

# WHAT'S HAUTE

# Miami

BY CHRISTINA BOHNSTENGEL



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As Miamians, our appetite for entertainment can be quite insatiable. We have been catered to and coddled to such an extent that nothing short of novel creative genius will impress us anymore. Thankfully the powers that be heeded our call to raise the bar on what constitutes the good life, and luxury boutique hotels, sexy supper clubs, and international dining venues have risen up like shining beacons of pleasure.

Take for example, the **W South Beach**. When this property opened in July, right in the heart of resort row on Collins Avenue, South Beach scenesters showed their support by lining up three-and-four deep along 22nd Street just to get a glimpse inside. As the first outpost of the W brand in Miami and the new flagship for the global brand, it took a slew of those creative geniuses to deliver the breathtaking results. Art Deco elements blended with a contemporary design motif make for a sleek aesthetic that feels like the haute couture of luxury interiors. With artwork from Aby Rosen's private collection, Italian sofas, and a 120-foot-long marble wall, the lobby itself is worth a visit, but you'll find the sophisticated jetsetters lounging in the Living Room Bar, clubbing at the ultra-exclusive Wall, or enjoying a Sunday fun-day poolside at Wet.

For guests staying at the hotel, one and two-bedroom ocean suites, beach bungalows, W's signature presidential suites, and penthouse accommodations offer private sanctuaries right in the heart of our American Riviera. With amenities too long to list, if there is a pampering comfort that can be dreamt of, the W South Beach can offer it. Bliss spa is slated for a December opening, and the property also offers tennis courts, basketball courts, an expansive outdoor garden, and a fitness facility with panoramic city views.

Additionally, a nod towards the luxury resort would not be complete without a Mr. Chow mention. An August opening ensured that **Mr. Chow Miami** had plenty of time to build the buzz throughout the summer months, and executive chef Nick Jinson Du is more than happy to deliver on the hype. Hailing from





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one of China's most renowned resort restaurants, Made in China, he finally brings his unique culinary techniques for pulling pasta to the States. The Michael Chow restaurant brand built an international reputation as a celeb favorite, and now the South Beach scenesters are joining in on the delectable action. Seating more than 300 guests in the interior restaurant, bar, and al fresco dining area, artwork from Mr. Chow's renowned private collection, including a 125-foot gold-leaf and Swarovski crystal chandelier designed by Chow himself, decorates the space.

After a stint of South Beach resort life, the time comes to venture off of the property. No need to go far though, as the entertainment complex of **Bancroft Supperclub** awaits just seven blocks south. Developed in the Art Deco space of the Bancroft Hotel, the venue is a well-executed blend of a

chichi organic restaurant helmed by Chef Tim Andriola, sharing space with a nighttime den of debauchery befitting South Beach club lore. It has been described as a 20s-style jazz hall, but it is also so much more. With various bars, tabletop dancing girls, and a terrace lounge that makes people-watching on Collins Avenue a nighttime event, Bancroft Supperclub has become the über haute hangout on the beach. And considering the nightmare that traffic and parking on this stretch of South Beach can be, it is the ideal all-in-one venue for dinner, drinks, and dancing.

For the Lincoln Road groupies, a stroll down the strip requires a visit to **Meat Market Miami**. Located in the old Pacific Time haunt from the good ole days of prosperity, since its opening last November, fans claim not to recognize the 4,400-square-foot revamped interiors. With an inspiration to catapult the

conventional American steakhouse into the 21st century, restaurateur David Tornek and Chef Sessel incorporate contemporary designs complete with sleek lines with wood and stone in shades of grey. The décor goes against the grain of traditional scale chophouses, to be sure, complete with a bar that features the spices of life that Brasilia resists, such as oysters with yuzu truffle migas, atomic horseradish and habanero cocktail sauce, mahi-mahi with green tomato, jalapeño juice, corn and a touch of tequila. With a self-proclaimed irreverent use of ingredients, the red meat creations include Kobe skirt steak marinated in grass, ginger, and roasted local chili; buffalo loin steak with a chili and espresso rub, topped with bittersweet chocolate mole butter; and a 16-ounce prime ancho and coffee marinated bone-in vealignon from Niman Ranch.

