberia Bank will reshuffle the players...”

Gibraltar has been captured again by the Spaniards, Iberia Bank. Despite the name, however, Iberia is from Louisiana. Branches of the Cajun bank have begun springing up in South Florida as bank mergers and acquisitions become part of our landscape. Iberia Bank is pushing into South Florida, having first taken over Sabadell with its expansive branch network, trade finance, and solid client base. Its latest acquisition, Gibraltar, is another gem.

What Iberia acquired in Gibraltar is perhaps the best Miami-based bank in wealth management and client service. It is spot on with the way commercial and branch banking is going, as the thirst for deposits fuels the growth. Furthermore, the staff runs quite deep at Gibraltar, headed by Angel Medina, an experienced and highly regarded banker. They will keep most of the personnel and assuredly most of the clients. In addition to its headquarters in Coral Gables, and two more branches in Miami, Gibraltar Bank also has a bank in New York, Naples, and in the millionaire’s resort Ocean Reef. This coverage will make Iberia Bank a formidable player in South Florida, and with assets approaching \$29 billion it has suddenly become one of the largest banks in the area.

Gibraltar handled their business slightly differently than other local banks. Founded by local Southeast Bankers about twenty years ago, they started with a heavy emphasis on wealth management. They were the first bank

to openly recognize the newly acquired wealth of athletes in our community, managing their money and helping them buy homes. Following the new rules initiated by 9/11, the collapse of the financial system in 2008, and a jump in regulations for offshore deposits, Gibraltar, like many other competitors, suffered as a result. But with hard work, dedication and good management, Gibraltar rebuilt itself. Until now, it was passed over as a purchase opportunity, which was unfortunate considering its excellent value. Gibraltar’s style of private banking, close coordination between the wealth management, real estate and lending giving it a leg up on its competitors.

Yes, the acquisition of Gibraltar by Iberia Bank will reshuffle the players, once it’s approved by the regulators. The current thinking is that Gibraltar’s office will stay in the current location and will become the private banking area of Iberia. The office will be headed by Orlando Roche, currently with Sabadell (now LaSalle) and formerly with Northern Trust. Angel Medina will be the leader of private banking, and all will report to Paco Perez-Hickman, who will oversee the area for LaSalle Bank. Mario Treva, former head of Southeast Bank for South Florida, will be president of Iberia Bank. And it will be good for Coral Gables since Gibraltar has not gone away and most of the branches and people will stay here and service the community.

Why Not Us?

IN THE NATIONAL CONTEST TO WIN AMAZON’S NEW DISTRIBUTION CENTER - ALONG WITH IT’S 50,000 JOBS - GREATER MIAMI CAN MAKE A COMPELLING ARGUMENT



Mark Trowbridge is the president and CEO of the Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce

“We have to believe we can win. We have to know we will...”

The growing excitement around the potential expansion and location of Amazon’s HQ2 in South Florida is both palpable and exciting. Yes, making the top 20 of any open, national competition this compelling, this transformative, and this energizing is cause for celebration.

But the biggest prize is still to be won. And even though second-round site visits are already underway with the 20 finalists, there is still plenty of time to improve our stock and elevate our standing. To be candid, I am obsessed with this project, constantly looking for small nuggets that could give Miami the decisive edge. Sure, Jeff Bezos is a Miamian, but we need a ticket even more golden to win!

I agree with much of the discussion that there are inherent challenges in any corporate bid as there are no perfect matches in life or business. In fact, the eternal optimist in me believes it is the areas of challenge in our plan that provide the greatest opportunities for all of us.

We can talk openly about transportation woes or workforce needs or even the fact that we are struggling with sea level rise and climate change on our peninsula. But, we also need to celebrate and elevate our most stellar attributes – our diversity, our can-do attitude that is the ethos of an immigrant community, our galva-

nizing spirit and desire to win, and our entrepreneurial vitality and youth.

A company like Amazon is looking for a community that meets their business needs as much as their desire to forever alter the landscape of their new home base.

Let’s stop the naysaying and hand-wringing that doesn’t do us any good. Let’s focus on how together we will transform this community together through job creation, wage growth, solutions-based problem solving, and the best minds working together every single day to address our long-standing challenges.

