

THE
CITY BEAUTIFUL

THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO DOING BUSINESS IN CORAL GABLES & CHAMBER OF COMMERCE DIRECTORY

Centennial
EDITION
1925-2025



CORAL GABLES
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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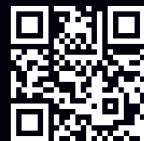
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CORAL GABLES
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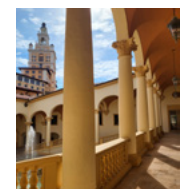
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COVER PHOTO:



Biltmore Hotel 1927



Biltmore Hotel 2024

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PHOTO: Rodolfo Benitez



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Welcome to the City Beautiful



Coral Gables is undergoing significant developments and planning for an even brighter future. Our city boasts a robust and resilient economy, unaffected by seasonal shifts, making it a highly desirable location for both domestic and international investments. With over 50,000 residents, Coral Gables offers a unique blend of strategic location and accessibility. Just a short drive from Miami International Airport and PortMiami, and 35 miles from Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport and Port Everglades, our city is well-connected to key destinations.

Coral Gables stands out as a premium office market in South Florida, offering more than 11.5 million-square-feet of prime office space. Our city's total tax-assessed value is an impressive \$19.5 billion. For corporate officers and employees, Coral Gables is not just a place to work but an ideal place to live, with world-class restaurants, first-class hotels, rich cultural offerings, and a wide range of retail establishments. Our international professional population and connectivity to the world place Coral Gables at the heart of a dynamic business ecosystem, serving as a gateway to Latin America.

We are proud to announce that Apple will be leasing over 40,000-square-feet of office space at The Plaza to house their headquarters. Additionally, FIFA will establish its HQ in Coral Gables, further cementing our city as a premier destination for global businesses. Since the onset of the pandemic, Coral Gables has added 36 new restaurants and 32 retail businesses in the commercial district, with approximately 20 new restaurants and four retail stores scheduled to open soon.

Our commitment to a business-friendly environment is well-recognized. In 2021, Coral Gables was ranked the third top small city in the country to start a small business by go.verizon.com. Key factors for this distinction included our strong financial climate, highly skilled workforce, short commute times, and high

income per capita. Additionally, our pro-business tax climate, which includes limited corporate taxes and no state/local personal income tax, makes business dollars go further in Florida.

Coral Gables has consistently demonstrated strong fiscal management, evidenced by our AAA bond ratings from Fitch Ratings, Standard & Poor's, and Moody's. This strong financial position allows us to continue providing superior services and amenities while investing in our infrastructure. Our real estate market is equally impressive, with high-quality schools, responsive municipal services, and a thoughtful integration of built and natural landscapes.

For shopping and dining, Miracle Mile, Giralda Plaza, and the surrounding downtown streets offer a European-style outdoor dining and shopping experience. We are a culinary destination, home to highly acclaimed Zagat-rated and James Beard Foundation honored restaurants. Fashion and style come to life at the Shops at Merrick Park, anchored by luxury retailers like Neiman Marcus and Nordstrom.

Public safety remains a top priority. Coral Gables continues to be one of the safest cities in South Florida, thanks to an increase in police and fire personnel and innovative programs such as a manned drone project and telehealth capabilities in our rescue vehicles. The remodeling and expansion of the Riviera Fire Station, the inauguration of a new headquarters, and the groundwork for Fire House 4 further demonstrate our commitment to ensuring the safety and well-being of every resident.

Thank you for your engagement and support. Together, we are building a brighter, safer, and more vibrant future for all. Let's continue this dialogue, keep the lines of communication open, and turn these plans into actions for the betterment of our beloved city.

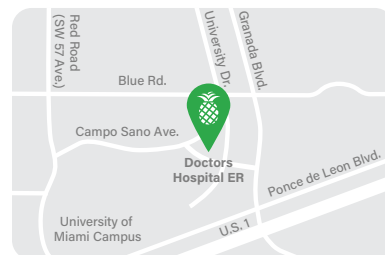
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City of Coral Gables



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Greetings, Coral Gables!



Looking toward our Chamber's centennial this upcoming year, we offer a heartfelt "thank you" to our businesses, residents, consumers, visitors, and community leaders as we celebrate our collective successes and significant milestones.

While it has been an incredibly challenging four years for the businesses in the City Beautiful, together we have embraced our future and created a business climate second to none. Business matters to the Gables, and we are the envy of our fellow communities. With nearly 1,000 people moving into Florida each day, we are poised as a business environment to embrace this unique opportunity.

As we continue to define and refine our downtown, Coral Gables is reaping the benefits of a better-than-predicted economic boom – new-to-market global companies like Ryder and FIFA now call our City Beautiful home. Coral Gables is ripe for these opportunities as corporations choose the Gables over our neighboring communities, and those that are already here choose to grow here at home. I am so proud of our local businesses and their resiliency, and trust that this trend will only continue.

Oft-awarded chef-driven restaurants and sought-after retailers dot the landscape. Names like Keller, Rapicavoli, and Bernstein continue to win awards and raise our foodie profile in the South Florida restaurant community. Our official Welcome Center took full advantage of this embarrassment of riches this past fall to launch a quarterly food tour, with many thanks to the support of a Miami-Dade County Tourist Development grant.

With our Chamber's centennial less than a year away, the time is perfect to think about our future. This latest edition of our award-winning comprehensive business guide and membership directory contemplates just that, produced by our much-val-

ued publishing partner, *Coral Gables Magazine*, and supported by our city's Economic Development Department. It's just what you need to help navigate all things business in Coral Gables and get further acquainted with the people, places, and companies that define our City Beautiful.

Most importantly, you will find detailed information on each of our GEM Level investors, trustees, and business members – the companies that have made a significant investment in our Chamber and have led with great conviction. We hope you will recognize and honor their commitment by patronizing these establishments throughout the year and trusting them with your business.

Since our founding by the visionary George E. Merrick in 1925, the Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce has been dedicated to making our community an epicenter for business, with a significant nod to the international marketplace and Consular Corps community, while diligently serving our resident, employee, and visitor populations.

Our action-oriented Chamber has always been a catalyst for the ever-evolving City Beautiful on the big stage. We will continue to work collaboratively to make Coral Gables the premier destination to do business, raise a family, get a world-class education, enrich your lives, and immerse yourself in unparalleled culture.

Thank you to all of our businesses for joining us on this journey as we tap into the unique power of YOU!

Mark A. Trowbridge
President & CEO
Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce

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The Power of YOU



Welcome to “The City Beautiful,” where residents, business owners, students, entrepreneurs, artists and others contribute to the distinctive charm and appeal of Coral Gables – a city that holds a special place in my heart.

I am a proud alumnus of Coral Gables Senior High School – I grew up a couple of blocks from Coral Gables, and it was my lifelong dream to live in the Gables one day. In 2016, that dream became a reality when my family and I moved to Coral Gables.

Coral Gables is more than just a place; it is a vibrant community where beauty, opportunity, and a sense of belonging converge. Nestled in the heart of Miami-Dade County, our city exudes a distinctive charm that captivates residents and visitors alike.

Living in Coral Gables means experiencing a high quality of life that is synonymous with our city’s reputation. From the tree-lined streets and picturesque landscapes to the meticulously designed architecture, every corner of Coral Gables tells a story of timeless elegance.

Coral Gables is not only a residential haven but also a thriving hub for businesses. Our city boasts a vibrant entrepreneurial spirit, with a diverse range of industries. Whether you are a small business owner, an established enterprise, or an aspiring entrepreneur, Coral Gables provides a rich environment for growth and success.

The Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce is committed to supporting our local businesses by offering valuable resources, networking opportunities and a platform to showcase their products and services. I have been actively supporting the Chamber since 2018 and am thrilled to embrace my new role as Chairwoman of the Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce.

By leveraging this year’s theme, “The Power of YOU,” we can collectively foster an environment of collaboration and innovation. The Chamber believes in harnessing the power of our collective for the betterment of our community and prosperity of all. We are fortunate to play a crucial role in shaping the future of our community; including the members, residents, and businesses that call our city home.

Our City Beautiful is a community where opportunity and growth thrive. I am particularly proud of this new role as Chairwoman of the Chamber because it is not hard to work for something you love. I am also committed to listening to your needs, championing your successes, and working alongside each of you to tackle the challenges that come our way. Together, we can make Coral Gables an even better place to live, work, and visit.

Addys Kuryla
Chair of the Board
Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce
External Affairs Manager, Florida Power & Light Co.



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A Stroke of Serendipity

This year's edition of *The City Beautiful* comes at a time of celebration – the 100-year anniversary of the Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce, to be immediately followed by the centennial celebration of the city itself. So, this year, we revere the past, and learn more about our founder, George Merrick, and how he created his dream city.

Coral Gables today is unique in its growth and success. It was a planned city, but the events that happened along the way also contributed to its success in ways Mr. Merrick never imagined.

One of the unforeseen qualities of Coral Gables is its ease of travel. Unknown to the early team of developers, the most successful airport and port in South Florida would develop just minutes away. Miami International Airport was just a small passenger terminal back in the late '20s and early '30s. Today, it is the most successful airlink connecting Miami to the Caribbean and Latin America for both passenger and cargo flights.

Also enhancing the city's growth was the development of the most significant port in the Southeast United States. PortMiami, now the cruise capital of the world and leading LATAM/Caribbean pan-hemispheric cargo port, would add increased asset value to the City Beautiful by providing further opportunities for business.

None of this was planned. It happened in the natural course of human events. But the travel time to these portals? Twenty minutes to catch a flight or reach the port.

Coral Gables became the mega center that it is today partly because of this unplanned development. In short, we just “happened” to be at the epicenter of this economic expansion. The result was that Coral Gables has become the home of incredible global companies: Bacardi, Del Monte Fresh, American Airlines, and, most recently, Ryder, along with a major expansion of Apple. And there are hundreds of other smaller firms, which emerged along with the commensurate increase in population and all the socioeconomics affiliated with dramatic growth.

When you couple that with what was planned – incredible architecture, gorgeous landscaping, Mr. Merrick's founding of a world class university, an iconic landmark hotel, a core business district, logical and intelligent definitions of how the city should be governed – you understand that once the groundwork was completed and organized for the brick-and-mortar city, the “orbs of the universe” took over and blessed this community with incredible success. And that brought top executives, investment, beautiful homes, and the creation of one of the strongest business markets in the county, along with an incredibly educated and wealthy population.

It just doesn't get any better. Happy birthday Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce. Happy birthday Coral Gables.

Richard Roffman
Chief Executive Officer and Publisher
Coral Gables Magazine



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COMPASS

Points of Interest locations



#2 The Biltmore Hotel



#49 Coral Gables Country Club



#50 Coral Gables Library

LEADING HOTELS

1. Aloft Coral Gables
2. The Biltmore Hotel
3. Courtyard by Marriott
4. Hotel Colonnade
5. Hyatt Regency Coral Gables
6. Hotel St. Michel
7. THesis Hotel
8. Loews Coral Gables Hotel

ATTRACTIONS & CULTURE

9. Actors' Playhouse at Miracle Theatre
10. Books & Books
11. Coral Gables Art Cinema
12. Coral Gables Museum
13. Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden
14. Lowe Art Museum
15. Matheson Hammock Park & Marina
16. Merrick House
17. Venetian Pool
18. Montgomery Botanical Center
19. Sanctuary of the Arts

LANDMARKS

20. Alhambra Water Tower
21. Alhambra Entrance
22. Coral Way Entrance
23. De Soto Fountain
24. Douglas Entrance
25. Granada Entrance
26. Country Club Prado Entrance

HISTORIC VILLAGES

27. Chinese Village
28. Florida Pioneer Village
29. Dutch South African Village
30. French City Village
31. French Country Village
32. French Normandy Village
33. Italian Village

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34. Shops at Merrick Park
35. Miracle Mile Shopping & Dining District
36. Giralda Plaza
37. The Plaza Coral Gables

SPORTS VENUES

38. Biltmore Golf Course
39. Granada Golf Course
40. Riviera Golf Course
41. Tennis Courts at Biltmore Hotel
42. Jaycee Park
43. Phillips Park
44. Salvadore Park

CIVIC VENUES

45. Chamber of Commerce
46. Coral Gables Welcome Center
47. Woman's Club
48. Coral Gables City Hall
49. Coral Gables Country Club
50. Coral Gables Library
51. Coral Gables War Memorial Youth Center



Map by Jorge Gavilondo

CORAL GABLES POINTS OF INTEREST

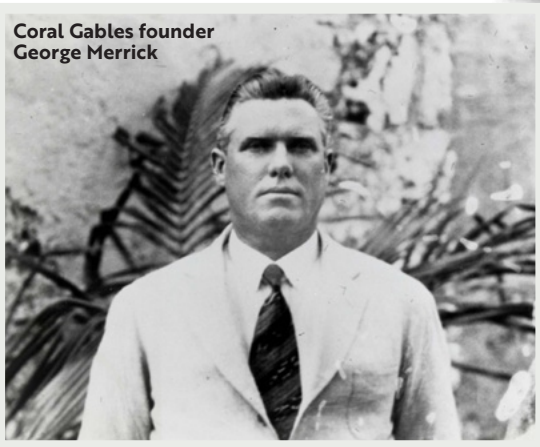
Coral Gables:

A glance in the rearview mirror after 100 years

By KAREN BUSCHBAUM



First City Commission meeting at the new City Hall 1928



Coral Gables founder George Merrick

THE DREAM

It was sheer persistence; back-breaking, soul-stealing persistence that kept the Merrick family in place after arriving on the 160-acre “farm” they purchased sight-unseen in 1899.

Persistence through yellow fever, a six-month drought, 67 inches of rain in 40 days, hurricanes, a bank failure, infestations of roaches and frogs, and “hypnosis of will and hope” as described by George Merrick. To the religious family, it must’ve seemed like plagues of Biblical proportion.

Merrick dreamed and planned for years before making his first move to create “America’s Finest Suburb.” In the years leading up to the City of Coral Gables’ official founding, sales and work progressed at a frenetic pace. Between 1923 and 1924, Merrick spent \$5 million on advertising, hundreds of homes were built, and miles of roadways established.

By the time the city was incorporated on April 29, 1925, there was \$25 million in building permits and 50,000 trees, shrubs, and flowering plants. Homes sold from \$4,000 to \$75,000, attracting a wide variety of income levels. The Chamber of Commerce was launched the same year with Merrick as founder. Just one year later, there were 2,792 private residences among the more than 4,000 structures built. Investment value was a staggering \$150 million-plus. There were now also 100 miles of paved streets and 125 miles of sidewalks, more than 100 office and commercial buildings, nine schools, a hospital, and the iconic Biltmore Hotel as the grand dame of the six hotels in the city.

Merrick donated land to several churches and, significantly, 160 acres for the new University of Miami, the crown jewel of his plans. There was a riding club, and bridle paths wound throughout the community, along with tennis courts and golf courses. The arts season included opera, dances, and symphony performances. A day after the city was incorporated, the first new trolley ceremoniously

A City Centennial



arrived with famous orator and Coral Gables promoter Williams Jennings Bryan.

Neighborhood women banded together for the good of the community. The Coco Plum Thimble Club was the first woman's club, founded in 1912. Eunice Merrick, George's wife, was a founding member of the Coral Gables Woman's Club in 1923. Two years later, 35 women started the Coral Gables Garden Club.

City features have evolved over time. The original high school campus is now Ponce Middle School, and the land where Coral Gables High sits was once home to a tent city for the hundreds of construction workers building the city. The quarry pit used to extract oolitic limestone for some of the first homes and gravel for the early roads was transformed into Venetian Pool, a tropical paradise residents still treasure.

When the Biltmore opened, it brought in 25 authentic gondolas and gondoliers from Italy to transport guests from the hotel to Tahiti Beach on Biscayne Bay through Gables waterways. Tahiti Beach featured parking for 1,000 cars, hundreds of coconut

palms, a South Seas atoll, a bandshell shaped like a seashell, a dance floor, and 100 thatched bathhouses.

THE DREAM BECOMES A NIGHTMARE

Tahiti Beach, along with plans for more waterfront development and a new hotel, were blown away by the 1926 hurricane that destroyed much of Miami. The Beach was rebuilt but closed for good in the early 1970s and is now part of the Cocoplum private residential community.

Due to strong building codes, structures and homes in Coral Gables fared well in the storm. Landscape was decimated and windows broken, but no lives were lost. After the storm, Merrick and his team kept going, advertising aggressively, replanting trees, and strengthening building codes: steps that would reap huge benefits in the decades to come.

They optimistically launched plans for 1,000 thematically inspired homes in various "village" designs, less than half of which were completed. City boundaries were expanded to include Central Miami and Schenley Park to the west of Red Road, and



Miracle Mile with the Colonnade building in the background

Building housed the police and fire departments and is now the home of the Coral Gables Museum. Other efforts included a two-story gatekeepers lodge at Matheson Hammock and the overlook and amphitheater at Fairchild.

The Biltmore kept sputtering along until Henry Doherty was convinced to donate funds to keep it thriving. Doherty was head of the oil company now known as Citgo and also ran an investment company that owned three properties in South Florida. Wealthy members would travel in style between the hotel, Roney Plaza on Miami Beach, and the Anglers Club in Key Largo in the “Miss Biltmore Autogiro,” a pre-helicopter contraption. With space for four passengers and a speed of 120 miles per hour, it could whisk members from the Gables to the

east to include property along the bayfront and a good portion of Key Biscayne.

But control of the city was slipping. Some residents felt the Coral Gables Corporation and City Commission were too intertwined. Residents demanded a local election. Four of the five Commissioners were replaced, with only Merrick remaining. Soon, based on his lack of attendance at meetings, he was removed.

An economic crisis was brewing. There was a run on a local bank, more than 1,000 buyers defaulted on their mortgages, and many delinquent taxpayers were adding to the city’s growing financial issues. Black Thursday, the great crash of the U.S. stock market on October 24, 1929, was the final blow for development of the Gables. The Coral Gables economy ground to a halt.

THE GREAT DEPRESSION

Though development was at a standstill, some landmark events would prove important to the City Beautiful of the future.

The Matheson family donated 85 acres of tropical hardwood hammock forest in 1930 to create and protect the land now known as Matheson Hammock Park, the Gables’ only surviving public beach. Eight years later, Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden was established with a gift of 83 acres, as well as funds for developing the plant collections, by Col. Robert H. Montgomery and his wife Nell.

As part of the federal government’s WPA program to put people back to work and rebuild the country, 17 projects were approved for Coral Gables, including the city library, which was run by the Coral Gables Woman’s Club. The WPA-built Municipal



The Venetian Pool

Beach in less than 10 minutes.

Doherty was considered a savior of Coral Gables during the ‘30s. At Merrick’s urging, he saved the University of Miami from bankruptcy, but his untimely death at the end of the decade dashed Merrick’s hopes that he would provide the funds to recharge the city’s development.

The city founder’s problems multiplied. He spent much time with lawyers, attempting to unwind his legal and financial issues, all while trying to woo new investors. He was even called to testify before the Securities and Exchange Commission about the City’s bond defaults. He was broken financially and spiritually, and died in 1942 having never completely realized his dream.

THE WAR YEARS

During World War II, Dade County became a large and important training area, and Coral Gables



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University of Miami under construction, 1926



Easter Sunday Service outside City Hall, 1963

played a major role. Beginning in 1940, thousands of soldiers occupied local buildings, including homes in the French Normandy Village. The University of Miami taught training classes to pilots, navigators, and aviation personnel. Merrick's original sales center, the Colonnade, had a pilot training facility and a WWII parachute factory, and the massive Miami Coliseum in Coral Gables was used for aviator training.

The U.S. government bought the Biltmore Hotel for \$895,000, converting it into a 1,200-bed Army Air Forces Regional Hospital. Eventually named Pratt General Hospital, historic décor was stripped, ceilings dropped, windows filled in, utilitarian surgical lighting replaced ornate light fixtures, and walls were painted institutional green. The grand dame was a ghost.

POST-WAR MODERNISM

The tides of change had stunted plans for the University of Miami. Grace, Henry Doherty's widow, came to the rescue, donating 45 acres for what became known as Main Campus. Modern buildings, a far cry from the original Mediterranean designs, were constructed.

As many who had trained in the area during World War II wanted to stay, new homes were being built and stores were popping up. Architectural guidelines were debated but not resolved, so residents, shopkeepers, and companies built pretty much whatever they wanted. Eventually, the Board of Architects was established to put firm standards in place.