For the ultra fancy palates, a trip to the pearl location of **The Webster** is a must. This shopping boutique opened in a temporary space in 2007, while fashion mavens, caviar lovers, and owners Laure Hériard Dubreuil, Frederic Drouot, and Milan Vukmirovic waited with baited breath for the completion of the final destination. In 2009, the fateful day finally arrived. Not only is the 20,000-square-foot emporium housed in a building with luxury brands like Balenciaga, Prada, Lanvin, Miu, and Marc Jacobs, along with exclusive pieces from Tom Ford and Yves Saint Laurent, the story venue in the heart of South Beach's Art Deco district is also the U.S. outpost for the acclaimed Parisian restaurant, **Caviar Kaspia Miami**. The original Caviar Kaspia has served the likes of Nicolas Sarkozy, Yves Saint Laurent, Valentino, Wintour, and Karl Lagerfeld. The Miami venue is sure to serve our own American royalty, with renowned caviars like Sevruga, Oscietra, and Wild salmon, duck foie gras, lobster medallions, specially bottled vodka, and Champagne also on the menu. French art adorns the walls throughout The Webster and Caviar Kaspia, and each space has a specific dedication, like the third floor gallery showcase, featuring Aurélie Biderman, Lalaounis, and Solange Azagury-Partridge, or the private rooftop terrace serving as the setting for elite, luxury brand events.

But Caviar Kaspia doesn't have the lock on fancy French cuisine on the beach. While restaurants on Lincoln Road have long been spotlighted for visitors to our fair city, a true trip in beachside luxury awaits in the über hip and trendy SoFi (or South of Fifth for those of you who are not in the know). Turning up the heat in SoFi is **André de Cochon**. The famed Paris-based brasserie features menu items like Iberian ham imported from Spain, Nova Scotian lobster, and oysters in



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PHOTOGRAPHY BY ZOLTAN

from France. The escargot is to die for, and Sunday brunchers have taken over this eatery because of the omelets and eggs benedict. The fact that Au Pied de Cochon is open 24 hours-a-day, all year long, means that following a late night of drinks and dancing, it is one of the only haute spots to hit for after-hours munchies.

When Raphael Reboh opened his sophisticated salon in the heart of South Beach, the style mavens breathed a sigh of relief. **Femme Coiffure Hair Spa**, located in Ritz-Carlton South Beach, features interiors that are worthy of its luxury location, with shelving, styling stations, and marble flooring finished in high-gloss stark white, accented with powder blue furnishings and the product placement of the emerald green René Furterer collection, all underlit with

LED lighting. From the top-of-the-line products to the state-of-the-art hair restoration equipment, and one of the poshest locales on the beach, we would expect nothing short of singing in the streets in praise of the opening of these elegant doors.

After stints on resort row, Lincoln Road, and SoFi, a short trip to the north side of the island will deliver luxury galore. The Bal Harbour Shops have long been celebrated as one of the top shopping destinations in the world. Recently, they added to the exclusive shopping directory with the addition of the Carolina Herrera boutique as well as **Roberto Cavalli Bal Harbour**. Both designers came to town for their grand openings and hosted separate private events for their favorite fashionistas. The Cavalli boutique, encompassing 3,000 square

feet, is the largest and most lavish to date with or walls finished in burnished brass Venetian plaster with gold dusting, and one wall featuring a beautiful textured damask pattern. Even the floor has an opulent feel, made of a special resin with speckles of 14-karat gold. The boutique offers plenty of dramatic touches such as a special lingerie area hidden behind curtains of Swarovski crystals, and a VIP lounge with alternating décor depending on the theme of the current season's runway presentation. With plush leather-covered couches and special one-of-a-kind pieces, the VIP area evokes an opulent, wardrobe-like environment offering the ultimate shopping experience.