We will be buoyed by the corporate social-responsibility attitude and investment of a game-changing corporate partner like Amazon that will no doubt inspire other local companies to invest, as well.

In the coming weeks and months, the world will watch and the nation will shake its head in affirmation of Miami and our ability to shine the bright light of success on our business community. We have to believe we can win. We have to know we will.

And, when Jeff Bezos opens the envelope and says Miami, I hope the celebration is as heralded and embraced as the arrival of David Beckham and MLS Soccer. It certainly needs to be!

To that end, I simply ask, why not us?

Voices

Your Money By John W. Harris

The 2018 Tax Reform Bill: What You Need to Know, Part I

ON DECEMBER 22, 2017, PRESIDENT TRUMP SIGNED INTO LAW THE FIRST SIGNIFICANT REFORM OF THE U.S. TAX CODE SINCE RONALD REAGAN WAS IN OFFICE. HERE IS PART 1 OF HOW IT WILL AFFECT YOUR FINANCES



John W. Harris is the managing director and chief wealth advisor for the Coral Gables Trust Company

“Florida becomes a more compelling domicile...”

The new tax act will affect how we make decisions on estate planning, buying a home, health insurance, setting up a business, and even divorce agreements. In this series, we will highlight major parts of the law to keep in mind, starting with individual income taxes.

Personal tax rates and income brackets will be lowered, yet they will also expire (or sunset) at the end of 2025. Specifically, the top rate falls from 39.6% to 37%, the 35% bracket stays the same, while the 33% bracket falls to 32%, the 28% bracket to 24%, the 25% bracket to 22%, and the 15% bracket to 12%. The lowest bracket remains at 10%. The standard deduction has essentially doubled, while the personal exemption has been removed. The deduction/exemption trade off works well for most people but may not for those with many dependents. The law also temporarily raises the exemption amount and exemption phaseout threshold for the alternative minimum tax (AMT), which affects higher earners. These changes also sunset at the end of 2025. The sunset provisions were necessary as a compromise to allow for the expeditious passage of the tax reform bill.

The deduction for state and local income taxes, property taxes and sales tax, or SALT, remains in place for those who itemize their taxes, but it is now subject to a \$10,000 cap. This will likely hurt taxpayers

and homeowners in high tax states (New York, New Jersey, California, etc.). As Florida's SALT is much more reasonable, Florida increasingly becomes a more compelling comparative domicile from a tax perspective, with a positive relative impact on Florida residential real estate values. The mortgage interest deduction for new home purchases has also been lowered somewhat from \$1 million to \$750,000 post Dec. 15, 2017.

Also beginning in 2018 the deduction for interest paid on a home equity line will no longer be eligible for the home mortgage interest deduction (with certain exceptions for the purchase of real estate and or direct improvement thereof). The new tax law does still preserve the deduction of mortgage debt used to acquire a second home.

The tax deduction for alimony payments will no longer be deductible for the person who writes the checks. This provision will apply to couples who sign divorce or separation paperwork after December 31, 2018.

While Obamacare was not repealed, the new tax law does permanently end the Obamacare individual mandate starting in 2019. The individual mandate provided for tax penalties for individuals who did not obtain health insurance coverage.

Next Month Part II: Estate Planning

Social Seen

Art & Culture Night at the Biltmore Parc

MG DEVELOPER LAUNCHES ITS QUARTERLY SERIES FOR ARTISTS

Coral Gables-based MG Developer featured Venezuelan contemporary artists Uaio Antor and Adriana Dorta at the first of its Arts & Culture Night series. The quarterly event focuses on artists who are part of the Biltmore Parc's rotating art collection.

Guests enjoyed drinks and hors d'oeuvres by Zucca, live music, and a panel discussion with the artists and collection curator Adriana Meneses. The panel was moderated by Coral Gables Magazine Publisher Richard Roffman.

“We are excited to share

our passion for Coral Gables' vibrant arts scene and to provide a unique space for residents to gather and be inspired,” said Alirio Torrealba, CEO of MG Developer. “We look forward to hosting these quarterly creative celebrations at various locations throughout the Biltmore Square community as part of our mission to support the cultural landscape of The City Beautiful.”