Post-war development included the new Miracle Theatre and Doctors Hospital. Miracle Mile became the new home of high-end shopping and garages were built to accommodate customers.

City boundaries began to shrink, as Central Mi-

ami and Schenley Park left the city and the Biscayne Bay section Merrick had such high hopes for became unincorporated. It took 30 years for the city to pay its final principal dividend on the debt incurred from the bond defaults in 1930.

By the mid-'60s, residents were beginning to notice the decline of the Mediterranean style that had attracted so many to the Gables. The late historian Arva Moore Parks identified the start of the Gables preservation movement with the successful citizen efforts to save the Alhambra Water Tower.

About the same time, plans became known to tear down the crumbling Douglas Entrance for a grocery store. A group of local architects and design professionals banded together to save the most impressive of Merrick's city gates. Many of the women became involved in raising money, even doing physical renovation work on the site. This group incorporated as The Villagers, now the county's oldest preservation organization.

SAVING OUR HISTORY

The VA hospital closed its doors in the late '60s, eventually ceding the Biltmore to the City of Coral Gables in 1972. The hotel reopened with much fanfare in 1987, only to close again three years later. Finally, in 1992, the current management, Seaway Hotels Group, began to operate the elegant Gables hotel, undertaking a \$40 million renovation and adding a spa and fitness center.

Meanwhile, preservation efforts were surging. The Historic Monument Board of Review was the result of the first historic preservation ordinance, followed by the City of Coral Gables Preservation Board, founded in 1974. Its initial focus was to acquire Merrick House and, after methodical resto-



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ration with advice from Merrick family members, it opened to the public.

The city hired its first preservation professional in the mid-'80s, eventually establishing a Historic Preservation Department, which has set a standard for other areas of the county. A new board was put together in the early '80s to study if "Merrick's original ideas were being ignored and compromised." The result was the Mediterranean Ordinance, adopted in August as a guideline for preserving elements of the Gables' original style. The Colonnade building was the first test of the new ordinance, resulting in the addition behind the historic structure with office, hotel, and parking facilities while maintaining the restored building on Miracle Mile.

Homeowners united and formed the Historic Homeowners Association, which later expanded its mission and evolved to become the Historic Preservation Association of Coral Gables, still active today. And, in 1990, Nell Montgomery left the balance of her estate to support and maintain the 120-acre Montgomery Botanical Center. Dedicated to research and education, the Center has the largest and finest private collection of palms and cycads in the world.

THE CITY BEAUTIFUL WE KNOW TODAY

"We have done a good job of combining the past with the future," explains Mark A. Trowbridge, president and CEO of the Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce. "It's about balanced development. When you look at our great downtown, you still see our history reflected."

Indeed, the 13-square-mile city is thriving. With about 50,000 residents and a triple-A bond rating, the city has become known worldwide and, as Merrick planned, serves as an international center for the Americas. Currently, 120 multinational corporations have offices in the city, and there are myriad foreign consulates and government offices.

"I think the past is prologue when it comes to Coral Gables," says Trowbridge. "When you look back 50 years, one of the things that was surprising

was our prowess in recruiting multinational companies. We now look beyond Latin America to Europe and Asia to attract new business. Coral Gables literally has everything to offer."

The city has also reclaimed boundaries, expanding to include coastal communities along Biscayne Bay, and now boasts more than 47 miles of waterways and coastline.

New business has been robust, if sometimes controversial, accounting for about 40 percent of the city's tax base. Today, residents enjoy two distinct business districts, Miracle Mile and the Shops at Merrick Park, along with an impressive variety of new restaurants. "From a business perspective, we have always punched above our weight," said Trowbridge. "At the end of the day, we always find a balanced approach."

More than 1,450 properties have been designated local landmarks, including 12 properties that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. There are 22 historic districts, including seven thematic residential villages, as well as those representing a particular type of home like the Coral Rock Residences Thematic Group. "We have been able to preserve and yet elevate [our historic sites]," says Trowbridge. "Properties like the Biltmore are as reflective of the past as of today."

International recognition of the city's attributes has poured in over the last few years, with the Gables making it on the Top 5 Most Beautiful Small Cities in America (Rand McNally / *USA Today*), amongst the Top 10 Cities to Live Well in America (*Forbes*), the No. 3 Top Small City in the U.S. to Start a Small Business (go.verizon.com), one of the Best Places to Retire in America (NBC's "Today Show"), and one of the Top 5 Most Livable Communities in the World (United Nations-backed LivCom International).

"Coral Gables is a hometown where people really do connect with one another and know each other's stories, but we are also not afraid to embrace change," says Trowbridge. □



A Coral Gables developer's sales office



First day of streetcar service, 1925



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The Business



PHOTO: Rodolfo Benitez

The Plaza Coral Gables, featuring the Loews Hotel tower

An overview of the state of business in Coral Gables

By BY J.P. FABER

Coral Gables remains a tapestry of small businesses, from retailers to high-end professionals. That overall pattern continues, with some 90 percent of all businesses in the city employing 10 people or less. “The U.S. government defines a small business as having 500 employees or less,” says Mark A. Trowbridge, president and CEO of the Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce. “But for us, when we talk with our partners – and I use the Chamber as the barometer – it is about 10 or less.”

Having said that, Trowbridge is quick to point out that the salient business news in the past year has been corporate employment expansion in the downtown. The big three moves: Ryder taking up new offices in the Colonnade building on Miracle Mile, the arrival of FIFA in its new headquarters on Alhambra Circle, and the new Apple offices in The Plaza Coral Gables’ south tower. “What’s cool about these three is that you have a retention, a relocation, and an expansion,” says Trowbridge.

Thanks to these and the addi-

Landscape



tion of new small businesses, Coral Gables now has 82,000 employees working in the city, up from 79,000 a year ago. Ryder, which relocated from Medley, FL, added 180 workers, while FIFA expanded from a small foothold to occupy the space formerly used by HBO Latin America. Currently, they employ 250 in their offices, a figure expected to reach 750 by the end of the year. “FIFA is a worldwide phenomenon, so it’s been wonderful for the city in that it has gotten worldwide attention,” says Belkys Perez, director of

“The Plaza has really crystalized our [business] improvements. It’s played a pivotal role in the stories about new companies and the improvement of [downtown] life. The companies that have located there are top tier.”

economic development for the city. “We have a good relationship with them, and they are going to be great partners. They are very aggressive in terms of their expansion.”

The impact of more workers in the downtown is, of course, an

immediate benefit to the retailers – especially restaurateurs – who populate the city’s commercial streets. “This adds to people for our restaurants,” says Perez. “I have seen it on Giralda, people waiting for restaurants with their FIFA badges.”



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While the number of Apple employees is yet to be determined, the company’s decision to remain in the Gables resulted in the taking of 43,000-square-feet at The Plaza – an entire floor – up from a small office on Alhambra. They are also among the latest tenants at the now almost fully leased mixed-use complex on Ponce, which includes the earlier relocation of the Bacardi headquarters and, most recently, the move from Brickell of the 55-person Eisner Advisory Group.

“The Plaza has really crystalized our [business] improvements,” says Trowbridge. “It’s played a pivotal role in the stories about new companies and the improvement of [downtown] life. The companies that have located there are top tier. They have done it the right way, with quality companies.”

Carlos Beckmann, managing director for Agave Holdings, LLC, the developer of the project, remains both surprised and pleased with the demand for space at The Plaza Coral Gables complex – which includes 280 residences, the new Loews hotel, 170,000-square-feet of retail, and almost 500,000-square-feet of office space in two corporate towers.

“We took a very measured approach to building out

Top 10 Employers Coral Gables

EMPLOYERS	EMPLOYEES	RANK
University of Miami	4,805	1
Baptist Health South Florida	4,445	2
City of Coral Gables	1,106	3
MasTec	1,053	4
Dade Country Public Schools	983	5
Doctors Hospital Inc.	924	6
Care Plus Health Plans Inc.	693	7
Steward CGH, Inc.	555	8
B & B Holding Enterprises	547	9
International Business Machines Corp.	538	10

The Plaza and securing its tenants,” says Beckmann. “We wanted to make sure we had the right businesses located here, so we were not in a rush. Our watchword has always been quality, and I think that we have achieved that, both in terms of the beauty of the architecture and the mix of tenants. And, of course, we are very proud of the public art we have assembled.”

The Plaza also recently inaugurated a twice-monthly Friday night free concert series in its one-acre court-



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yard. “It’s really nice to see that The Plaza is becoming the center for the neighborhood and the community to come and spend afternoons on dining, entertainment, and culture,” says Beckmann. “And it’s just getting started. In the last six months, our retailers and food establishments have been opening, and we are excited for next year, with The Plaza project coming to fruition.”

While not as impactful in terms of employees, another feather in the city’s cap this past year was the relocation of the prestigious Cervera Realty firm, which handles sales for the massive condo projects rising in Downtown Miami and Brickell. In some ways, this relocation was emblematic of small, professional firms – like lawyers and wealth managers – moving from Miami’s urban core, where the influx of companies from New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles has driven rents sky high. While average commercial rents have reached more than \$77 per square foot in Brickell, they are hovering at around \$50 in Coral Gables.

“Instead of ‘new to market,’ we

have companies moving in from Miami and Brickell. There are quite a few, including law firms,” says Perez. Adds Trowbridge, “There is an opportunity to take space here that doesn’t cost what it does in Downtown [Miami].”

Trowbridge also points to the ecosystem of small businesses in the Gables, and how that lures like-minded and like-sized companies to the city. “I



Diners on Giralda Plaza

The Employment Picture

THE WORKFORCE

Total Jobs:	82,000
Local Workforce:	26,000
Outside Workforce:	56,000

EMPLOYMENT BY SECTOR

Office and Admin Support	17.7%
Sales & Hospitality	12%
Executives, Managers, Admin	14%
Professional Services	13.5%
Banking & Finance	9.2%
Health Care	9.4%
Education	8.2%
All Others	9%

NUMBER OF BUSINESSES

Licensed in the city	12,000
Based in the city	10,000

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE 1.8%

WORK DISTRIBUTION

Blue Collar	22%
White Collar	77%

Business Size

PERCENTAGE OF COMPANIES WITH

1-4 Employees	75.64%
5-9 Employees	16%
10-19 Employees	4.78%
20-49 Employees	1.79%
50-99 Employees	> 1%
100+ Employees	< 1%

think what’s attractive to small businesses is that there are others of the same size here, dealing with the same challenges, so there is a synergy,” he says. “It’s amazing to see that synergy around certain industries – professional services, wealth management, and banking, for example. While other places have consolidated, we have solidified.”

One clear impact from huge corporate locations to Downtown Miami and Brickell from New York and California has been on the home-buying front. While these firms may place their offices in Miami’s urban core – something their younger workers prefer, they say – the corporate leadership looks to elegant, leafy suburbs like Coral Gables for their personal homes. “We are seeing the impact of those businesses coming in mostly through real estate, with [executives] moving here, looking for homes and schools,” says Perez.

The result has been a continual rise in the price of private homes, which climbed from an average price of \$2.5 million in June of last year to \$3.7 million in June of this year – albeit due to a leap in waterfront home prices – according to Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices EWM Realty. At the same time, prices for condominiums dropped from an average of \$1.2 million to \$680,000. That is good news for newer residents to the city, especially young families, and again puts more potential customers close to the Gables’ downtown. “We want to grow our residential base in the downtown to have a viable economy, day

or night,” says Perez, “so that there are people here at night, eating here, walking the streets, going to hear music...”

The results, so far this year, look promising. “There are a lot more people on Miracle Mile. You can see it when you walk there,” says Martha Pantin, head of communications for the City of Coral Gables. “With more people living here, there are more walking their dogs. We now even have a veterinarian office on Miracle Mile,” she says – not to mention a showroom for electric vehicle company Polestar.

A key sign of the growing number of pedestrians – and shoppers – has been the high levels of retail occupancy, with the city overall experiencing a vacancy rate of just one percent. “We are doing wonderful in retail occupancy,” says Perez. “Retail has always been strong and that is a credit and nod to our retail strategy, where we work with our property owners and what sort of tenants are most appropriate for them.”

This is especially important because 27 percent of the city’s taxes are paid by businesses located in the Gables, with 40 percent of that figure coming from the central business district – i.e. downtown Coral Gables.

“The companies we grow here are top tier,” says Trowbridge, “and that bodes well for our economy. Right now, things are going very well. Just count how many companies we have stolen from Brickell.” □



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The Quest for Support

Small business resources in the Gables include two Quest Workspaces locations

By *BY LUKE CHANEY*

In 2010, Quest Workspaces had just a single humble location on Brickell Ave. Today, the co-working space company has 14 workspaces across South Florida, including two in Coral Gables.

“The Gables is an amazing community,” says Quest CEO Laura Kozelouzek. “Many of our clients [here] live very close to their homes or close to the office, so they get the best of everything because they’re able to have this amazing commercial area with all the amazing amenities that downtown Coral Gables has, yet be really close to their homes.”

Across Quest’s 14 locations are full-time office spaces, virtual offices, traditional co-working spaces, and meeting rooms for businesses of all sizes. When a client walks into the lobby of any of these locations, they’re greeted warmly by a receptionist stationed at the front desk. This commitment to service is something Kozelouzek says is missing in the workspace industry. She emphasizes the importance of quality service in everything that Quest does.

“When you walk into a Quest location, it kind of has the feel of a



Quest Workspaces lobby



PHOTO: Author Name here

Laura Kozelouzek, CEO of Quest Workspaces



The 2525 Lounge



high-end hotel kind of lobby,” says Kozelouzek. “It’s very welcoming. It’s stylish, but at the same time, very cozy. We build our spaces out based on the location, [so] we take into account who’s a local client, what they enjoy, and how they’re different from, let’s say, a Brickell Avenue or West Palm [client].”

Don McClain, CEO and founder of Fast Commercial Capital, which keeps an office at Quest’s 2525 Ponce de Leon location, echoes the sentiment. “The team here is amazing,” he says. “It makes you feel like family here. I’ve been at other executive offices, and they just don’t really have that family feeling like they do here. They really care about the businesses. It’s a community; it’s not just an office. And a lot of the other businesses in this space here, we work together.”

All Quest offices feature smaller and larger boardrooms, meant for meetings of various formalities, as well as chat rooms, phone booths, different-sized private offices, and a café. Every location, which is fully furnished with around-the-clock access and

security, has its own flare.

The 2525 Ponce de Leon office, which opened in 2012 and is located one block from Miracle Mile, appealed initially to attorneys and legal professionals, according to Kozelouzek. Given the heavy legal and financial presence in the surrounding area, the 2525 Lounge was constructed, which features a bar that “looks like a bourbon room,” used to network and host events.

Quest’s newest location on 121 Alhambra, meanwhile, opened in April 2024 and boasts elaborate wrap-around terraces and three towers that offer views of downtown Gables and beyond. The outdoor space is what Kozelouzek considers to be the standout feature of this location.

“If you’re going to leave your home to go to a special place to work, it has to feel special,” the CEO says. “And everything from the way it’s designed – so you can be inspired and feel good working in that space – to how you’re treated by the staff that’s there... Quest has really been able to combine those things with the design of the space to create a wow factor.” □

Gables-based organizations that assist small businesses

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

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coralgables.com/department/economic-development

CORAL GABLES CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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coralgableschamber.org

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business.fiu.edu/centers/sbdc

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whcf.org/coulter-foundation-programs/translational-research/

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law.miami.edu/academics/experiential-learning/clinics/startup/

'CANE ANGEL NETWORK

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caneangelnetwork.miami.edu
305.284.2211

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121 Alhambra Plaza 10th Floor
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786.723.6009

OFFICE EDGE

4000 Ponce de Leon Blvd. Suite 470
303.777.0200

PIPELINE

95 Merrick Way 3rd Floor
786.477.6440

WEWORK

222 Ponce de Leon Blvd.
305.363.4997
255 Giralda Ave. 5th Floor
305.250.2832

FORUM

275 Alhambra Cir.
786.522.4466

ESQ. SUITES

121 Alhambra Plaza Suite 1500
844.377.1234

REGUS

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(Columbus Center)
786.749.2200
2332 Galiano St. 2nd Floor
305.728.7000

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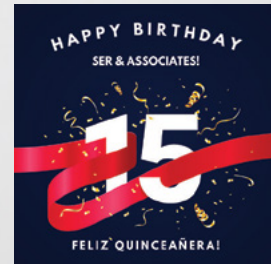


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AMERANT ASCENDING

The Gables-based bank is leveraging partnerships and lengthening its reach
By DOREEN HEMLOCK



The grand opening of Amerant's regional HQ in Tampa

PHOTO: Author Name Here

When Jerry Plush took over Amerant Bank in 2021, few people recognized the name of the multi-billion-dollar bank he led in Coral Gables. After all, the bank, long known as Mercantil, had only recently re-branded.

Today, the Amerant name seems ubiquitous in South Florida, thanks to the strong community partnerships Plush has helped forge. Amerant is now the official bank of the Miami Heat basketball and Florida Panthers ice hockey teams and the official “Hometown Bank” of the Miami Marlins base-

ball and University of Miami sports teams. It also holds naming rights for the arena that hosts the Panthers, Stanley Cup champions for the first time this year at the Amerant Bank Arena in Sunrise.

“You can’t put a value on the name recognition they’re getting with the Florida Panthers in the Stanley Cup,” says Ken Thomas, a banking analyst, longtime finance teacher at The Wharton School, and president of Miami-based Community Development Fund Advisors. “Their brand name is being seen not just in Florida but all over the United States and Canada.”

Plush has developed what Thomas calls one of the strongest and best-managed community banks in Florida, “one truly engaged in the community,” Thomas says.

Amerant used to operate in Houston, Texas, but agreed to sell its Houston operations to MidFirst Bank of Oklahoma City in April 2024, including six branches that had some \$576 million in deposits and \$529 million in loans. Now, Amerant is expanding in Broward and Palm Beach counties and in the Tampa area in west Florida, its first growth outside Florida’s southeast. In Broward, Amerant has a new regional headquarters in Plantation and a branch on Las Olas Boulevard in Fort Lauderdale. In West Palm Beach, it’s developing a regional hub and branch. And in Tampa, it held the grand opening of its regional headquarters in the Westshore business district in May 2024, an event Plush personally attended.

“We’re trying to be local,” says

the CEO. “People coming onboard in those markets are people from those markets or who have spent a lot of time in those markets.”

The effort has been paying off financially. In 2023, assets rose six percent to \$9.7 billion, gross loans grew five percent to \$7.2 billion, deposits increased nearly 12 percent to \$7.9 billion, and net interest income spiked 22 percent to \$326.5 million, compared to the previous year. As of mid-2024, five stock analysts recommended a buy or hold on shares in the bank’s parent company, Amerant Bancorp., which trades as AMTB on the New York Stock Exchange.