Believe it or not, all of the action is not relegated to the beach alone. As Miami mainlanders will attest, there are dozens of destinations across the beachfront that are equally deserving of praise. The perfect example is **Club 50 at the Viceroy**. When George Perez's Icon Brickell hit the downtown scene just in time for an exclusive preview during Art Basel in December, the town couldn't stop talking. In 2012, we have been blessed with the official opening of the three towers that have redefined Miami's downtown skyline. The third tower has garnered the attention from the elite power players, both local and on an international scale, for the third tower is the home of the legendary Viceroy Miami hotel, not just the room accommodations that have lured vacationers and staycationers gawking and squawking, but year it is the semi-exclusive rooftop lounge, Club 50 that has won the hearts of the city's most notoriously hard-to-please tastemakers. From fashion shows to celebrity-laden cocktail parties, Club 50 at the Viceroy has cast its spell on the movers and shakers of the Magic City. Private elevator escorts the elite power players to the top floor of the Kelly Wearstler-designed hotel and lounge. From the dizzying height of 50 stories up in the air, the floor-to-ceiling wall of windows showcase Miami's never-ending display of twinkling nighttime lights. The interiors could be described as *Goldfinger* meets *Midcentury Modern*, with turquoise and citrine paying an ode to Miami's tropical style. Outdoors, Club 50's private rooftop pool reflects an Asian influence that is as haute enough for the sophisticated set that grace its terrace. And just to prove how haute they really are, a sampling from the liquid opportunities entertainment menu includes cigars from Guaymas Grand Reserve and Cohiba Puro Dominicana.

Located on the 15th floor of the same famed Viceroy hotel, the name **Eos**, which translates to new dawn in Greek, hopes to incorporate the philosophy of the name by waking up the culinary scene of the Magic City. Recognized with top honors from *Bon Appetit* and *Food & Wine*, the super food duo of Donatella Arpaia and executive chef Michael Psilakis have created Eos' exotic menu incorporating ingredi-





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and entrée items from far away lands like Portugal, Spain, and Morocco. The 27-foot bar, crafted from Brescia pontifica marble in swirling hues of pink, yellow, and white, is not only the focal point of the restaurant, but also serves as the parking spot for the elite guest list of Hollywood starlets like Sharon Stone and Phoebe Cates, along with hometown heroes Emilio and Gloria Estefan, who showed their support at the opening in May.

Another mainland favorite, **Da Vittorio** reopened under a new moniker late last year, but with the same Coral Gables address. Reality personality Fabian Basabe is running the business side of the eatery, while Roman-born Chef Vittorio Lozzi offers a menu that has been compared to Italy's greatest hits, meaning a myriad of noodles prepared in a dizzying array of styles. Hosting international businessmen for power lunches and local celebrities for intimate evening meals, Da Vittorio is winning the battle to entice diners off of the beach, as is the newly opened Sci Sci restaurant in Brickell, which specializes in southern Italian fare. The restaurant, located in the new 1060 condo building, is packed nightly with scenesters who are sick of the hassles associated with some South Beach venues.

And when you've had enough of Miami all together, a short jaunt north to the shores of Ft. Lauderdale is sure to relax the nerves and revive the senses. Rising up to meet the demands of South Florida's most discerning residents and visitors is the **W Fort Lauderdale**. Remember the time when you were a child and life was easy because it consisted of only three things: recess, naps, and snack time? The W Ft. Lauderdale is just such a playground, albeit for adults, offering such delights that we remember from childhood. Recess takes place in not one, but two sleek infinity pools; private cabanas and posh guest rooms are ideal for the much needed afternoon siesta; and savory cocktails and an array of award-winning menu items ensure that this will be better than snack time at summer camp. Prepare for the night to come at Bliss Spa with a youth-as-we-know-it facial or hot milk and almond pedicure. **STEAK 954**, an ultra-modern, sexy boutique steakhouse guarantees to satisfy the palate of any red meat lover, but for those seeking the ultimate experience, request a table in the lavish outdoor garden. Next, make your way to Whiskey Blue, a cutting-edge lounge where you can wrap up the evening with cocktails and dancing.

From the luxury boutique hotels to electrifying nightclubs and exotic fine dining establishments, there is a reason snowbirds flock here every winter. It is the perfect culmination of nightlife, tropical beaches and people from all over the world that make Miami the unique super-power that it is. 