Biltmore Parc, a 32-unit, boutique luxury condominium, is located at 718 Valencia Avenue, and is the second midrise in Biltmore Square.



Publisher Richard Roffman greets the guests



Antor, Meneses, Torrealba, Dorta and Roffman

Photos: Maginate Photography

ADOPT A NEW FAMILY MEMBER

Meet our newest faces twice a month at our Open House.

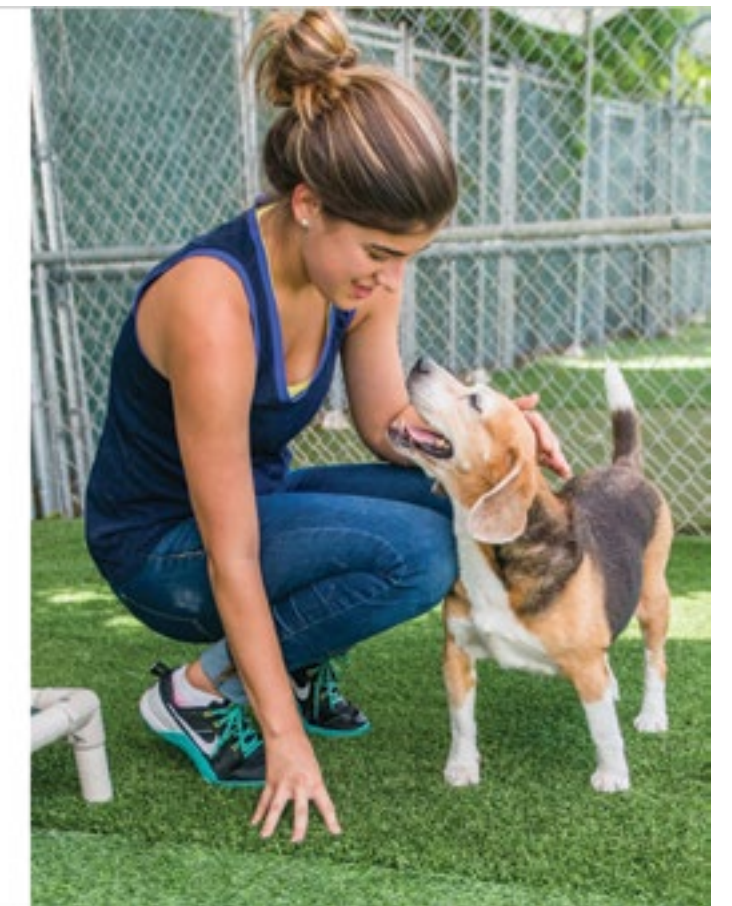
Next Open House:

Saturday, April 21

12:00pm - 4:00pm
8717 SW 134th Street
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We are a 501(c)3 nonprofit volunteer group saving dogs from euthanasia in Miami-Dade County. Located off US1, we offer the neighborhood convenient adoption and boarding services, benefitting homeless pets. Learn more at www.paws4you.org.

PAWS4YOU



Time Machine

THE GREEN MILE

In the late 1940s, you could stand in the middle of Miracle Mile and view emblematic Coral Gables landmarks such as the Miracle Theatre and

Coral Gables City Hall. Today, the theater hides behind the branches of leafy live oaks and a new row of date palms along the Mile's new median. Want a

better view of the whole area? Park your car at the top of the garage at 220 Aragon Avenue, then peek over the rooftop's southern edge.



1949



2018

IN
1949

George Orwell's
1984 is published

Soviet Union tests its
first atomic bomb

RCA debuts first
television broadcast
in color

The Berlin Blockade
officially comes to an
end

CBS premieres the
The Goldbergs, TV's
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Photo top: City of
Coral Gables Historical
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Annual Percentage Yields (APYs) are accurate as of 1/1/18. The minimum balance to open an account and obtain the advertised APYs is \$25,000.00 up to a maximum of \$1,000,000.00. Stated APYs are valid for Personal and Business account customers. Advertised rates are subject to change without notice. Penalties for early withdrawal may be imposed. Fees could reduce earnings on the account. CD will automatically renew for the same CD term at the current rate and APY available at that time. This offer applies only to funds transferred from another institution. Offer is valid through 5/31/18.

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