Plush wants to continue growing. He’s looking to add three to five branches in Tampa in the next year and is eyeing Orlando next. He’s keen to be among the top 25 percent of the best performing banks in the U.S., based not on size but on financial results and profitability, which he links in large measure to community involvement and personal service. □

*Banks by Local Branch Deposit**

Amerant (Coral Gables based)

220 Alhambra Circle \$5.6 billion

Anchor Bank (Palm Beach Gardens based)

2100 Ponce de Leon Blvd. \$34 million

Anthem Bank & Trust (Louisiana based)

1 Alhambra Plaza \$21 million

Banesco USA (Coral Gables based)

150 Alhambra Circle \$2.1 billion



**Jerry Plush,
Amerant CEO**

Bank of America (North Carolina based)

2308 Ponce De Leon
2600 S Douglas Rd.
1500 S Dixie Hwy. \$1.9 billion (total)

Bank Ozk (Arkansas based)

1220 Ponce De Leon \$153.8 million

BankUnited (Miami Lakes based)

299 Miracle Mile \$14.2 million

Belmont Bank & Trust (Illinois based)

2020 Ponce De Leon \$7.4 million

Bradesco Bank (Brazil based)

3011 Ponce de Leon \$2.9 billion

Centennial Bank (Arkansas based)

121 Alhambra Plaza \$219.5 million

Citibank (South Dakota based)

396 Alhambra Cir.
1190 S Dixie Hwy. \$656 million (total)

Citizens Bank (Rhode Island based)

2222 Ponce de Leon \$40 million

City National Bank of Florida (Miami based)

2855 S Le Jeune Rd. \$10.7 billion

First American Bank (Illinois based)

540 Biltmore Way \$157 million

First Horizon Bank (Tennessee based)

2109 Ponce de Leon Blvd.
1515 Sunset Dr. \$680 million (total)

First Citizens Bank & Trust (North Carolina based)

250 Palermo Ave. \$135.1 million

FirstBank Puerto Rico (Puerto Rico based)

2990 Ponce De Leon \$187.5 million

Flagstar Bank (New York based)

2701 Ponce De Leon \$125.4 million

Grove Bank & Trust (Miami based)

2151 S Le Jeune Rd. \$97.7 million

Intercredit Bank (Miami based)

396 Alhambra Cir.
1430 S Dixie Hwy. \$264.8 million (total)

JPMorgan Chase Bank (Ohio based)

355 Alhambra Circle
1300 Ponce de Leon
4101 Ponce de Leon
2740 Coral Way
1570 S Dixie Hwy. \$784.5 million (total)

Ocean Bank (Miami based)

2655 Le Jeune Rd.
6939 SW 57th Ave. \$62.6 million (total)

Pacific National Bank (Miami based)

255 Aragon Ave. \$81.3 million

PNC Bank (Pennsylvania based)

2728 Ponce de Leon \$17.5 million

Popular Bank (New York based)

2317 Ponce De Leon \$181.4 million

Regions Bank (Alabama based)

2800 Ponce de Leon \$883 million

Seacoast National Bank (Stuart based)

396 Alhambra Cir. \$404.7 million

SouthState Bank (Winter Haven based)

2 Alhambra Plaza \$76.2 million

Sunstate Bank (Miami based)

2901 S Le Jeune Rd. \$119.5 million

Synovus Bank (Miami based)

121 Alhambra Cir. \$175.7 million

TD Bank (Delaware based)

2401 Ponce De Leon
255 Alhambra Cir. \$576.2 million (total)

The First National Bank of South Miami

3399 Ponce De Leon \$157.4 million

The Northern Trust Company (Illinois based)

595 Biltmore Way \$505.8 million

TIAA, FSB (Jacksonville based)

2525 Ponce De Leon \$313.7 million

Truist Bank (North Carolina based)

201 Alhambra Cir. \$569.3 million

U.S. Century Bank (Doral based)

396 Alhambra Cir. \$174.2 million

United Community Bank (South Carolina based)

3399 Ponce De Leon \$36.1 million

Valley National Bank (New Jersey based)

2121 Ponce De Leon \$131.4 million

Wells Fargo National Bank (South Dakota based)

2100 Ponce De Leon
2555 Ponce De Leon \$1.2 billion (total)

Source: Federal Deposit Insurance Corp., as of June 30, 2023 for banks in the 33134 zip code

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Coral Gables Banks & Wealth Management Firms

BANKS

**Assets are companywide, including Coral Gables location, as of 3/31/24 per fdic.gov*

Amerant Bancorp.

Assets: \$9.79 billion
Location: 220 Alhambra Cir.
Founded: 1979, formerly Mercantil Bank
Key personnel: Jerry Plush, chairman and CEO

Bradesco Bank

Assets: \$4.28 billion
Location: 3011 Ponce de Leon Blvd.
Founded: 1973 as Popular Bank of Hialeah
Key personnel: Henrique Lima, president and CEO; Julio Rojas, vice chairman

City National Bank of Florida

Assets: \$26.12 billion
Location: 2855 S. Le Jeune Rd.
Founded: 1946, as North Shore Bank
Key personnel: Jorge Gonzalez, CEO and vice chairman

Grove Bank & Trust

Assets: \$1.1 billion
Location: 2151 Le Jeune Rd. Suite 100
Founded: 1926, longest-running bank in Miami-Dade
Key personnel: Jose E. Cueto, CEO

PNC Bank

Assets: \$561.95 billion
Location: 2728 Ponce de Leon Blvd.
Founded: 1845, as Pittsburgh Trust and Savings Co.
Key personnel: Benny Gonzalez, head of corporate banking, North and South Florida

Sunstate Bank

Assets: \$0.5 billion
Location: 2901 S. LeJeune Rd.
Founded: 1999
Key personnel: Lloyd DeVaux, president and CEO

U.S. Century Bank

Assets: \$2.48 billion
Location: 396 Alhambra Cir.
Founded: 2002
Key personnel: Luis de la Aguilera, chairman, CEO, and president



Diego Polenghi, Market
Leader of PNC Private Bank

PHOTO: Rodolfo Benitez

WEALTH MANAGEMENT

**Assets are companywide, including Coral Gables location, as of mid-2024*

Calamos Wealth Management

Assets: About \$3.6 billion under management
Location: 220 Alhambra Cir. Seventh Floor
Founded: 1977 in Chicago
Key personnel: John Koudounis, president and CEO

Coral Gables Trust Company

Assets: About \$2.5 billion under management
Location: 255 Alhambra Circ. Suite 333
Founded: 2004
Key personnel: Donald Kress, president and CEO; John Harris, managing partner

Evensky & Katz/Foldes Financial Wealth Management

Assets: Over \$3 billion under management
Location: 4000 Ponce de Leon Blvd. Suite 850
Founded: 1985
Key personnel: Harold R. Evensky, founder; Steven Foldes, founder; David Evensky, CMO; Matt McGrath, managing partner

Firestone Capital Management

Assets: About \$750 million under management
Location: 1501 Venera Ave. Suite 310
Founded: 1991
Key personnel: Carlos A. Carbonell, managing partner

Kaufman Rossin Wealth

Assets: About \$280 million under management
Location: 3310 Mary St. Suite 501, in Coconut Grove
Founded: 2019
Key personnel: Jay Pelham, president



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LP \$5,799,900

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Tropical Garden Views from Every Room
Huge Deck with New Pool/Spa Renderings/Plans
2024 Refurbished Roof + Generator
4 BD + REC ROOM | 3 BA | 3,003 SF
LP \$3,900,000

SOUTH BRICKELL | 1541 Brickell Ave A801, Miami
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LP \$775,000

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LP \$24,000/mth

FOR RENT | 12511 Ramiro St, Coral Gables
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Cul-De-Sac St Near Community Park
Guard-Gated Community
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Multitudes of Multinationals

By *DOREEN HEMLOCK*

Preparing for the world's most-watched sports tournament requires massive coordination, and the office in charge needs excellent telecommunications, easy access to international flights, and Class-A office space close to restaurants, hotels, services, and partners.

The Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) found all that in Coral Gables.

The governing body for world soccer has more than 200 people working at its FIFA World Cup '26 headquarters in Coral Gables at 396 Alhambra Circle, its only office in the United States. That tally is set to grow, with staff relocating

from FIFA's global hub in Zurich, Switzerland and interns being recruited from Miami-Dade College, among other local hires.

FIFA opened the roughly 60,000-square-foot office in mid-2023, seeking a central location in the Americas near a busy international airport. It helped that Miami is among several host cities

for the 2026 World Cup, and that Miami already had an office for a key soccer partner: CONCACAF, the football federation for North and Central America and the Caribbean.

FIFA's choice underscores the strength of Coral Gables as a hub for multinational companies and organizations. Some 120 multinationals now call the city home, with



The new FIFA Headquarters



PHOTO: Rogelio Ben



Ryder offices at the Colonnade Building

the latest entrants including transport titan Ryder and tech giant Apple. Their presence often creates a multiplier effect by luring their vendors and other suppliers to set up in the city, says Belkys Perez, director of the Coral Gables economic development office. A broadcasting company that does video production for soccer is one of them, for example, courtesy of FIFA.

A new global headquarters for Ryder

The multinational offices in Coral Gables span a wide range of industries: hospitality (Hyatt), beverages (Heineken), tech (Pycargo), telecom (Millicom), and architecture (HOK), to name just a few. They serve varied functions, with some overseeing local, regional, or even global operations.

Ryder formally opened its world headquarters in Coral Gables in May 2024 by inviting in some 800 South Florida-based employees. Many work in hybrid mode, mainly from home. The 40,000-square-foot office spans two floors in what is now the Ryder Colonnade building at 2333 Ponce de Leon Boulevard on the corner of Miracle Mile and is designed to host up to 200 employees at a time.

The new digs are a massive change from Ryder's former home near Medley, a town in west



Bob Fatovic, Executive VP of Ryder

Miami-Dade County. Its former 250,000-square-foot building hosted all 800 employees, plus vendors who leased space on-premises. Now, to build corporate spirit among those visiting less often, the new headquarters prominently displays Ryder's red, black, and white colors. New facilities are also built for flexibility: tech-equipped work stations that move, huddle rooms for small meetings, privacy booths for quiet time, and a cafeteria set up for catering lunches or events, among other features.

"The feedback has been phenomenal," says Bob Fatovic, an executive vice president who oversees real estate as part of his portfolio. Employees like the chance to walk to restaurants nearby, and the privacy booths with adjustable



The Ryderson logo overlooks Miracle Mile

lighting are so popular that “we may be getting some more.”

The company, founded in Miami-Dade in 1933, now has some \$13 billion in annual revenue and nearly 50,000 employees, mostly in North America. Its business spans from renting trucks to managing the supply chains and transport networks of some of the world’s best-known brands.

Apple sets up at The Plaza Coral Gables

Tech giant Apple Inc. has been operating a small Latin American office in Coral Gables for years, but now it’s taken nearly 42,000-square-feet of space in The Plaza Coral Gables, the city’s largest commercial development. The iPhone maker has not offered details, but analysts say Apple surely liked rental rates less expensive than

Miami’s Brickell financial district, the presence of a Loews hotel in The Plaza for its visitors, less congestion than Downtown Miami, and quick access to Miami International Airport, among other factors.

Other tech companies are setting up in Coral Gables amid South Florida’s tech boom too, says the city’s Perez. Among the latest arrivals from Latin America: Mexico’s The Rocket Code, software developers active in fintech and cybersecurity, with offices in Madrid and San Francisco; and Colombia’s software developers Make Systems, based in Medellín.

“We offer a really unique ecosystem,” says Perez. City attributes include safety, with more police officers being added downtown, plus walkability to restaurants, entertainment, and hotels. “And we plan ahead,” adds Perez. “Look

at our Miracle Mile infrastructure. It took a while to get it done, but that was built to withstand large amounts of rain. With heavy rains in June 2024, there was no flooding. We invest in ourselves, and that’s important for companies and people to invest in us.”

Challenges: traffic, tech talent, downtown housing

Of course, challenges remain, especially traffic. Ryder’s Fatovic says in the two years between planning Ryder’s relocation and opening in the Gables, traffic in South Florida has worsened, making commutes more difficult for many workers. “The problem is east-west transit,” says Fatovic. While commuters on north-south routes have more options, including the high-speed Brightline train, congestion has thick-

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tries. Some work internationally but have yet to set up shop abroad, including the World Jai Alai League. The League operates the Magic City “Fronton,” where live-action jai-alai is played, working with a roster of nearly 40 players, some from France, Mexico, and Spain’s Basque region.

Its parent company, the investment firm West Flagler Associates, recently bought and oversaw the renovation of 866 Ponce de Leon Boulevard, a two-story building that now houses nearly 20 staff from the investment firm and League headquarters. Scott Savin, the League’s chief operating officer, welcomes the move from his space at the Magic City Casino. He’s found clients now keen to visit his office, eager to try out restaurants in the area. “Coral Gables has a very upscale identity, so it’s a prestigious address to have,” he says.

Cooperation with Miami-Dade

Of course, Coral Gables doesn’t exist in a vacuum. The city works closely with Miami-Dade County’s economic development arm, The Beacon Council, since firms attracted to Greater Miami often start their relocation search with that countywide group, says Perez. Plus, even when a company sets up elsewhere, nearby communities often benefit – with many finance executives working in Miami offices choosing to live in Coral Gables, for instance.

FIFA’s arrival in the City Beautiful will surely ripple across Miami and beyond. The soccer group is already planning an exhibit at Miami-Dade College’s downtown Freedom Tower starting in 2025 “about the history of football... which is a history of opportunity,” according to FIFA president Gianni Infantino. “We are here to work together... and will have great fun on top of it.” □

ened on east-west corridors, making drive times longer for employees living in Kendall or Brickell.

South Florida in general is struggling to fill the growing needs of the tech industry. Coral Gables, for its part, is launching a new digital skills-training program dubbed Gables TechTank. The city is partnering on the program with 4Geeks and a unit of Beyond Academics called TalentFarm, a city resolution says.

Perez says the city is also working to bring more residential units to downtown Coral Gables to help add clients for restaurants and other retail venues at night and on the weekends. “If you have residents living downtown, you diversify your customer base,” she says. “We want to expand the hours of operation downtown.”

Allures: upscale identity, prestigious address

Not all the companies setting up in the city are technically multinationals, defined as ventures with offices in at least two coun-

MULTINATIONALS IN THE GABLES: A SAMPLER

- ACI Worldwide
- AECOM
- Aersale
- American Airlines
- Americas Market Intelligence
- Apple
- Arthur Murray International
- Avison Young
- Bacardi
- Banco de Credito del Peru
- Banco Internacional de Costa Rica
- Bermello Ajamil & Partners
- Bunge Latin America
- Cargill
- Charles Schwab Latin America
- Cosentino
- Crystal Lagoons
- Del Monte Fresh Produce
- Dragados USA
- Esteyco
- FIFA
- Friesland Campina
- Hear.com
- Heineken Americas
- HOK Architecture
- HSBC Bank
- Hyatt Hotels & Resorts
- Jones Lang LaSalle
- Latin American Agribusiness Development
- Millicom International Cellular (Tigo)
- One Sotheby’s International
- Pan American Life Insurance
- PayCargo
- Perkins+Will
- ProTranslating
- Richemont Latin America & Caribbean
- RSM Global
- Ryder System



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Better Business in the City Beautiful

Sustainability, employee happiness, and diversity are pillars of business in the Gables

By RACHEL COSTA

From multinationals to small businesses, Coral Gables is home to over 10,000 companies that make up an eclectic commercial space and a vibrant downtown. Over the years, the city has become a space for businesses to grow, with an excellent tax environment, high quality of life, and luxury commercial infrastructure. Perhaps even more importantly, Coral Gables has maintained its high standards by promoting good business practices and attracting reputable companies like Baptist Health, which opened its doors in the Gables in 1949.

“Coral Gables truly embraces its slogan, ‘City Beautiful,’” says Joe Natoli, executive vice president and chief administrative officer of Baptist Health South Florida. “The city has a rich history and thriving economy, featuring both local and international businesses in various industries. It’s centrally located in our service area, which makes it convenient for our clinicians and staff to travel to our facilities from the Keys to Palm Beach. It’s a great place to live and work.”



Joe Natoli, Executive Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer of Baptist Health South Florida

PHOTO: Rodolfo Benitez



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The Gables is home to multiple Baptist facilities, including its corporate headquarters, the Miami HEAT Sports Medicine Center at Baptist Health Orthopedic Institute, and more recently, Belmont Village Coral Gables, a senior living community Baptist helped develop.

According to Great Place to Work, a global authority on workspace culture, 81 percent of Baptist Health South Florida employees say it is a great place to work, as compared to the much lower national average of 57 percent. Baptist consistently ranks highly in employee happiness, as well making it regularly into Fortune's list of the 100 Best Companies to Work For.

Natoli believes one of the many reasons why so many companies are attracted to Coral Gables is the availability of high-quality health-care. "Being recognized as one of the top places to work is paramount for our organization," he says. "Healthcare is a people business. Baptist Health is committed to recruiting, retaining, and developing the best, most engaged, and compassionate workforce in South Florida. At the heart of our success is an unwavering commitment to our people and fostering a culture of caring. We are committed to creating an environment where every employee feels welcome, valued, respected, and truly accepted for who they are."

On the sustainability front, Natoli says the company has elevated its commitment to environmental practices by launching a composting pilot program that has diverted over 20 tons of food waste from hospital kitchens, offsetting operational greenhouse emissions through innovative solar power partnerships, and reducing clinical emissions through a sustainable anesthesia program.

THE BACARDI BOON

One of the prototypical global companies in the Gables, with a long history in the city, is Bacardi North America.

"Miami has been a Bacardi community since 1964 following the family's forced exile from Cuba," says VP of human resources Kathleen Procario. In 2006, Coral Gables became the company's North American home. With over 300 employees at the Gables office alone, "it's one of the largest in the global Bacardi network," Procario adds. She names the city's thriving culinary scene and its close proximity to Miami International



Kathleen Procario, VP of Human Resources at Bacardi

Airport as major reasons for the company's long history here, allowing Bacardi to connect with its global headquarters in Bermuda and encouraging employee connection.

One of the company's main tenets is mirroring its consumers in representation, mindset, and behavior through its Belonging Initiative. In 2021 and 2022, Bacardi was recognized by Forbes as one of the world's top female-friendly companies. In partnership with the Hispanic Heritage Foundation (HHF), it also runs Visión Verde, a grant program for Hispanic and Latino-owned beverage businesses within the Greater Miami area, to help incorporate more environmentally sustainable practices. And through Backing the B.A.R., it supports NAACP nationwide grants for underrepresented minorities in the hospitality industry. Since January 2011, the company has also been certified Gold in the LEED rating system (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design), the most widely used green building rating system in the world.

"Across our Bacardi sites, we continuously look for ways to minimize our impact," says Procario. "Whether it's through innovative technology to reduce greenhouse gas emissions at a production

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PHOTO: Rodolfo Benitez

Jonathan Taylor,
Founder of Andromeda District

site, creating a wildflower garden as a wildlife habitat, or designing office spaces that are LEED certified – it's all about ensuring we're doing what we can to protect the environment. It's also part of our mindset, as we often talk about sustainability at work and with our customers to ensure it is top of mind for everyone."

The City of Coral Gables itself has been Gold LEED-certified since June 2022. Aside from that, it has its own sustainability program, Keep Coral Gables Beautiful, which was established in July 2020 to promote sustainability in the community through cleanups, beautification events, and educational opportunities. Its Green Business program also recognizes and rewards local businesses for green initiatives. Amongst them is Andromeda District, a gold-certified Green Business in Coral Gables, which specializes in the installation and design of "living" walls.

"We do it all naturally, with plants that are Florida-grown, and

use labor from the local agriculture sector," says founder Jonathan Taylor. "We want to embody every component of what sustainability can be."

The company started in 2012, eventually moving from a warehouse in Doral to Coral Gables, where Taylor created a showroom and biophilic garden center. "The decision to come to Coral Gables and make it our home came after years of really understanding that the city and this community really embody nature and beauty in a way that is different from other cities," he says. Indeed, the city's commitment to sustainability under current mayor Vince Lago has seeped through in many different ways; and it's a commitment that aligns with Andromeda District's mission to provide accessibility to natural spaces throughout the city. "With so many high rises, we lack land to plant trees – but we have walls," says Taylor. "We can turn something as lifeless as concrete into a beautiful space for biodiversity." □



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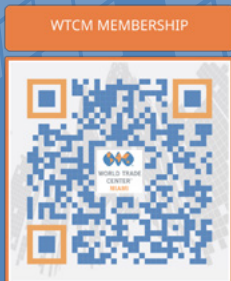
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NOW AND THEN

By NATALIA CLEMENT



Coral Gables Woman's Club, 1935

Established in 1925 by Coral Gables visionary George Merrick, the Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce has been a cornerstone of economic development and community advocacy throughout the last century. Since its founding, the Chamber has been dedicated to promoting the interests of local businesses and fostering a robust economic environment in Coral Gables.

“The fact that the city and the Chamber were founded only six months apart is a strong indication of Merrick’s vision for a robust business community that would play an important role in growing the city,” says Mark Trowbridge, Chamber president and CEO. “Our business climate was just as important as what we were building in the residential community – and that continues to this day.”

Throughout the decades, the Chamber has played a pivotal role in advocating for infrastructure im-

provements, business-friendly policies, and initiatives that support the growth of local commerce. Evolving into a key influencer in local policy, the chamber works closely with government officials and community stakeholders to shape the city’s economic landscape. Through its networking opportunities, educational seminars, and community events, it not only supports local businesses but also enhances the overall quality of life for residents.

In honor of the city’s centennial, we take a look at three other organizations that have contributed to the pleasurable experience of residing in the City Beautiful over the past century.

Coral Gables Woman’s Club: A Legacy of Community Service

Founded in 1923, the Coral Gables Woman’s Club stands as a cornerstone of civic engagement and



philanthropy in the community. Established during an era when woman's clubs wielded significant influence in social reform, the organization quickly distinguished itself through an unwavering commitment to social welfare, educational advancement, and cultural enrichment. Eunice Peacock Merrick, the wife of George Merrick, was the founding director of the club. Before a dedicated building for the club was built, meetings were held in the city's Country Club courtesy of Mr. Merrick, who continuously offered his support to the club's mission of bettering the community. The Club was federated in 1924 as part of the General Federation of Women's Clubs.

Central to the Woman's Club's mission is its historic clubhouse, an architectural gem designed by famed architect H. George Fink in the Mediterranean Revival style that defines the visual landscape of the City Beautiful. Notably, it is one of the few remaining examples in the state that showcases the

incorporation of Great Depression-era Moderne style architecture. Club members raised \$10,000 towards the construction of the building, which was built on land donated by the city. The first Work Projects Administration project in the city, the building was completed in 1936 using oolitic limestone from a local quarry. Now listed in the U.S. National Register of Historic Places, it not only serves as a gathering place for members but also as a hub for numerous charitable endeavors and cultural events. It also housed the city's library for more than 30 years beginning in 1937.

Among its many initiatives, the Woman's Club has championed the Coral Gables Children's Dental Clinic, providing essential dental care to underserved children. This initiative, founded in 1939, has provided free dental treatments and check-ups to over 60,000 children. Historically, the club's charitable initiatives were funded by cabaret shows, which



Coral Gables Garden Club, 1925

nowadays have been replaced with galas, auctions, and tea parties.

“We have adapted our mission [to] focus on building a sustainable club for future generations through the implementation of a Strategic Plan for the next five years,” says Woman’s Club President Arely Ruiz. “Last year, we celebrated the Club’s centennial by honoring our past through numerous events and initiatives culminating in a fundraising gala in December. Now, it is time to look to the future. It is so important that we leave a legacy for the younger members. My personal goal is to train the younger members to be leaders so the club will prosper and live long into the future. Leaders grow more leaders.”

1011 E Ponce de Leon Blvd.
305.448.7080
coralgableswomansclub.org

Coral Gables Garden Club: Cultivating Beauty and Community

Since its inception 100 years ago, the Coral Gables Garden Club has been a cherished local institution dedicated to enhancing the community’s natural beauty and promoting environmental steward-

ship. Founded in 1925, the same year as the City of Coral Gables’ incorporation, the club has played a large role in shaping the lush greenery that defines the City Beautiful. Founding members, including George Merrick’s wife Eunice and his mother Althea, set the groundwork for the club’s mission: to foster a love for gardening, educate members on horticultural practices, and beautify public spaces across the city. Their efforts culminated in the creation of the stunning gardens and green spaces that continue to enchant residents and visitors of Coral Gables to this day.

“The Coral Gables Garden Club cherishes its past and continues to be actively involved in our present community while it works to plan for the future,” says President Bonnie Crouch Seipp. “We are dedicated to educating our members, our youth, and the public in gardening, horticulture, environmental issues, community beautification, and the art of floral design.”

In addition to its commitment to beauty, the club is also dedicated to sustainability and conservation. Through workshops, educational programs, and partnerships with other local organizations, the Coral Gables Garden Club empowers members to adopt eco-friendly gardening practices and advocate for environmental stewardship. Notable projects include the Adopt an Entrance initiative, which aimed to complete Merrick’s vision of beautiful city entrances; restoration efforts at the Girl Scouts of Tropical Florida’s Camp Mahachie; and the creation and continuous tending to various greenspaces, such as the Lamar Louise Curry Park, the Heritage Garden at the historic Merrick House, and the Butterfly Garden adjacent to the Coral Gables Library. Other gardening projects target local environmental initiatives, including



Coral Gables Garden Club, 2024

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one of Coral Gables
7 unique villages



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butterfly conservation, mangrove restoration, native canopy planting, and the creation of pollinator patches throughout the city.

The Garden Club also spotlights the city’s history, sponsoring historic markers such as the Blue Star Memorial outside the Coral Gables War Memorial Youth Center, as well as two statues dedicated to the city’s founding family. You can view the 12-foot high bronze statue honoring George Merrick outside of City Hall or stop by the Merrick House to sit next to a life-size statue of his mother, Althea, in her beloved garden. With a century’s legacy, the Coral Gables Garden Club continues to sow seeds of beauty, sustainability, and civic pride across Coral Gables.

1200 Anastasia Ave. (The Biltmore Hotel)
coralgablesgardenclub.org

Coral Gables Music Club: Harmonizing Community and Culture

The Coral Gables Music Club, dedicated to celebrating the artistry and cultural significance of music, has harmoniously enriched the community since its inception in 1939. Established by passionate music enthusiasts, the club has been an instrumental force in the city’s cultural landscape, promoting musical education, performance, and appreciation. It is affiliated with the National Federation and Florida Federation of Music Clubs, as well the Royal Poinciana District, all of which sponsor a wide range of musical events and numerous awards for talented musicians.

At the heart of the Coral Gables Music Club's mission is its commitment to fostering musical talent and inspiring a love for music amongst res-

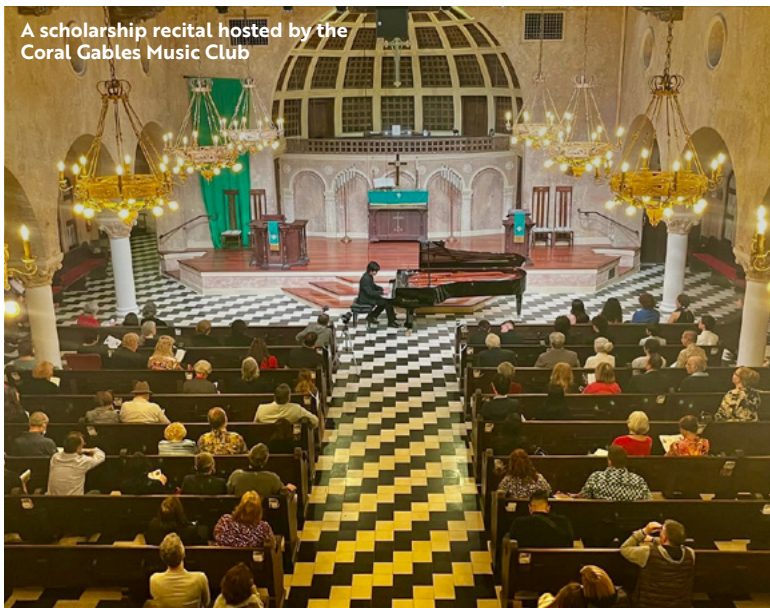
idents of all ages. Through a variety of initiatives, including recitals, concerts, and educational workshops, the club provides a platform for local musicians to showcase their talents and engage with the community. Every year, the Music Club sponsors approximately 20 young musicians, elementary school through high school aged, with scholarships, as well as group study and performance opportunities through the Coral Gables Junior Music Club. Every February, these students showcase their talents at a recital held at the Coral Gables Congregational Church.

“It’s helped so many,” says Art Director Angelica Sganga. “It’s given so many kids from our community a platform to develop their talents. It’s not just the money that they receive, but the fact that every year, [they have] to perform for the scholarship recital.” Sganga says this experience is key to developing a young musician; many of the Music Club’s scholarship kids have gone on to Julliard, armed with a plethora of performing experience.

Notable alumni include world-renowned voice teacher Manny Perez and Tony and GRAMMY Award-winning composer Alec Lacamoire.

In addition to nurturing emerging talent, the Coral Gables Music Club actively collaborates with local schools, cultural institutions, and artists to promote music education and cultural enrichment through-

out the city. Its efforts throughout the decades have contributed to Coral Gables' reputation as a vibrant hub of artistic expression and community engagement. □



A scholarship recital hosted by the Coral Gables Music Club

gablesmusicclub.org
Scholarship Recital
Feb. 6, 2025 at 6:45 pm
Coral Gables Congregational United Church of Christ
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Inside the Chamber



Mark A. Trowbridge, President & CEO of the
Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce

The Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce

201 Alhambra Circle, Suite 100
305.446.1657

coralgableschamber.org

Director: Mark A. Trowbridge, President and CEO

MISSION

The Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce is a nonprofit organization comprised of businesses and leading professionals. Its mission is to advance business success and member engagement in Coral Gables and beyond through our commitment to inclusiveness, relevance, and integrity.

OVERVIEW

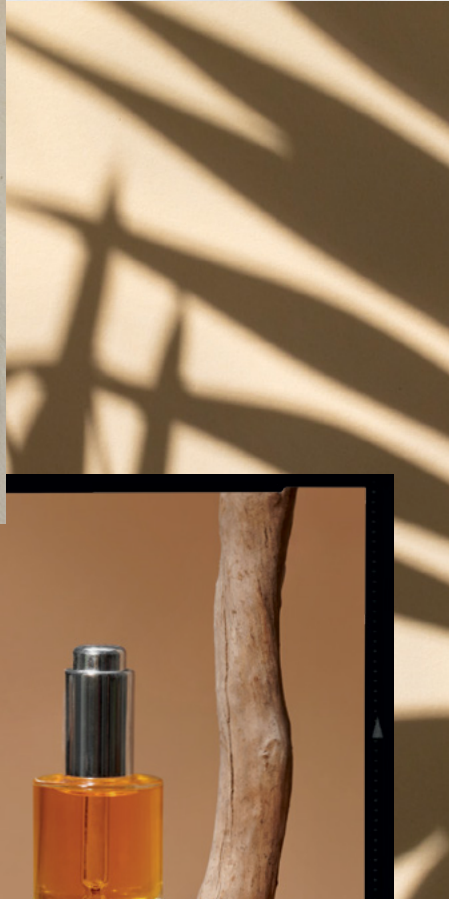
The Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce was founded in 1925 by George Merrick, the visionary city planner and developer who also founded the city itself. Merrick served as the first chairman of the Chamber, which will celebrate its centennial in

2025. Today, with 1,600 members, the Coral Gables Chamber is recognized as a top-tier chamber of commerce, and one of South Florida's largest, based on membership size, annual budget, and the assets of the organization.

With strong support from a collection of leading local businesses, including the Biltmore Hotel, Fresh Del Monte Produce, Bacardi, The Allen Morris Company, Florida Blue, UHealth, Baptist Health, and Amerant Bank, the Gables Chamber offers a comprehensive series of programs and events to encourage networking among its members, to educate the area's businesses on best practices, and to engage the local business community through networkers, educational presentations, breakfast and lunch meetings, leadership interviews, roundtable discussions, and a full complement of annual events.

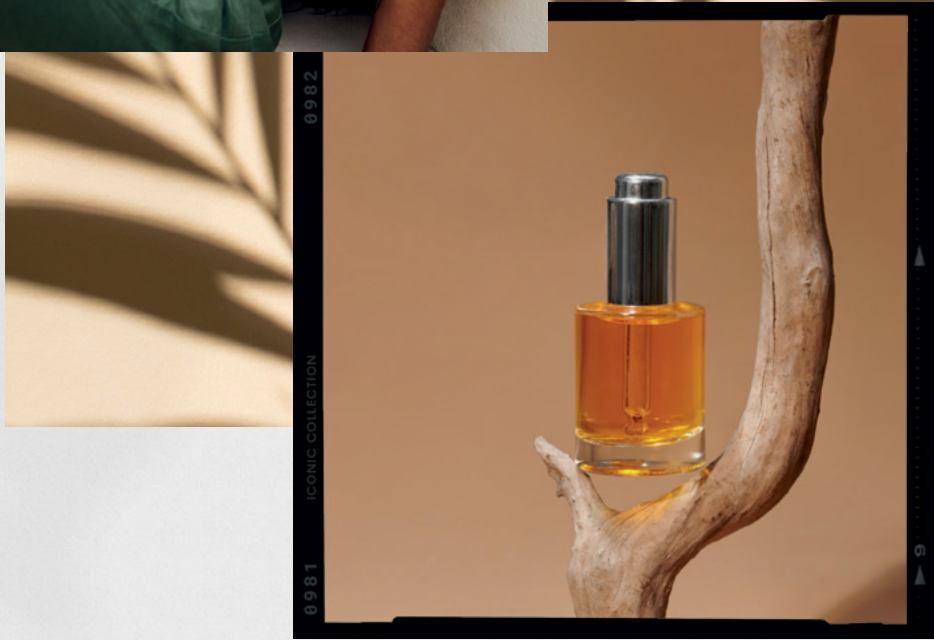
The Chamber also spearheads an annual fly-in to Tallahassee and Washington, D.C., accompanied by its members and city political leaders, to present its legislative priorities. □

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Programs

MONTHLY EVENTS

AFTER HOURS NETWORKERS

Networking after hours events such as "Wind Down Wednesday" are geared toward groups of like-minded professionals looking to expand their personal and professional networks.

BUSINESS BOOK CLUB

Oprah Winfrey, move over! The Chamber has its own Business Book Club, in which participants discuss timely tomes, often with visits by the author.

GOOD MORNING CORAL GABLES

A signature breakfast, with keynote presentations by business leaders, consultants, pundits, etc. on a topic of relevance to the community and/or Chamber members. It is also a great opportunity to network with like-minded business professionals.

WOMEN'S BUSINESS NETWORK LUNCHEON

A gathering of women in business to discuss opportunities and challenges.

MONTHLY TRUSTEE & GEM INVESTORS EVENTS

These include luncheons and receptions hosted exclusively for our top-tier Trustees and GEM investors.

SMALL BUSINESS SEMINARS

An "IMPACT" series geared toward small businesses. Subjects include best HR practices, techniques to motivate your sales team, franchising, social media marketing, compliance workshops, etc.

ANNUAL EVENTS

DIAMOND AWARDS

The Diamond Awards celebrate all that sparkles and shines about local businesses! The Chamber's most prestigious awards program honors businesses in a variety of categories including large, small, nonprofit, retail, woman-owned, family-owned, and more.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Held each summer, the Annual Conference is a high-impact gathering focused on your personal and professional growth, with recognition of incoming leadership.

SMALL BUSINESS SUMMIT

Held in May during National Small Business Week, this annual summit showcases all things small business, discussing timely topics, trends, and pertinent information.

RISING STAR AWARDS

An annual awards program recognizing our community's stellar young professionals under the age of 40.

BUSINESSWOMEN OF THE YEAR AWARDS

An annual awards program honoring women throughout Miami-Dade County in categories such as small business, corporate, entrepreneurial, large business, real estate, and more.

BURGERLISCIOUS

A meaty gathering of South Florida's best and beefiest burger restaurants competing for "Best in Bur" and "People's Choice"

awards. The bragging rights are huge! Stay up-to-date on all the juicy details by visiting us at burgerliscious.com or head over to @burgerliscious_ on Instagram.

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Elected - Term Expires 2027

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 Elizabeth Perez (The Keyes Company - Coral Gables office)
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Planting the Flag

The Gables supersedes Brickell in the flight to quality

By KYLIE WANG



The Plaza, Coral Gables



“For every rule there is an exception,” says William Holly, president and founder of Gables-based Patton Real Estate, which specializes in corporate leasing. “And Coral Gables is that exception, for office space, commercial space, and residential space.”

Despite the challenges of the last few years (skyrocketing inflation, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the new “work from home” norm), Coral Gables has emerged as a frontrunner for commercial real estate across the nation. Holly, for one, attributes this largely to major corporate relocations to the Gables, which has myriad retail and dining options, Class A office space, and a short commute to both Miami International Airport and nearby neighborhoods like the Brickell financial district and Downtown Miami. Experts also attribute the post-pandemic surge to a mix of a “flight to quality” and better pricing than nearby markets. As rates rise in Brickell, tenants are making the move to the Gables, where they can get a \$30-plus discount per square foot.

This mirrors the trend of the past few years, when companies from places like New York, Austin, Chicago, and the Bay Area flocked to Brickell, happy to pay \$55 per square foot. But today, Brickell’s rate is now the same as what they were escaping: around \$80 per square foot, or more for Class A and what Avison Young Managing Director Donna Abood calls “the trophy building.”

A step above Class A office space, trophy buildings are not only excellently located, but also have myriad amenities like dry cleaning, free Wi-Fi, coffee bars, and on-premise food and fitness options. Designed to entice workers back to the office post-pandemic, they can capture higher rates, which is what The Plaza



Donna Abood,
Managing Director of
Avison Young

PHOTO: Rodolfo Benitez

Coral Gables has done.

The 2.25-million-square-foot mixed-use project includes highly sought-after offices, residences, a Loews hotel, and numerous restaurant and retail options. “We bet on the luxury end, and it has proven successful,” says Carlos Beckmann, who runs operations for Agave Holdings, the company behind the project. Rates for trophy buildings have increased 78 percent over the last five years, according to Abood, compared to a significantly lower 31 percent increase for Class A and B buildings. Office rental rates at The Plaza are around \$60 per foot and its two towers are nearly completely full, with Apple recently leasing over 40,000-square-feet for its new office.

“The new firms that came to Downtown Miami and Brickell have driven up the prices on Class A office space to rates that far exceed inflation,” says Holly. “What that’s done is taken local tenants and priced them out of the market.” Meanwhile, Coral Gables’ rates have stayed relatively linear, and businesses have taken notice. Last year, there was a 12 percent increase in office leasing activity in the Gables, accounting for 226 new leases, including FIFA and Ryder System.

Class A buildings like The Allen Morris Com-



PHOTO: Rodolfo Benitez

Carlos Beckmann, Managing Director of Agave Holdings

pany’s Alhambra Towers aren’t doing poorly either. Last year, Alhambra Towers leased 62,861-square-foot of space via new and expanding contracts. It is now almost 100 percent full and boasts some trophy aspects of its own, including an outdoor work area, LEED certification, and an upscale restaurant soon to come.

B and C class buildings, meanwhile, are looking to renovations to keep clients in seats. Pattons’ Holly points to this as a growing trend, citing the 4000 Ponce building, which his company manages, as an example – it just completed a multimillion-dollar renovation to include or update outdoor and common areas, conference facilities, and restrooms.

Abood, meanwhile, believes that the current trend of hybrid work is decreasing as companies work to bring their employees back to the office, which bodes well for future office occupancy rates. Holly even goes so far as to say that work-from-home will likely be completely phased out in the Gables soon. “National companies in low-rent suburban markets like Miramar will continue to see work-from-home,” he says, but Coral Gables, with

its “more locally-owned businesses” will readapt.

Thad Adams of The Allen Morris Company says the revenue from corporate relocations to the local economy is huge. According to him, 15,000 new jobs and over \$54 million was added to Miami-Dade County’s economy last year. “In Coral Gables, approximately 40 percent of the entire city’s revenues come from the commercial sector,” he says. “Having buildings that are substantially occupied means higher property tax valuations [which] means more city revenue. And that mitigates the need for residents to pay higher millage rates and taxes on their properties.”

On the other side of the coin is retail, which has been transformed by the Miracle Mile streetscape and Giralda Plaza projects of 2015, both of which transformed downtown Coral Gables into a more pedestrian-friendly locale with enhanced lighting and landscaping, widened sidewalks, and public art. Retail has seen the same “flight to quality” that the office sector has, with average retail rents in the Gables around \$53 per square foot, as compared to \$85 to \$130 in Brickell. “In the past three years, rents have increased a cumulative 13.5 percent,” says Carlos Fernandez-Guzman, president and CEO of Pacific National Bank, which primarily finances commercial real estate transactions. “Buyers have exhibited a steady interest in the area.”



PHOTO: Rodolfo Benitez

Barbara Tria, Broker and Founding Principal at Coral Pine Real Estate

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“When you look at the asking rates that you find in the City of Coral Gables, I would suggest we’re actually a value proposition compared to other markets that we tend to complete with, like Wynwood or Coconut Grove,” agrees Coral Pine Real Estate founding principal and broker Barbara Tria. “It’s not unusual to see triple digit figures for base rents quoted in those markets, and we have yet to see that number in our retail market.”

Today, vacancy rates for retail are in the single digits – around 1.2 percent, according to Fernandez Guzman. “Sometimes it’s hard to perceive that because of the transition from one retailer to the next,” says Tria. “There’s downtime, and so it may feel like there’s more vacancy than there actu-

ally is.” Low vacancy also means base rent will be driven up, and retail also has to contend with rising triple net charges like real estate taxes, maintenance, and insurance, which has gone up significantly over the last year.





Among the industries coming to prominence in the Gables are health and wellness and chef-driven restaurants. CVI.CHE 105, which has locations in Miami and Miami Beach, just opened their flagship location in The Plaza. Graziano’s recently opened another Argentine market in the LifeTime building on US-1. Beckmann says The Plaza won’t accept any more restaurant leases since the industry has grown so much.

Specialized gyms like

Sweat440, Orangetheory, Pilates Strong, and SoulCycle have also become the belle of the ball, as have high-end boutique retailers that appeal to affluent Gableites and visitors from Europe and South America.

Terranova Corporation, which owns the most buildings on Miracle Mile, is looking to buy up even more property in downtown Gables, adding to its existing profile of 15 properties and an office building at 255 Alhambra. Founder and chairman Stephen Bittel has always had a vision for the Mile, buying four more buildings in the last two years. “We’re by no means done,” he says, echoing the overarching sentiment of, it seems, every buyer and seller in the Gables’ commercial real estate market. □

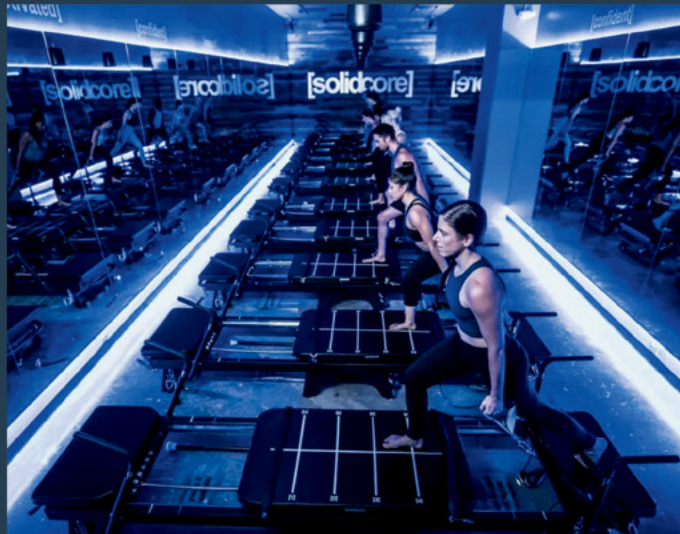
OVERALL COMMERCIAL OFFICE MARKET

	 Coral Gables	 Brickell	 Downtown	 Coconut Grove
<i>Total SF</i>	12MM	11.3MM	12.7MM	2.9MM
<i>AVG RATE</i>	\$50.46/RSF	\$77.60/RSF	\$52.63/RSF	\$60.47/RSF
<i>VACANCY</i>	10.4%	8.1%	12.0%	9.7%
<i>12 Mo LEASED SF</i>	942K	660K	784K	191K
4 & 5 Star				
<i>Total RSF</i>	6.6MM	9.8MM	8MM	1.3MM
<i>AVG RATE</i>	\$54.83/RSF	\$82.18/RSF	\$61.12/RSF	\$69.96/RSF
<i>VACANCY</i>	14.0%	9.1%	13.6%	13.1%
<i>12 Mo LEASED SF</i>	770K	631K	748K	110K

Source: The Allen Morris Co.



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THE RESIDENTIAL ROCKET

The state of residential real estate in Coral Gables
By KYLIE WANG



Alirio Torrealba, CEO
of MG Developer

PHOTO: Rodolfo Benitez

Initially, Gables-based realtor Drew Kern thought the pandemic-era influx of West Coasters and Northeasterners to Coral Gables would weaken the residential real estate market, leading to what he calls “the rebound” effect. “I thought we’d have a ton of inventory this year from people who said, ‘Oh, we’re going back,’” he says. But that didn’t happen. “They’re staying. And their friends are coming.”

The trend of wealthy northerners moving to sunny Coral Gables appears to be here to stay, experts say. The massive tax benefits of moving to Florida makes the decision to move here easy, and Coral Gables, with its beautiful aesthetics, open restaurants, A-rated schools, and overall walkability, is a perfect choice.

“COVID did so much for people’s realization of how they’re living,” says realtor Ashley Cusack, who saw the average price per square foot of homes in the City Beautiful rise to a whopping \$1,000. “Over the past couple of years, everything took off.” Today, the Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices EWM realtor says, things have “tapered off a little bit,” but the mar-

ket is still holding strong. “I don’t see it coming down. But I don’t see the same increase,” she adds.

While some locals say Coral Gables has become too expensive, that’s not reflected by the current market. “Despite the perception of high costs, people continue to move to Coral Gables because of the lifestyle it offers,” says local realtor Audrey Ross. “Additionally, many residents are attracted to the investment potential of real estate in the area, knowing that properties in Coral Gables tend to appreciate well over time.” Last year, a non-waterfront property in Coral Gables sold for \$22 million. Experts say what used to be two or four million is now eight to 10. Some of those prices have been driven up by lack of inventory, but a recent increase in properties on the market are helping to balance things. Still, prospective buyers are often competing with 14 or 15 offers from day one, and homes are frequently taken off the market within days of being put on.

This is all under the dark umbrella of incredibly high rates for home insurance, which have gone up



Ashley Cusack, realtor at Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices EWM Realty

more than 100 percent post-pandemic. Cusack says she's seen some owners priced out of their homes on the insurance alone, though she acknowledges that rates – like prices – seem to be balancing now. Still, homeowners have had to get creative: they're self-insuring, forgoing windstorm protections, or pushing their rates down by installing things like PVC plumbing, impact glass, and new roofs. It may not be sexy, but it's what works. "With the increase in insurance rates, home buyers in Coral Gables are prioritizing these mitigating factors during their property search," says Ross. "They understand that investing in a home with these features can result in long-term savings and added peace of mind. This shift in buyer awareness and behavior reflects a more informed and strategic approach to purchasing real estate in today's market."

Meanwhile, lenders are becoming more willing to negotiate. "They're trying to make it work because they know they're going to refinance in a year if they don't put them at a decent rate," says Kern, who adds that he's seen several big national banks come under market rate for his clients.

Those clients vary from empty nesters with kids in college who choose the Gables for its convenience and proximity to services, to New Yorkers searching for the same walkability they had in the Big Apple, to renters from Brickell who are attempting to start families in a house rather than an apartment, close to good schools.

For the empty nesters, at least, townhomes are the new pink. They're easy to maintain and easy to leave behind for months at a time without need of a house-sitter. They're also generally more spacious

than people assume, meaning you don't have to "sacrifice entertainment space or sacred spaces where people gather," says MG Developer CEO Alirio Torrealba, who has six townhome developments in the Gables, including two in the works: The Village at Coral Gables and The George, a 13-townhome project priced at \$1,100 per square foot.

"Residents of Coral Gables are used to a certain quality of architecture and design, which in the past they have found in private homes," says Torrealba, whose townhomes have won various design awards. "We have raised the bar in terms of high-end elegance, with walkability to downtown Gables as a bonus."

Torrealba's completed Biltmore Square project sits just a few blocks from Miracle Mile, creating a village like cluster of townhome rows that include Biltmore Parc, Althea Row, Beatrice Row, and Biltmore Row. Torrealba is perhaps most proud, however, of his new Village at Coral Gables project, which encompasses an entire city block directly north of the city's Youth Center and Public Library. "It's about creating a community with Mediterranean design," he says. "It repeats the original vision of the city – a beautiful enclave that is part of the vision George Merrick had when he founded Coral Gables in 1925."

The Calta Group is also working on a townhomes project, a break from their norm of luxury single-family homes. "Townhomes are a trend," says Gaetano Calta-girone, who partners with his brother, Ignazio, to lead the firm. "[They're] also a product that lets the kids come back and visit you. If you want everyone home for Christmas, you have the space." Indeed, their Via Vene-



Drew Kern, realtor at BHHS EWM International Realty

PHOTO: Rodolfo Benitez

to's 10 townhomes, due for completion in 2025, are spacious at 5,000-square-feet. "It's just normal market selection," says Ignazio Caltagirone. "There are always going to be people looking to move out of homes and into apartments or townhomes."

Meanwhile, condos are experiencing a sudden change in the wake of the 2021 Surfside condo collapse, which killed 98 after postponing major repairs to avoid raising assessments. In June, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis signed into law a sweeping bill that outlines new building safety standards. The law attempts to revitalize the negative image of condos as unsafe options, aiming to improve quality of life and overall public opinion. While it remains to be seen how the new law will affect the market in the short-term, experts are predicting a slump as owners sell to avoid the impending fees and costs associated with improved maintenance standards.

Amongst many new rules, the law will give the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation more power to enforce existing laws and investigate condo boards; require associations with over 25 units to make records available to owners by Jan. 1, 2026; set criminal penalties for condo board members who accept kickbacks or fail to maintain or provide access to public records; require mandatory training for board directors on inspections, recordkeeping, and financial literacy; and force owners to provide prospective buyers with the association's annual financial statement and report as of Oct. 1. A previous senate bill passed in May 2022 set out regulations on inspections and reserve funds used for maintenance.

The more recent law also gives developers more control over common spaces like pools, elevators, and lobbies, which historically have been managed by condo associations once units are sold. Now, several high-profile lawsuits have seen developers arguing that they are still, in fact, the owners of these common spaces. Condo owners say the law will give



Audrey Ross, realtor at Compass

In Coral Gables, there is a six-month supply of condos as of March, making it one of the hottest condo markets in South Florida.

the developers' power to abuse them by raising assessments without approval from the condo board. And, of course, if the board doesn't have any enough saved in an emergency maintenance fund, the cost of repairs could fall on condo owners' shoulders.

Still, the new regulations are expected to bring more benefit than loss to the condo market, ultimately, with buyers more assured of the quality of the product.

In Coral Gables, there was a six-month supply of condos as of March, making it one of the hottest condo markets in South Florida, with about 120 units available for purchase at about \$718 per square foot. One of the fastest-selling markets in 2023 with the lowest levels of inventory means that for condo owners in the Gables, at least, things may not look so bad.

Perhaps the most ambitious residential project to be approved for construction in the Gables recently is the Allen Morris Company's Ponce Park Residences. In the works for several years now, with an expected 2026 completion date, the original proposed plan was put through multiple changes at the behest of Mayor Vince Lago

and local residents to make it smaller and more appropriate for the Gables. Developer Allen Morris not only sought input from residents on the project, but also agreed to execute long-awaited improvements to nearby Ponce Circle Park to the tune of nearly \$9 million, a huge boon for the city. "I was a 'no' vote until we had discussions on the issue of Ponce Circle Park," said Lago. "To me, public spaces are the key and the future of our city." □

CORAL GABLES CONDO MARKET (INCLUDING TOWNHOMES)

<i>Date</i>	<i>For Sale</i>	<i>Average Sold Price</i>	<i>Average Sq. Ft. Price (sold)</i>
JUNE 2019	273	\$ 383,000	\$331
JUNE 2023	65	\$1,169,000	\$765
JUNE 2024	139	\$ 680,000	\$613

CORAL GABLES SINGLE FAMILY HOMES MARKET

<i>Date</i>	<i>For Sale</i>	<i>Average Sold Price</i>	<i>Average Sq. Ft. Price (sold)</i>
JUNE 2019	435	\$1,287,000	\$451
JUNE 2023	116	\$2,523,000	\$920
JUNE 2024	167	\$3,675,000	\$1,258

Source: Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices EWM Realty

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www.SamanthaSaraInteriors.com



Smart City Resources

The Gables sets the standard for Smart Cities

By MAYA REGO

Within the last decade, smart cities have become a standard of living across the globe and Coral Gables' efforts to upgrade its technological ecosystem have not gone unnoticed. In March 2024, the city was named one of the smartest communities in the world for the second year in a row by the Intelligent Community Forum, and just months earlier, the Dense Networks Think Tank recognized the Gables with the Connected City Innovator of the Year award at the 2024 Smart Cities Connect conference.

From traffic lights to AI energy models, Coral Gables continues to adopt policies that bolster its smart city project and forge a path into the future for not just the City Beautiful, but other municipalities across the state. Here is a guide to the city's Smart City resources, from an updated mobile app to online AI bots. □

BENCHMARKS OF A SMART CITY

The City of Coral Gables has:

- 26 free public Wi-Fi sites
 - 25 city-owned buried fiber optic corridors, with plans for another 26 underway
 - 2,900+ network devices citywide that maintain and secure effective internet connections
 - 60+ smart lighting controllers, which provide residents with energy usage information
 - 700+ traffic and environmental sensors, including CCTV cameras and upgraded traffic signals
 - 70+ AI-powered smart city poles, with free Wi-Fi, CCTV, and traffic sensors (including vehicles, pedestrians, speed, etc.), and environmental sensors (air quality, weather, noise).
 - 200+ high performance servers
- The City of Coral Gables mobile app, which allows residents to access all the services provided on the city website – including the Smart City Hub portal – from the convenience of their phone. The app is available to download for Android and iPhone.

THE SMART CITY HUB – THIS ONLINE HUB INCLUDES:

TRANSPARENCY PORTALS – View financial and public information in dashboards and graphs for:

- City finances, including revenues and expenditures
- Capital improvement projects
- Property tax distribution
- Lobbyist information
- Election history demographics
- Public records requests
- Legislative calendar
- Permit inspections
- Traffic analytics
- Water quality and levels
- City smart lighting reports
- Weather and climate reports
- Electrical and water consumption reports
- Development projects



A Smart City Pole which provides traffic data

CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT SERVICES –

Connecting people via:

Aida Bot – an AI assistant designed to help visitors navigate the City of Coral Gables' Smart City Hub

Police to Citizen – a website that allows residents to search for police reports, keep updated on recent arrests and incidents via the Daily Bulletin, and register their residences for security during an extended absence, amongst other tools.

Citizen Public Input Hub – the online home for outreach to the Coral Gables community. Visitors to the site can find upcoming events, initiatives, and opportunities to share their input on key topics.

Citizen Request Center – now upgraded to allow residents to report non-emergency issues such as potholes and graffiti. Also includes an AI chatbot to help users navigate the system. Available via website and app.

Real-Time Trolley Tracker – a website tool and mobile application that shows trolley locations in real-time. The trolley is available Monday through Saturday from 6:30 am to 10 pm for free on two routes down Ponce de Leon Blvd. and Grand Ave.

Virtual Historic Tour – a geo-enabled learning experience that includes digitized historical building prints, property parcels, aerial photographs, boundaries, streets, vegetation, landscape, and architectural landmarks; a virtual walking tour; 3D simulations of significant landmarks; and over 8,000 digitized historical documents, oral histories, maps, and photographs.

CITY APPLICATIONS – Find the mobile app you need:

City Mobile App

Pay by Phone – pay for parking

In-telligent and Everbridge – emergency communications

INRIX ParkMe – find and reserve parking

ETA Trolley – real-time trolley tracking

FreeBee – free Uber-style rides throughout downtown Gables

Saferwatch – incident reporting

Aira Explorer – visual interpretation app for the blind

Orchid Tracker – personal orchid observation journal

Actionbound AR – digitally interactive scavenger hunts

MagicalPark AR – digital playground for children six to 11

EGOV CITY SERVICES –

Make requests, ask questions, and get service for:

Permit management

Payment of permits, business licenses, lease services, certificates of use, stormwater bills, invoice services, special assessments

Parks memberships

City vendor registration

Parking permit renewals

Zoning code and map access

City employee portal

Lobbyist registration

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SCIENCE –

The science of where, including maps of:

City trees

Hurricane debris sites

Voting precincts

Street lights and traffic calming measures

Smart city kiosks

Trolley routes

Pet waste stations

Bicycle routes

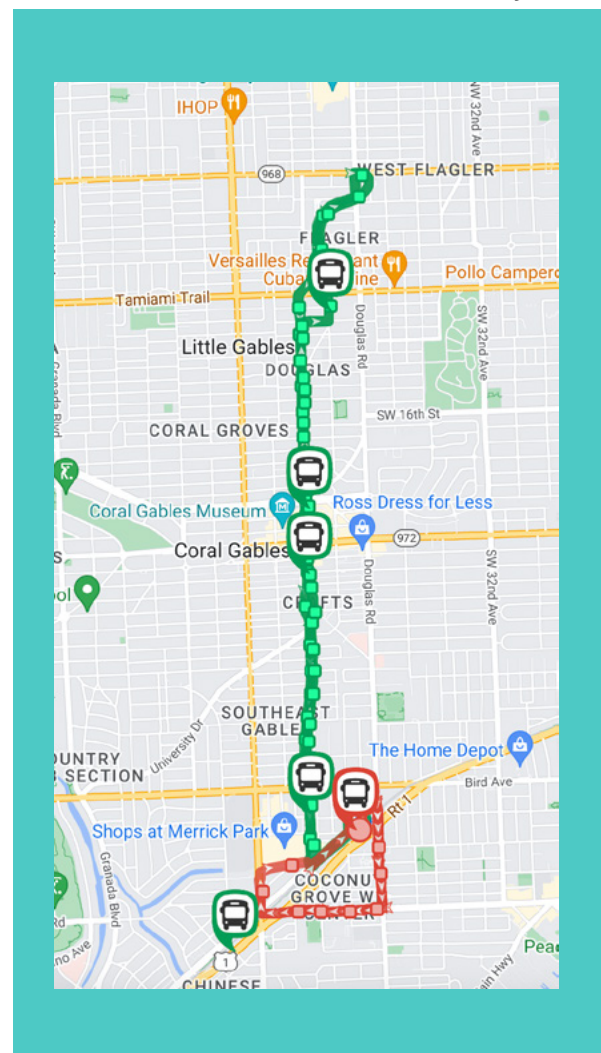
Historic properties

Wi-Fi locations

Zoning maps

EV charging stations

The Real-Time Trolley Tracker



MBA 2.0

Graduate business education programs serving Coral Gables

By LUKE CHANEY

PHOTO: Rodolfo Benitez



University of Miami
Herbert School of Business

UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI HERBERT SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

5250 University Dr.
305.284.4643
herbert.miami.edu

The University of Miami Herbert School of Business offers a STEM-designated, 21-month full-time MBA program that is designed to give students hands-on opportunities key to career advancement. With a curriculum structured around current employer demands, Miami's MBA program integrates students' knowledge of management, economics, and marketing, with finance, business law, and technology. Classes meet on weekdays and weeknights. The program is ideal for those with an undergraduate degree in any field and three or more years of work experience seeking advanced business expertise.

For executives who remain on the job, the Herbert Business School offers an online program. This online MBA is ranked in the top 50 and in the

top 25 for veterans nationally by the U.S. News & World Report this year.

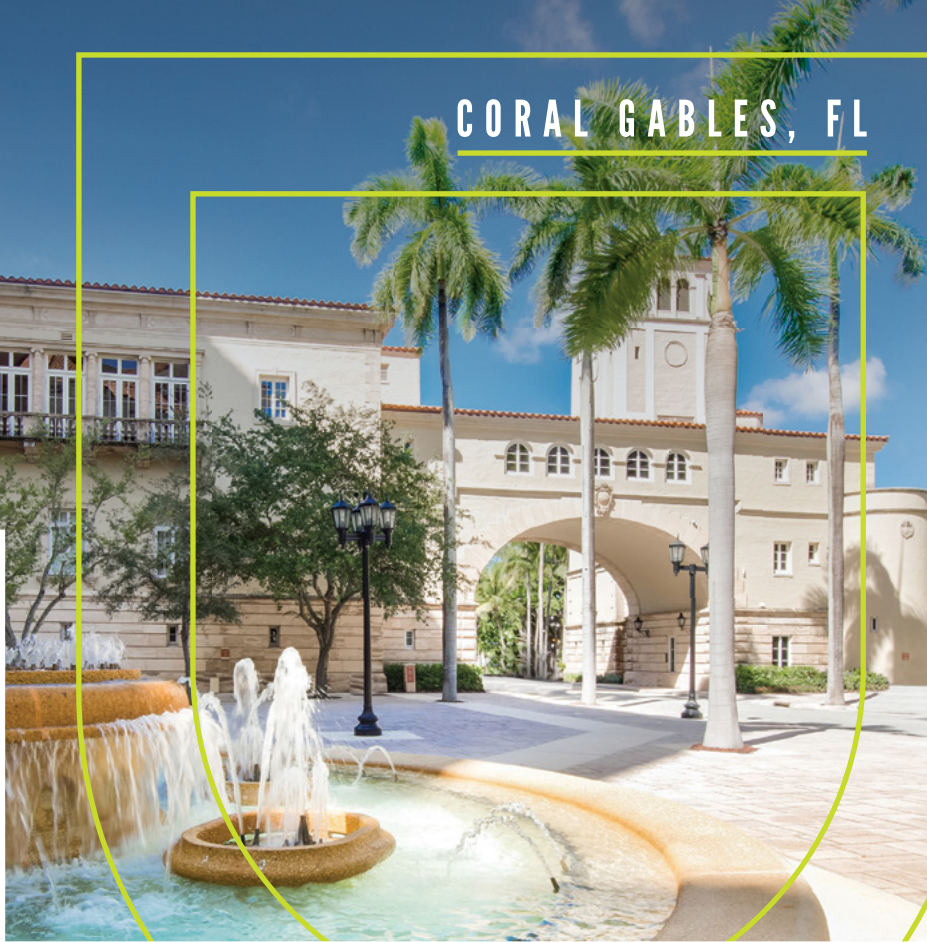
Miami Herbert also features an Accelerated MBA program designed for candidates with an undergraduate or graduate degree in business or related fields who are seeking to propel their careers in a short amount of time. This program lasts for 10 months; 11 months shorter than UM's standard MBA program, making it Florida's fastest accelerated MBA program.

For those looking to launch a career in commercial real estate, the Herbert Business School also teaches a 19-month Accelerated MBA in real estate, which combines the business expertise of the school with UM's School of Architecture's strengths in new urbanism. The program offers students a chance to gain a general management perspective and hands-on commercial real estate experience through experimental learning, internships, and an interdisciplinary curriculum. TUITION: \$95,478 – \$142,757.



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FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY CHAPMAN GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

11200 SW 8th St.
305.348.0148
business.fiu.edu

Florida International University's Chapman Graduate Business School is a nearby option for Gableites seeking an advanced degree. The school offers an array of different MBA options that align with the needs of working professionals as well as those who have the ability to commit to a full-time program.

The Full-Time International MBA program aims to prepare students to become global business leaders in 12 months through a curriculum that focuses on cultural insight, global business strategies, and real-world experience. Study abroad and internship opportunities are highly emphasized and classes are only offered during the day, Monday through Friday, at FIU's Modesto Maidique Campus in West Miami-Dade.

FIU also offers a program specifically designed for executives called the Professional MBA for Executives (Executive MBA). This program is carefully catered to working professionals and provides education with an emphasis on leadership, strategic

thinking, and digital transformation. With classes on Saturdays, the program lasts for 16 months.

Other MBA programs at FIU include specializations in business analytics, healthcare, sports management, and cybersecurity risk management. There is also a Flex program that offers both online and in-person classes over the course of 20 months, and a Weekend MBA that lasts 16 months only on Saturdays. The MBA Online program, meanwhile, was ranked fourth in the U.S. among public programs and tenth in the world in the 2022 QS Online MBA Rankings.

TUITION: \$42,000 – \$54,000.

KELLOGG SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT AT NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

95 Merrick Way
305.442.7780
kellogg.northwestern.edu

With a campus located in the heart of Coral Gables, Miami executives have the opportunity to immerse themselves in Kellogg's Executive MBA Program, which features multiple schedules to suit a busy lifestyle. The program qualifies as a STEM-designated field of study, offering substantial benefits to international students holding F-1 student visas. The rigorous curriculum aims to enhance leadership skills through intensive classes once a month from Thursday through Sunday over the course of two years. The school provides accommodations (either in Miami or Evanston, Illinois, where its other campus is), meals, and e-books through its tuition.

TUITION: \$118,479

ADEN UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

2850 S Douglas Rd.
786.332.2122
aduniversity.us

Aden University School of Business' main draw is its bilingual Executive MBA program, taught in English and/or Spanish. This 15-month, 37-credit program follows a curriculum that covers every aspect of business, including accounting, finance, economics, marketing, sales, corporate strategy, business development, and more.

The school also offers a 14-month Global MBA program taught both in English and Spanish. Its curriculum teaches students how to analyze the organizational dynamics and scope of business administration, to design strategies to lead regional and international companies, and to assess the risks and sustainability of companies in the global market.

TUITION: \$13,000 – \$16,800. □



PHOTO: Rodolfo Benitez

Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University

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
As you grow older, you will discover that you have two hands -one for helping yourself, the other for helping others.

- Audrey Hepburn



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Coral Gables Schools

Relocation Guide

By LUKE CHANEY



The Growing Place

Coral Gables features a wide array of excellently rated public and private schools, some of which rank among the top in South Florida. Many offer unique programs and non-traditional methods of teaching, such as a variety of language studies, STEM curriculum, and magnet and International Baccalaureate (IB) programs. Here, there are schools available for every family's needs.

Private Schools

CORAL GABLES PRESCHOOL

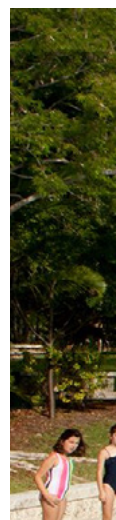
TODDLER – KINDERGARTEN

3010 Columbus Blvd.

305.444.9792

gablespreschool.org

Coral Gables Preschool prides itself on providing activities for social growth, positive self-image, and the development of school readiness skills. Its curriculum includes reading/writing, language and art/music, math, science, social studies, and Spanish. Learning through play is an emphasis. TUITION: \$775-\$950 monthly (extra \$200 for kindergarten materials and books fee)



GIRALDA PRESCHOOL

INFANT – PRESCHOOL

320 Giralda Avenue

786.332.3610

preschoolingables@gmail.com

Giralda Preschool is a community-based, year-round early childhood program designed for children aged six weeks to five years old. Our curriculum is carefully crafted to reflect each child's unique interests, strengths and needs. Our daily routine fosters a culture of free exploration infused with creative movement, music, art, storytelling, dramatic play, and STEAM activities. We offer a well-rounded education focused on reading, writing, early math, and early science to prepare your child's academic growth and success.

Tuition: \$1250 (average)

GRANADA DAY SCHOOL

INFANT DAYCARE – KINDERGARTEN

900 University Dr.

305.444.2028

granadadayschool.com

Granada Day School is accredited by the Christian Schools of Florida and by the National Council for Private School Accreditation. Its curriculum includes language and literacy, science, math, social studies, and Bible studies. The school was established in 1954, and its mission statement ensures that a "quality Christian education" will be provided.

TUITION: \$8,300-\$18,000 annually

THE GROWING PLACE SCHOOL

AGES 1 – FIFTH GRADE

536 Coral Way

305.446.0846

thegrowingplace.school

On behalf of the First United Methodist Church of Coral Gables, The Growing Place School aims to provide Christian, child-centered, and purposeful education to toddlers through fourth graders (growing to fifth grade by 2025). The school includes project based learning, environmental sciences, STEM, math, chapel, language arts, Spanish, physical education, music, and Highscope (preschool). All teachers have three or more years of K-12 teaching experience.

TUITION: \$7,800-\$11,000 annually

BANYAN DAY SCHOOL

TODDLER – KINDERGARTEN

340 Palermo Ave.

305.447.1233

banyandayschool.org

Banyan Day School is a bilingual English/Spanish school that includes small class sizes and self-directed activity periods. The curriculum includes language arts, reading and writing, math, social sciences, art, and computer instruction.

TUITION: \$925-\$1,020 monthly

INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

INFANT – PRE-KINDERGARTEN

3930 S. Le Jeune Rd.

305.770.6195

iscoralgables.com

International Christian School is a private day-care, preschool, and kindergarten school for children from three months up to kindergarten. The school includes science and social studies curriculum, healthy meals, athletics and physical education, as well as a broad-based language education intended to provide each student with great advantages in their educational and future careers.

TUITION: \$1,250-\$1,500 monthly

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE



Carrollton School of the Sacred Heart



Gulliver Prep

Florida to offer the International Baccalaureate program.
TUITION: \$10,000-\$20,000 annually

BRIGHTMONT ACADEMY

K-12
 6101 SW 76 Street, South Miami 33143
 305.433.7557
 brightmontacademy.com/campuses/miami-fl

Full-time, one-to-one instruction that enables students to complete all grade required coursework and build self-confidence for lifelong learning success. As an accredited private school our curriculum includes math, language arts, science, social studies, foreign language, and electives for 1st through 12th grade. In addition we offer Advance Placement and Honors courses.
TUITION: \$28,000-\$33,000 based on the program



St Philips Episcopal School

CARROLLTON SCHOOL OF THE SACRED HEART

PRE-K3 – GRADE 12
 3747 Main Hwy., Miami 33133
 305.446.5673
 carrollton.org

Founded in 1961, Carrollton School of the Sacred Heart is the only Catholic, all-girls, Montessori-3 through Grade 12 college preparatory school in Florida. The curriculum includes religious studies, world languages, and science. The average student-to-teacher ratio is 17:1, and students are encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities.
TUITION: \$32,980-\$46,800 annually

GORDON SCHOOL

3 MONTHS – 6TH GRADE
 2625 SW 3rd Ave, Miami FL 33129
 305.854.-3911 ext 270
 gordonschoolmiami.org

The Gordon School offers Hebrew, STEM, Athletics, Fine Arts, Music, Performing Arts, Spanish, Science, Judaic Studies, Technology, Math, ELA, Health and Wellness. Sports offered: Basketball, Soccer, Pickleball, Field Hockey, Yoga, Karate. Numerous Extracurricular activities offered: Cooking, Sewing, Tennis-Pros2Go, Jewelry, Pottery, Spanish, Gymnastics, Theater, Karate, Dance.
TUITION: \$20,584

ST. PHILIP’S EPISCOPAL SCHOOL

PREK3 – FIFTH GRADE
 1121 Andalusia Ave.
 305.444.6366
 stphilips.org

St. Philip’s aims to educate children from pre-school through fifth grade intellectually, physically, and spiritually. The curriculum includes instruction in Spanish, Latin and French, reading, writing, music, art, sacred studies, science, math, physical education, social studies. Student/Teacher ratio is Early Childhood 8:1, Lower School 12:1, 4th & 5th grade students 1:1 student to Laptop ratio.
TUITION: \$28,810-\$32,535 annually

THE BILTMORE SCHOOL

PRE K-8TH GRADE
 1600 South Red Road, Miami 33155
 305.266.4666
 biltmoreschool.com

Established in 1926, The Biltmore School uses a curriculum based on teaching techniques and materials that cater to educational, emotional, and physical development over the years. The school was the first in South

GULLIVER PREP

PRESCHOOL – HIGH SCHOOL
 General phone: 305.666.6333
 12595 Red Rd. (K–8 Campus) 305.665.3593
 6575 N. Kendall Dr. (Upper School Campus) 305.666.7937
 8000 SW 56th St. (Upper School Miller Campus) 305.274.9535
 gulliverprep.org

Gulliver’s PK–8 campus is in Coral Gables, while the other campuses are in Pinecrest and surrounding neighborhoods. Its mission is to create an academic

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

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PERUVIAN CUISINE BY JUAN CHIPOCO



CRYSTAL ACADEMY

SPECIAL THERAPY CENTER AND SCHOOL FOR AUTISM SPECTRUM AND RELATED DISORDERS

DIAGNOSIS – HIGH SCHOOL

107 Antilla Ave.

305.567.5881

crystalacademy.org

Crystal Academy’s mission is to provide the best evidence-based therapies and individualized intervention for children and adolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and other developmental delays, promoting language and communication, education, socialization, and inclusion opportunities.

TUITION: \$28,677-\$41,293 annually

Public Schools



GEORGE W. CARVER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

PRESCHOOL – ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

238 Grand Ave.

305.442.5286

gwces.com

George W. Carver Elementary School is an international magnet school with programs in Spanish and Italian. Its mission is to foster an innovative, multilingual program with an academically challenging and rigorous curriculum, ensuring student achievement and personal growth for success in a global society.

SUNSET ELEMENTARY

PRESCHOOL – ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

5120 SW 72nd Ave.

305.661.8527

sunsetinternationalschool.com

Sunset Elementary School features a magnet program and international studies in French, German, and Spanish. The vision of the school is to nurture culturally competent and globally-minded individuals.

community devoted to educational excellence, with a personal touch that fulfills each student’s potential throughout their academic careers.
TUITION: \$29,300-\$47,600 annually

RIVIERA SCHOOLS

PRESCHOOL – HIGH SCHOOL

6800 Nervia St. (Day School) 305.666.1856

9775 SW 87th Ave. (Preparatory School)

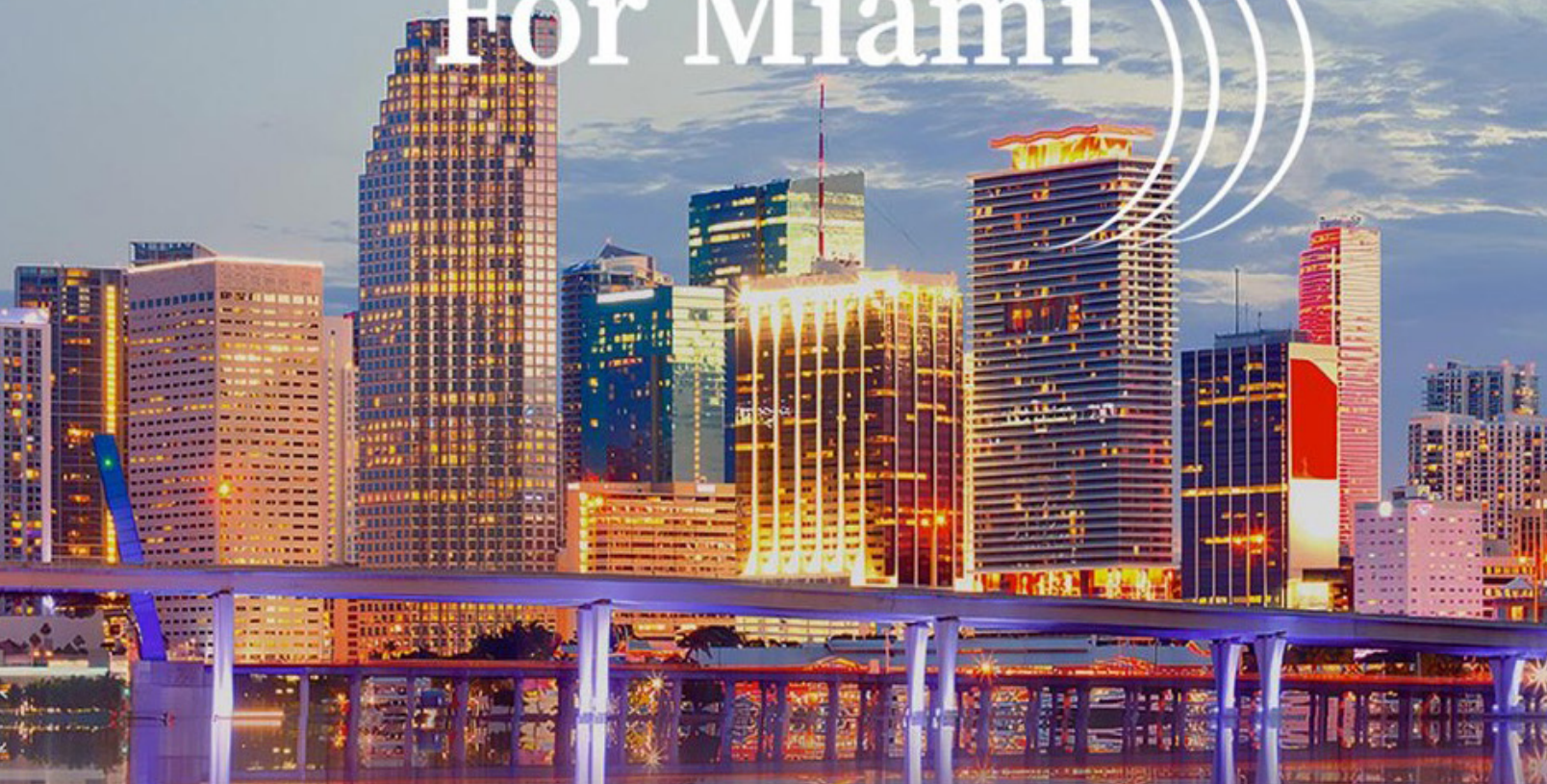
786.300.0300

rivieraschools.com

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CORAL GABLES PREPARATORY ACADEMY

KINDERGARTEN – MIDDLE SCHOOL
 105 Minorca Ave.
 305.448.1731
 coralgablesprepacademy.net

Formerly Coral Gables Elementary School, Coral Gables Preparatory Academy features a prestigious magnet program. Kindergarten through fourth graders attend the Lower Academy, and fifth to eighth graders attend the Upper Academy.

HENRY S. WEST LABORATORY SCHOOL

KINDERGARTEN – MIDDLE SCHOOL
 5300 Carillo St.
 305.661.7661
 westlabschool.org

This professional development magnet school has a partnership with the University of Miami's School of Education. West Lab, as it is known by locals, aims to provide high-quality education for all

students and to pioneer change in the teaching and learning processes. Its goal is for students to become interested learners and contributing members in a changing, multicultural society.

GEORGE W. CARVER MIDDLE SCHOOL

MIDDLE SCHOOL
 4901 Lincoln Dr.
 305.444.7388
 gwcmiddleschool.net

Ranked No. 18 among all middle schools in the State of Florida, George W. Carver Middle School is a magnet school that offers advanced placement testing in Spanish, German, Italian, and French. Carver houses both the International Studies Program for students continuing their studies from Sunset Elementary School as well as the International Education Program for students beginning their studies of foreign languages in the sixth grade.

PONCE DE LEON MIDDLE SCHOOL

MIDDLE SCHOOL
 5801 Augusta St.
 305.661.1611
 poncedeleonmiddle.net

Ponce de Leon Middle School is a magnet school that features an International Baccalaureate program. Its mission is to provide its students with a safe, academically challenging, and culturally diverse learning environment that fosters the development of a strong character and intellect.

CORAL GABLES SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

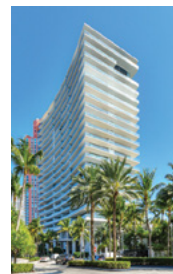
HIGH SCHOOL
 450 Bird Rd.
 305.443.4871
 coralgablescaivaliers.org

Coral Gables Senior High School is regarded as an International Baccalaureate Magnet School of Excellence and an "A-rated" school by the Florida Department of Education. Its curriculum features 43 advanced courses, including



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Coral Gables Preparatory Academy

advanced placement and dual-enrollment classes. There are also 40 student-led extracurriculars, and it has recently received funding from the state to upgrade facilities across the campus.

INTERNATIONAL STUDIES PREPARATORY ACADEMY

HIGH SCHOOL
 1570 Madruga Ave.
 305.663.7200
 internationalstudiesprep.net

International Studies Preparatory Academy is a language magnet school serving students from grades nine through 12. The school features language studies in French, Italian, and

Spanish. Its mission is to prepare students to meet the challenges of the 21st century through the development of their academic and social development, linguistic capacity, cultural appreciation, and international and global awareness. ISPA's learning philosophy promotes choice, equity, diversity, and academic excellence for all students. □

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Coral Gables

Relocation Guide

By LUKE CHANEY

Lennar Foundation Medical Center



Featuring a large variety of services, including a comprehensive cancer center and the No. 1-ranked eye hospital in the United States, Coral Gables has established itself as one of the nation's leaders in health care. The region is served by Baptist Health South Florida and the University of Miami Health System and welcomes the youngest and oldest of Gables residents.

DOCTORS HOSPITAL

5000 University Dr.
786.308.3000
baptisthealth.net

In the 75 years since its opening, Doctors Hospital has remained consistent in its commitment to providing high-quality medical

Health Care



Doctors Hospital

care to the Coral Gables community. Doctors Hospital is a Magnet hospital, the highest recognition for nursing excellence. It offers general and specialized services, including orthopedics and sports medicine, cardiac care and sports cardiology, general surgery, robotic

and minimally invasive laparoscopic surgery, geriatric medicine, and pulmonary care. It is also home to the Miami Heat Sports Medicine Center at Baptist Health Orthopedic Institute, which earned high-performing honors in orthopedics and hip and knee replacement this year.

UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI HEALTH SYSTEM

Lennar Foundation Medical Center
5555 Ponce de Leon Blvd. 305.689.5555

UHealth Tower: University of Miami
Hospital and Clinics
1400 NW 12th Ave. 305.325.5511

Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center
1475 NW 12th Ave. 305.243.5302

Bascom Palmer Eye Institute in Lennar
Foundation Medical Center
5555 Ponce de Leon, 3rd Floor
305.326.6000

The University of Miami Health System includes the Len-

nar Foundation Medical Center, University of Miami Hospital and Clinics, the Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center, the Bascom Palmer Eye Institute, and more than 50 other Florida locations where patients can access high-quality care.

The Lennar Foundation Medical Center is a five-story, 206,000-square-foot ambulatory multidisciplinary care center that provides access to leading physicians for students, faculty, and staff of UM, as well as residents of surrounding communities. Set in the heart of Miami's health district, UHealth Tower is the flagship Uhealth location, providing research-driven, leading-edge care in multiple specialties. The Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center is South Florida's academic-based cancer center, home to an expert team of more than 2,500 physicians, researchers, and staff working to discover, develop,

and deliver world-class care. The Bascom Palmer Eye Institute, meanwhile, is ranked as the top eye hospital in the entire United States.

Slated to be completed in 2025, UHealth at SoLé Mia is a 363,000-square-foot ambulatory site east of Biscayne Boulevard in Downtown Miami. It will be

UHealth's largest outpatient facility serving residents of northeast Miami-Dade County and south Broward County with a focus on healing, wellness, and prevention. Specialists from Sylvester Cancer Center and the Bascom Palmer Eye Institute will be on-site.

NICKLAUS CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

3100 SW 62nd Ave.
305.666.6511
nicklauschildrens.org

Since 1950, Nicklaus Children's Hospital has advanced its mission to inspire hope and promote lifelong health by providing the best care to every child. It has over 40 pediatric specialties, five programs of which are identified as among the best in the United States by the U.S. News & World Report: cardiology and heart surgery, neonatology, neurology and neurosurgery, orthopedics, and pulmonology.

This year, a 127,000-square-foot surgical tower is slated for completion that will fully accommodate



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CORAL GABLES HOSPITAL

3100 Douglas Rd.
305.445.8461
coralgableshospital.org

Operating under the Steward Health Care Network, Coral Gables Hospital was established in 1926. The 245-bed acute care hospital serves South Dade County as well as many patients from Latin America and the Caribbean. Services include emergency care, cardiology, orthopedics, general surgery, and urology. Coral Gables Hospital is also the first in Miami-Dade County to be certified by the Joint Commission in both total hip and total knee replacement. □



Coral Gables Hospital

An advertisement for IronBodyFit. The background shows two women in a fitness setting. One woman is wearing a blue EMS (Electro Muscle Stimulation) suit and is in a squatting position. The other woman is wearing a red shirt and is also in a squatting position. The text on the advertisement includes:

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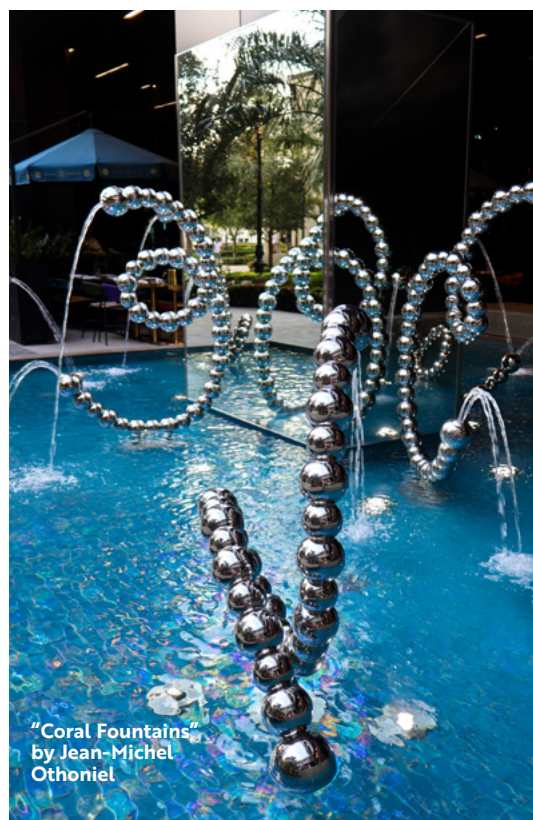
Admiring the city's public art on foot or out on a ride

By NATALIA CLEMENT

Under the city's thick green canopy and rich architectural landscape, a walk or bike ride around the Gables becomes a pleasant outing. Pair that scenery with the numerous art pieces scattered throughout the streets and you'll take in a fresh view of the City Beautiful – one that showcases the seamless blend of design, culture, and vegetation that earns it its nickname. The following two routes serve as an introduction to the city's one-of-a-kind outdoor galleries.

Coral Gables enhances the pedestrian experience with museum-quality artwork, thanks to its Art in Public Places program. The city's goal is to procure and preserve pieces that add to the city's artistic heritage and enhance its unique character. "As we build the collection, we are striving for works by significant artists that will build on the identity of the city as a place of world-class art," says Catherine Cathers, the city's arts and culture specialist.

This thoughtfully curated collection of over 40 works brings additional beauty and intrigue to our outdoor spaces, providing abundant opportunities for public engagement with the arts. Through a variety of styles, sizes, materials, and themes, these pieces of public art encourage interaction, education, and discourse. "The same piece is often perceived in different ways," Cathers adds. "For me, it's one of the most interesting and engaging things about it and what it brings to the community."





**"WAITING"
by KAWS**

The program, which started back in 2010, complies with the county's public art requirements for municipalities, including allocating a small percentage of municipal construction to it. But the City of Coral Gables added an additional economic push, requiring private development projects valued at or over \$1 million to dedicate one percent of the project's value towards public art. By doing so, Coral Gables has seen the emergence of huge groups of works framing large developments like The Plaza Coral Gables.

Strolling Through The Plaza

STARTING POINT: 111 Palermo Ave.

"Coral Fountains" (2021) by French artist Jean-Michel Othoniel is an art installation made of mirrored, stainless steel beads arranged symmetrically to resemble the organic forms of twisting corals and dancing seahorses. The piece features Othoniel's signature use of reflective materials, adding dynamic visual interest to the flowing fountain it's based in. His fountains are seen across the world, including in the royal palace at Versailles and the National Museum of Qatar.

Across the street, you'll find **"Monumental Ritual Bench and Radiant Table" (2022)** by American artist Michele Oka Doner. The patinated, cast bronze piece encircles a large shade tree, highlighting Oka Doner's signature use of natural motifs. The textured bench and table is further complemented by hanging copper lanterns adorning the tree branches above.

Continuing south and crossing Coconut Grove Drive, you're met with the contemporary art of Brian Donnelly, better known as KAWS. Towering at an impressive 16 feet, **"WAITING" (2022)** depicts two mice-like figures, a guardian and a smaller companion, both cast in bronze with a muted gray colorway. This contemporary piece, unveiled last year, embodies the interconnectedness of familial bonds and communal empathy, two constructs heavily intertwined in the social fabric of Coral Gables.



"Monumental Ritual Bench and Radiant Table" by Michele Oka Doner



"Rey del Tequila" by
Leonora Carrington

Continuing along The Plaza's courtyard towards Ponce de Leon, you're greeted by "Rey del Tequila" (2009-2019), or the king of tequila, a patinated cast bronze sculpture by British-born surrealist artist Leonora Carrington. Representing her profound connection to Mexican culture – one shared by Agave Holdings, owners of The Plaza – the sculpture captures a zoomorphic being emerging from the alchemical heart of the agave plant, the key ingredient in tequila. According to The Plaza, it "encapsulates Carrington's dedication to redefining art's boundaries by introducing a woman's perspective to a previously male-dominated artistic realm."

Walking up Ponce and circling back to Palermo Avenue, the route ends with a landmark piece at the entrance of The Plaza Coral Gables. "Mean Average" (2013) is a 19-foot abstract bronze sculpture by contemporary sculptor Tony Cragg. The piece was originally located on Park Avenue in New York City before it was moved to Germany, where it was purchased for \$1.24 million by Agave Holdings.

All of the pieces in The Plaza were acquired and brought to the Gables by Agave Holdings through the Art in Public Places program, with "Rey del Tequila" the only exception – it was acquired through Agave Holdings Director of Operations Carlos Beckmann's personal charity, the Beckmann Foundation.

A Ride Pondering the Abstract and Our History

**STARTING POINT: 405
Biltmore Way (City Hall)**

Venturing west of Le Jeune Road starting at City Hall, you'll find 10 public art pieces that can be viewed during a leisurely bike ride down

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"Venice in the Gables"
Mooring Post

Biltmore Way towards Venetian Pool, looping back up via Coral Way. This path consists of a range of artworks, including abstract works by Latin artists, hidden pieces honoring the city's history, and unique benches where art lovers can sit and admire their surroundings.

"Pause" (2019) by Venezuelan artist Rafael Barrios highlights his expertise in visual illusion. Featuring four bright purple rectangular planes that overlap and appear to float, Barrios creates an illusion of depth and movement. "Concepto I" (2000-2019) by Zilia Sánchez is a bronze and paint artwork outside the neighboring Development Services building, also acquired by the city through its public art program. A prominent Cuban artist, Sánchez is known for her abstract and minimalist style, incorporating organic shapes and sensuous forms and exploring themes of identity and space.

Inside two of the city's landmarks along your journey, you'll find hidden yet public pieces that connect with Coral Gables' rich history. Keep a lookout for eight of the 33 Venetian-inspired mooring posts that make up "Venice in the Gables" (2018). The design of the posts was inspired by the entrance finial of the city's administration building in the 1920s. The majority of the

posts are now in private collections, making a dip at the Venetian Pool also a rare look at the painted designs of local artists.

Making your way to the historic Merrick House, you'll find an homage to one of the founding family members of the Gables: a sculpture of **Mrs. Althea Merrick (2010)**, the mother of city founder George Merrick. Created by the American Bronze Foundry as a dedicated gift to the city by the Coral Gables Garden Club, Althea sits immortalized on a bench in her garden, providing us with a seat to take in the views of her family's historic coral rock home.

To view the remaining artworks in our suggested bike route, visit the city's *Art in Public Places* website. There, you will be able to view the full interactive Google map, with over 40 pinpoints, as well as plan your next public art stroll, including two highlighted routes through Miracle Mile. coralgables.com/departments/historical-resources-cultural-arts/art-public-places. □



"Pause" by Rafael Barrios



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Putting the Gables On-Stage



GableStage, at the Biltmore Hotel



Actors' Playhouse at the Miracle Theatre

GableStage makes community its mission amidst state budget cuts

By LUKE CHANEY

GABLESTAGE

Since 1978, GableStage's mission has been to confront today's issues and ideas through theatrical works of artistic excellence. In April 2021, Bari Newport took over that mission as producing artistic director, following in the footsteps of the late Joseph Alder, who ran GableStage for 20 seasons and was tabbed by Newport as the "godfather of South Florida theater."

A native of the theater, Newport was a child actress before she obtained a Bachelor of Fine Arts at the University of Southern California, where she raised a large sum of money to start the school's first theatrical library. Since then, she has worked in various roles for companies both big and small. Her most recent stop before GableStage was as producing artistic director at Penobscot Theatre Company in Bangor, Maine.

These past experiences have prepared GableStage's leader for the multifaceted leadership position she's in today, as she carries out the theater's longtime mission while implementing her own specific artistic style. "I'm an artist myself, so therefore, all of the work takes on a certain delight because that's my style," says Newport. "I'm a member of the community too. I live two miles

from [GableStage]. I think a big part of being an artistic director is being able to listen, and not just with your ears, but to what the rhythm of a community is, what the zeitgeist of a community is, what the rhythm of a year is, how summer here is different than February."

Newport and GableStage's plan for how to encapsulate the rhythm of Coral Gables through theater will encounter financial obstacles, as a recent legislative move made by Florida Governor Ron DeSantis vetoed more than \$32 million in arts and culture funding from Florida's state budget. The decision disgusted Newport, who described the absence of arts and culture in a community as "barbaric."

"For us, a \$70,500 cut is three percent of our budget – but it's someone's salary," the director says. "And it means that instead of working on serving more people, impacting more youth and seniors, instead of making sure that we're prepared to do another season of high-quality, excellent work, I'm spending my time advocating on behalf of why we deserve to be funded by our own state."

Amid these tumultuous times for theater companies like GableStage, Newport hopes the theater will be a "center of imagination" for the commu-

nity. She recently finished directing a production of “The Lehman Trilogy,” which featured over 800 sound, light, and projection cues and successfully animated 163 years of American history.

“Theater is the only art form which only studies what it means to be alive; nothing else,” says Newport. “It only examines the human experience. It’s about seeing yourself. It’s about seeing the human condition played out before you. And when we’re faced with – as society always is – overwhelming existential questions, you want a group of people in your community – your entire community, your entire society – to be able to imagine solutions to these problems.”

1200 Anastasia Ave. #230 (The Biltmore Hotel)
305.445.1119
gablestage.org
2024-25 season begins November 1

ACTORS’ PLAYHOUSE AT THE MIRACLE THEATRE

Established in 1988, Actors’ Playhouse has produced more than 180 mainstage productions, including Broadway and off-Broadway musicals, mysteries and thrillers, comedies, new works, and over 170 children’s theater productions. It has also won 90 Carbonell Awards for artistic excellence.

The playhouse started out as a Kendall-based movie theater for the first seven years of its existence before entering a partnership with the City of Coral Gables in 1995. This partnership prompted the Gables to renovate the historic Miracle Theatre, which transformed the Art Deco facility into the Actors’ Playhouse’s new home, where it has remained for the last 29 years. In addition to generat-

ing licensing agreements with some of Broadway’s top shows like “Little Shop of Horrors,” Disney’s “Beauty and the Beast,” and “Les Misérables,” the theater also presents world premieres.

Through Actors’ Playhouse, over 2.5 million children have had cultural and educational experiences through youth programs, and 16 percent of tickets are distributed to students each year. Actors’ Playhouse also has partnerships with Miami-Dade schools, Florida International University, the University of Miami, and other regional colleges and universities.

280 Miracle Mile
305.444.9293
actorsplayhouse.org

CORAL GABLES ART CINEMA

The Coral Gables Art Cinema is a film lover’s paradise, with a wide selection of new releases, acclaimed classics, and indie films. The state-of-the-art movie theater opened in October 2010 and is now one of the highest-grossing art houses in South Florida. It presents first-run and regional premieres of domestic and international features of both fiction and documentary genres, as well as classic movies, special programs, and events run through the nonprofit organization.

The cinema’s mission is to “inspire, engage, and enhance our community through the powerful medium of great film” by hosting events like Family Day on Aragon, a monthly event that features family-friendly classics like “The Lion King” and “The Wizard of Oz”, amid other activations. Other community programs include After





Coral Gables Museum



Hours, which showcases late-night cult classics, foreign favorites, and summer blockbusters every weekend, as well as National Theater Live, which features the best of British theater recorded live from the London stage.

260 Aragon Ave.
786.472.2249
gablescinema.com

CORAL GABLES MUSEUM

Formed in 2003 by the City of Coral Gables, the Coral Gables Museum was originally the City of Coral Gables' police and fire station back in 1939. The WPA building was renovated in 2008 and opened as the Coral Gables Museum in 2011. In recent years, the civics museum has also begun to showcase more artistic exhibits and programs, featuring the planned community of 1920s Gables as well as local and international artists.

The 3,000-square-foot Carole A. Fewell Gallery and 5,000-square-foot Museum Plaza and Courtyard were both constructed in 2010 to showcase local exhibits and host events. Meanwhile, the exterior of the museum pays homage to its roots with WPA artworks, including original firefighter busts, which add decorative features to the building's exterior architecture. Current exhibits include "Vision from Inside the Walls – Coral Gables Artists Today," a group exhibition that highlights the vibrancy and diversity of the local art scene, as well as "Jorge Tacla: A Memoir of Ruins," a selection of paintings from the last two decades of Chilean-American artist

Jorge Tacla's career. The museum is a publicly funded, nonprofit organization.

285 Aragon Ave.
305.603.8067
coralgablesmuseum.org

FROST SCHOOL OF MUSIC

The Frost School of Music at the University of Miami was founded in October 1926 as "The Conservatory of Music" before being renamed in 2013. Frost performs an array of live events throughout the year, including more than 70 student ensembles and a signature series that offers up acclaimed concerts featuring top GRAMMY, Emmy, and Tony award-winning and nominated guest artists and alumni who collaborate with Frost faculty and students. Its symphony orchestra, led by conductor Gerard Schwartz, is comprised of roughly 100 grad and undergrad students, performing major works by both contemporary and past greats.

One of the largest music schools at a private institution in the United States, Frost offers a music degree in 12 majors as well as numerous graduate and Ph.D. programs. The music school "seeks to transform lives through the study and performance of music and to enhance music's future as the result of the most innovative and relevant curricula in higher education."

1314 Miller Dr.
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LOWE ART MUSEUM

The Lowe Art Museum has been a staple of the University of Miami’s campus and surrounding Coral Gables community since its conception in 1950. Originally named the “University Art Gallery,” Miami philanthropists Joe and Emily Lowe underwrote the construction of a separate art museum on UM’s campus, and the “Lowe Art Gallery” was formally dedicated in February of 1952.

The museum originally held several collections of non-Western art, including examples of Asian, ancient American, and African art. Since its original collections, the museum has opened countless exhibits and undergone major expansion. In 1968, the Lowe Art Gallery changed its name to the “Lowe Art Museum,” its current title. In 1985, it became the first Miami-Dade museum to be recognized by the State of Florida as a major cultural facility and resource.

The Lowe now includes works by esteemed artists across many different styles, like Claude Monet, Rembrandt Peale, Pablo Picasso, Henry Raeburn, Frank Stella, and Andy Warhol; it holds nearly 19,500 objects throughout its numerous collections. Its mission is to offer “its diverse audiences opportunities and resources for engaging with contemporary culture through 5,000 years of human creativity.” The Lowe also serves as a teaching resource for University of Miami students across multiple majors and specialities.

1301 Stanford Dr.
305.284.3535
lowe.miami.edu

SANCTUARY OF THE ARTS

Sanctuary of the Arts is one of the newest arts organizations in Coral Gables, having opened in April 2022. Since then, the Sanctuary has presented over 60 performances in music, dance, and literature. The organization features an art campus at the First Church of Christ Scientist that includes three historically designated properties, two professionally-sized studios, a 314-seat theater, teaching and mentoring classrooms, and offices.

Founded by Mike and Dr. Margaret Eidson, Sanctuary of the Arts aims to emphasize and expand its global impact and significance as a cultural gateway destination; to present, develop, and produce work that connects to the diverse Gables community; and to support career-minded youth with professional mentoring and training opportunities to access admission into specialized arts schools.

Featured programs include the Choreographic Ensemble Training and Audition Program, which is led by awarded teacher Alice Arja, and the Summer Intensive Choreographic program, which explores the perceptions of dance and choreographic movements. With over 30 years of past experience in related fields, Rafi Maldonado-Lopez is the Sanctuary’s principal managing director – a position he has held since 2021. □

410 Andalusia Ave.
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The Chefs of the Gables

Coral Gables' culinary offerings include eight James Beard or Michelin-awarded chefs

By MAYA REGO

In April of this year, Coral Gables received its first Michelin star for a local restaurant in the form of SHINGO, Chef Shingo Akikuni's 14-seat omakase eatery at the historic La Palma Hotel. But Akikuni, who already had a star from a previous venture, is only one of several Michelin-starred chefs that have descended upon the Gables in recent years. With culinary masterminds like Thomas Keller, Donatella Arpaia, and Jeremy Ford all opening up new restaurants in the Gables, perhaps more Michelin stars are in the City Beautiful's future.

What makes the influx of culinary talent here all the more fascinating are the various backgrounds of each chef. The spectrum is vast. Educationally, some are self-taught, whereas others come from the most prestigious culinary schools in the world. Specialty-wise, there is no shortage of cuisines. From Spanish to Japanese and everything in between, here are some of the best and brightest in the City Beautiful.



Chef Shingo Akikuni



Chef Pablo Zitzmann



CHEF SHINGO AKIKUNI – SHINGO

Just over a year since its debut, SHINGO has already become one of the most acclaimed restaurants in all of Miami. The classic omakase den, headed by Chef Shingo Akikuni, recently became the first Gables eatery to receive the coveted Michelin Star. To earn Michelin distinction, restaurants are evaluated according to five criteria: quality of product, mastery of flavor and cooking technique, the personality of the chef represented in the dining experience, value for money, and consistency.

A fourth-generation sushi chef and Osaka native, Akikuni crafted the fourteen-seat dining experience around the Japanese expression of *omotenashi*, or true hospitality. The menu is designed around seasonal ingredients, with products being sourced both locally and from Japan. Akikuni's commitment to making his self-titled restaurant adhere to traditional Japanese dining is evident not only in the food but in the ambience as well; the space was entirely designed by woodworkers in Kyoto, who incorporated traditional elements of omakase dens across Japan, such as the use of Hinoki and Sugi woods on the counter, ceiling, and grand entrance.

CHEF DONATELLA ARPAIA – NOMA BEACH AT REDFISH GRILL

About a year-and-a-half after taking over the longstanding Redfish Grill at Matheson Hammock, Chef Donatella Arpaia has completely reconfigured the Gables' only waterfront restaurant into a seafood-dominated Italian hotspot. It was out with the old and in with the new from the moment Arpaia arrived, from the menu to the bar to the building itself. Shoddy electrical work and a painfully small kitchen were just some of the challenges the chef, who won a Michelin star for a previous restaurant in New York, tackled upon accepting the position as NOMA's new leader. Despite the struggles, she has worked successfully to breathe life into the nearly 90-year-old establishment.

Her Italian heritage and Napoli culinary training are apparent across the menu, especially in the intriguing and popular sea urchin and burrata pizza. Arpaia's personal touches don't end there; the restaurant's new name, NOMA Beach at Redfish Grill, refers to her twins, Noah and Emma. And the Michelin-starred chef says she views NOMA as an extension of her own home, which is apparent in the dichotomy of comfort cuisine and upscale dining.

CHEF NIVEN PATEL – ERBA

The last year has been a tumultuous one for Chef Niven Patel, the homegrown restaurateur and creative mind behind some of Miami's most lauded fine dining experiences. Last October, Patel unveiled Erba, an upscale Italian joint featuring modern takes on classic dishes, to widespread acclaim – *Esquire* named Erba one of the best new restaurants of the year in the entire country. Three months later, Patel and his business partner, Mohamed Alkassar, suddenly announced they were parting ways with the Thesis Hotel, which hosted Gables favorites Mamey and the Michelin-recognized Orno, now redeveloped as The Collab. And one month after that, Patel opened up NiMo Coastal Mediterranean, his first venture into Palm Beach County.

The James Beard semifinalist shows no signs of slowing down now, even as his projects continue to receive rave reviews. Ghee Indian Kitchen, Patel's authentic Bib Gourmand-awarded restaurant, is poised to open a new location in Wynwood come fall. And as for his presence in the Gables, Erba is a worthy successor to his endeavors at Thesis, an exemplary culinary experience on par with some of the most iconic Italian eateries in the country.



Chef Donatella Arpaia

PHOTO: Rodolfo Benitez

Chef Niven Patel

CHEF PABLO ZITZMANN – ZITZ SUM

Growing up in Colombia, born to German and Mexican parents, it may seem surprising that Chef Pablo Zitzmann, the visionary behind the Bib Gourmand-awarded dumpling house Zitz Sum, would feel so passionately about Asian food. Yet it is precisely those South American roots that prompted his love for the flavors of the Far East, as he spent his childhood in teppanyaki restaurants in and around Bogotá. Later, Zitzmann immersed himself in the flavors and dining habits of Hawaii, Hong Kong, and Japan. The day after graduating from Academia de Cocina Verde Oliva in Bogotá, Zitzmann moved to Miami with his father. Here, his professional career has flourished.

Prior to opening Zitz Sum in 2021, Zitzmann gained praise for his work at No Name Chinese, a now-defunct but once beloved eatery in South Miami. Today, Zitz Sum is self-described as a “fam jam,” with the chef’s wife, Natalia Restrepo, leading the pastry kitchen and managing the business aspects of the restaurant alongside Zitzmann. Originally meant to be a pandemic-era pop-up, Zitz Sum is now a Gables mainstay.

CHEF JEREMY FORD – BEAUTY AND THE BUTCHER

Since adding Beauty and the Butcher to Grove Bay Hospitality Group’s roster in 2022, Florida native Jeremy Ford has garnered national recognition for the contemporary Americana restaurant. The South Gables hotspot was featured on the Miami list of restaurants recommended by the Michelin Guide, championed for a menu that revolves around collaboration. Ford, however, is no stranger to Michelin recognition. Stubborn Seed, his stab at fine dining in South Beach, has now twice been awarded a Michelin star – and if that weren’t enough, Ford is both a “Top Chef” winner and a James Beard semi-finalist.

Yet despite the grandeur Ford and his awards exude, the chef’s career began in a place nearly every foodie credits with their love of cooking: a family member’s kitchen. For Ford, this particular kitchen happened to be that of his maternal grandmother. Her knowledge of Italian cooking was passed down to Ford and is now evident across all his restaurants, which celebrate locally sourced ingredients and contradictory elements of flavor and texture.

CHEF THOMAS KELLER – BOUCHON BISTRO

Just a year since Chef Thomas Keller added a Coral Gables location to Bouchon Bistro’s impres-

sive collection, the superbly simplistic French brasserie has already been added to numerous Best of Coral Gables and Miami lists. While Keller, one of the most prominent celebrity chefs and restaurateurs of the 20th century, may be largely known for his upscale fine dining restaurants, Bouchon takes a more affordable look at Keller’s classic experi-



Chef Jeremy Ford



Chef Thomas Keller

ences. Less formal than The Surf Club, Keller’s Michelin-starred restaurant in Surfside where a New York strip costs \$235, Bouchon reminds diners that French food truly excels when simplicity, well-sourced ingredients, and precision rank above all. Sometimes, reliable upscale is all one needs to feel satisfied. And the outdoor plaza is gorgeous in the winter, making it one of the best spots to eat outside in the City Beautiful.

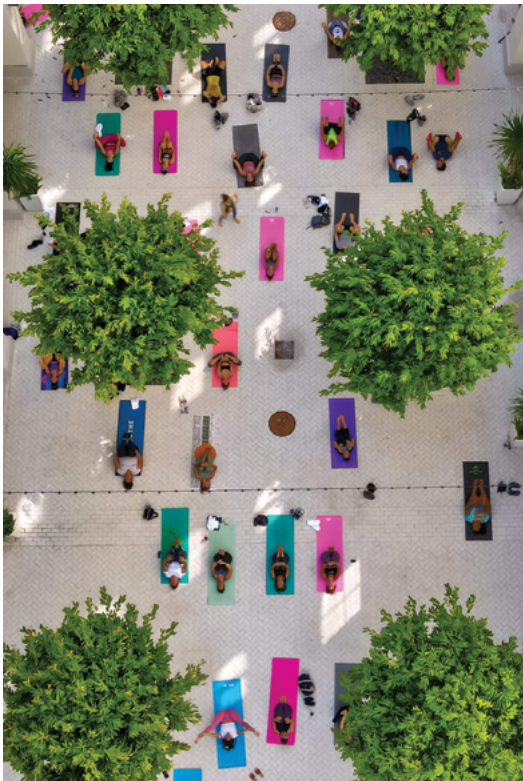
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Chef Antonio Bachour

CHEF ANTONIO BACHOUR – BACHOUR

The beating heart of the Gables’ brunch scene, Bachour offers up precisely what people are looking for when they shell out \$30 to forego cooking at home. Owned and operated by Chef Antonio Bachour, the bakery and restaurant caters to a variety of diners’ needs. Looking to impress an out-of-town client? Try a 7 pm reservation and an order of the Lomo Risotto. Feeling drowsy during your mid-afternoon slump? Head over for a cafe-cito and one of their expertly made viennoiseries. And, of course, it is no surprise that Bachour’s great success has been in its patisserie department; Bachour himself was once described as a “confection master” by Zagat. One look at the refrigerated shelves full of croissants, bon-bons, macarons, and unique desserts, and you’ll understand why.

Originally from Puerto Rico, Bachour crossed the pond to Miami in the early 2000s and began working in Miami Beach restaurants. Over the years, he served as executive pastry chef at iconic hotspots like Scarpetta and Talula, then tested his talents in the Big Apple, opening Trump SoHo on behalf of the KNR restaurant group. Today, in the Gables, Bachour and his eponymous restaurant offer a masterclass in balancing a classy ambience, culinary technique, and out-of-this-world desserts.

CHEF MICHELLE BERNSTEIN – SRA. MARTINEZ

Over a decade after its original location in the Design District closed, Sra. Martinez is poised to re-open – but this time, the beloved tapas restaurant will be situated in the heart of downtown Coral Gables. It takes the place of Open Stage Club, a live music venue and bar that shut down during the pandemic and has since left the city-owned space tenant-less. Chef Michelle Bernstein, the pioneer and restaurateur behind countless trendy Miami spots, announced Sra. Martinez’ revival in 2022. Two years later, Bernstein has confirmed that they are set for a fall grand opening this year.

The original restaurant was known for being a small yet energetic space, with a menu that combined regional Spanish classics with Bernstein’s own contemporary flare. It opened in 2008 to critical acclaim; *Esquire* named it one of the best new restaurants of 2009. Later that year, Bernstein became the first woman to win the James Beard Award for Best Chef in the Southeast. Just four short years later, however, Bernstein and her partner David Martinez shut Sra. Martinez’s doors to pursue other endeavors.

The new iteration of Sra. Martinez has been given a “2024 update” according to Bernstein and Martinez, teasing live music and a more modern, bolder menu. Additionally, the partners are launching a Founding Membership Program ahead of opening, which offers members exclusive perks like early reservations and invite-only events. □



Chef Michelle Bernstein

Embracing Digital Transformation: A New Era for Community Banks

Marcelo Fondacaro

Chief Commercial Officer at Veritran

In today's fast-paced digital landscape, community banks face unprecedented challenges and opportunities. As the financial ecosystem evolves, banks must adapt to meet the growing expectations of tech-savvy customers while maintaining the personalized service that sets them apart. Digital transformation is no longer an option; it's a necessity for survival and growth.

Understanding the Digital Opportunity

Digital transformation offers community banks a unique opportunity to get closer to their customers. By leveraging digital tools and platforms, banks can provide seamless, personalized services that cater to the specific needs of their clients. This shift is not just about adopting new technologies; it's about rethinking how banks interact with their customers and deliver value.

One of the most significant advantages of digital transformation is the ability to offer convenient, anytime-anywhere banking services. Mobile banking apps, online account management and digital payment solutions are becoming standard expectations. These tools allow customers to manage their finances effortlessly, increasing satisfaction and loyalty.

Attracting the Next Generation

To stay relevant, community banks must also focus on attracting younger generations. Millennials and Gen Z are digital natives who demand intuitive, fast and secure banking experiences. Traditional banking methods often fall short of their expectations.

Innovative digital products, such as mobile-first banking solutions and peer-to-peer payment platforms, can help community banks attract and retain young customers. Additionally, integrating financial education and personalized financial advice into digital platforms can engage this demographic and build long-term relationships.

The Rise of Digital Wallets

In the last decade, cell phones have taken center stage, especially with newer generations. Research from Common Sense Media shows that 53% of children in the U.S. own a smartphone by age 11, and 84% of teenagers have access to their own personal phones. This shift has made it increasingly common to pay with mobile



MARCELO FONDACARO (CCO) OF VERITRAN

devices rather than carrying physical wallets. Digital wallets offer added benefits such as enhanced security, reduced fraud risk and the convenience of contactless payments. With over half of the world's population predicted to be using digital wallets by 2024, this technology is paving the way for the future of banking.

Transforming Bank Branches

The future of bank branches is undoubtedly digital. However, this doesn't mean the end of physical branches. Instead, it signifies a transformation in their role and function. Digital transformation can enhance the in-branch experience by integrating advanced technologies such as self-service kiosks, video banking and AI-powered customer service.

These innovations allow customers to perform routine transactions quickly and efficiently while freeing up bank staff to provide more personalized and complex services. By blending digital and physical banking experiences, community banks can offer a holistic service that meets diverse customer needs.

Veritran: Your Partner in Digital Transformation

Digital transformation can be intimidating and expensive for many community banks. The complexity and cost involved often deter banks from undertaking these necessary changes. Partnering with a technology vendor like Veritran is key to simplifying the process, saving money and saving time.

At Veritran, we specialize in helping community banks navigate the digital transformation journey. Our comprehensive suite of business solutions is designed to enhance customer engagement, improve operational efficiency and drive growth. We work closely with our clients to understand their unique challenges and develop tailored solutions that deliver measurable results.

We are excited to announce our upcoming expansion into Coral Gables, a move that underscores our dedication to supporting community banks across the region. This expansion will enable us to better serve our clients and contribute to the vibrant financial ecosystem in Coral Gables.

Useful Information

Demographics

The infographic consists of a 3x3 grid of statistics on a light teal background. Each statistic is accompanied by a simple icon: a house with two people for average household income, two people for median earnings, a family of three for population, a briefcase and gift for unemployment, buildings for number of companies, a person at a computer for white collar workforce, a ribbon for veterans, a graduation cap for educational attainment, a house with people for number of households, a briefcase and building for city employees, a building with a magnifying glass for top industry, and a house with a dollar sign for the 2023 city budget estimate.

Average Household Income: \$190,744	Median Earnings: Male: \$110,867 Female: \$78,698	Population: 50,516
Percentage Unemployed: 1.3%	Number of Companies: 12,042	White Collar Workforce: 77%
Veterans: 1,095	Educational Attainment: HS Degree or Higher: 97% College Degree or Higher: 76.21% Post-Graduate Degree: 38.16%	Number of Households: 18,947
City Employees: 730	Top Industry: Office and Administrative Support (17.59% or 14,482)	2023 City Budget Estimate: \$246,087,023

Source: *data.census.gov (as of 2020); rockethomes.com; beaconcouncil.com; coralgables.com/business*

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Florida House Member from Coral Gables District

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Senator Marco Rubio

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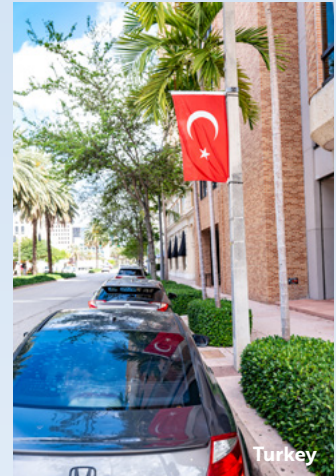
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Flags on Ponce

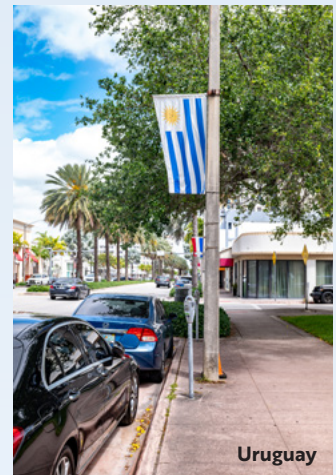
Flown annually by the Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce and the City of Coral Gables, the Flags on Ponce program is a stunning display of the rich diversity found in the City Beautiful, highlighting our growing international business community. Since its inception nearly 30 years ago, the flags of our Sister Cities, consulate offices, multinational businesses, and citizens have waved brilliantly above Ponce de Leon Boulevard. Originally created by our Chamber, Flags on Ponce is a visual reminder of our city's rich international roots. This exhibit can be seen from December through May every year along Ponce de Leon Boulevard.

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The Business Permit Process

When it comes to obtaining a business permit, Coral Gables has a reputation for strictness and deliberation. Recently, the Development Services Department underwent a dramatic overhaul, moving from cramped quarters in City Hall to its own building at 427 Biltmore Way, with new software that allows the entire process to occur online, simultaneously and transparently, avoiding the slow sequence of moving paperwork from office to office. The city even has an ombudsman on staff to assist residents and small business owners. Still, there is no getting away from the approvals that are required, as outlined below. □

Permitting Processes for a New Business

FOR A NEW, MOVE-IN BUSINESS WITH NO MODIFICATION OF SPACE:

1. Apply for a Certificate of Use from the Zoning Department.
2. Apply for a Business Tax License from the Finance
3. Check with the Zoning Administrator prior to signing a lease to make sure there are no problems with the building or zoning. A different use of the space may not be permitted.
4. A new Certificate of Use application, especially for a new type of use, may trigger inspections from building and fire officials, as well as county inspectors from DERM (The Department of Environmental Resources Management).

FOR A NEW, MOVE-IN BUSINESS WITH INTERIOR REMODELING:

1. Present plans to the Development Services Department.
2. If they are simple, they will go to the Building Division to review for Building, Electrical, Mechanical, Plumbing, Fire, etc.
3. If the plans are extensive and involve a significant change of use, they may go to the DRC (Development Review Committee) as well as Zoning and DERM for approval.
4. Perform the work and apply for a Certificate of Occupancy.
5. Apply for Certificate of Use and Business Tax License.

FOR A NEW, MOVE-IN BUSINESS WITH EXTERIOR REMODELING/ADDITIONS:

1. A pre meeting with the City Architect and Zoning Administrator is always advised.
2. If there is a new use for the space, check with Zoning first.
3. Present plans to the Board of Architects.

4. Once approved, submit plans to the Building Division to review for Zoning, Building, Electrical, Mechanical, Plumbing, Fire, etc.
5. If the plans are extensive, they may go to the DRC (Development Review Committee) as well as to Public Works & Landscape, Historic, and the county (DERM) for approval.
6. Perform the work and apply for a Certificate of Occupancy.
7. Apply for Certificate of Use and Business Tax License.

FOR NEW SMALL BUSINESSES, WITH NEW CONSTRUCTION:

A pre application meeting with the Zoning Administrator and City Architect is recommended to make sure the business will be allowed in that location, then to:

1. The Development Review Committee (DRC), then to:
2. Board of Architects:
3. Historic, if needed:
4. Building Division:
5. If needed, Public Works, Landscape and Zoning, then to:
6. County for DERM, DOH (Department of Health), and WASD (Waste and Sewage Disposal) if no sewer available.
7. Then to Building for C.O., Zoning for C.U., and Finance for Business Tax License.

FOR MAJOR COMMERCIAL PROJECTS

All the same as above, except additional approvals are needed from:

- Planning & Zoning
- The City Commission
- County departments (DERM, DOH, WASD, etc.)

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ECONOMIC STATE *of the Gables*

COMMUNITY
SURVEY
RESULTS



Coral Gables has a well-established business community with premier shopping and dining destinations. In the Gables, no matter the industry, we focus on the customer experience. It's what makes us unique, but don't take our word for it. We asked residents to grade the city on key indicators for high quality of life and great business environment. The results will help guide our future. View the full survey results at www.coralgables.com/survey.

QUALITY OF *life*

Higher than the national benchmark

9 in 10 residents praised the overall quality of life and overall image or reputation of the city.



SAFETY IN THE *downtown*



9 in 10 community members positively rated the overall feeling of safety in Coral Gables' downtown/commercial area.

DOWNTOWN *experiences*

Percentages indicate that residents rated these downtown experiences as 'very or somewhat satisfied'.



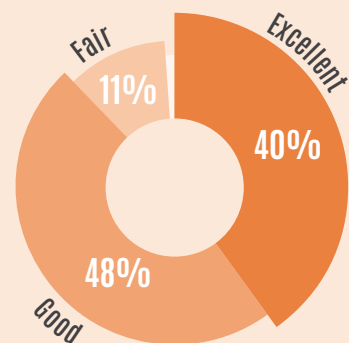
ECONOMIC *indicators*

Higher than the national benchmark



Percentages indicate that residents rated these aspects of the community as 'excellent or good'.

OVERALL ECONOMIC HEALTH



Survey conducted in Sept. 2023. Results published in Jan. 2024.

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Trash Hauling/Recycling
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Williamson Automotive Group
Mr. G. Ed Williamson II
(305) 670-7100
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com
Automobile Dealers - Sales,
Service & Parts

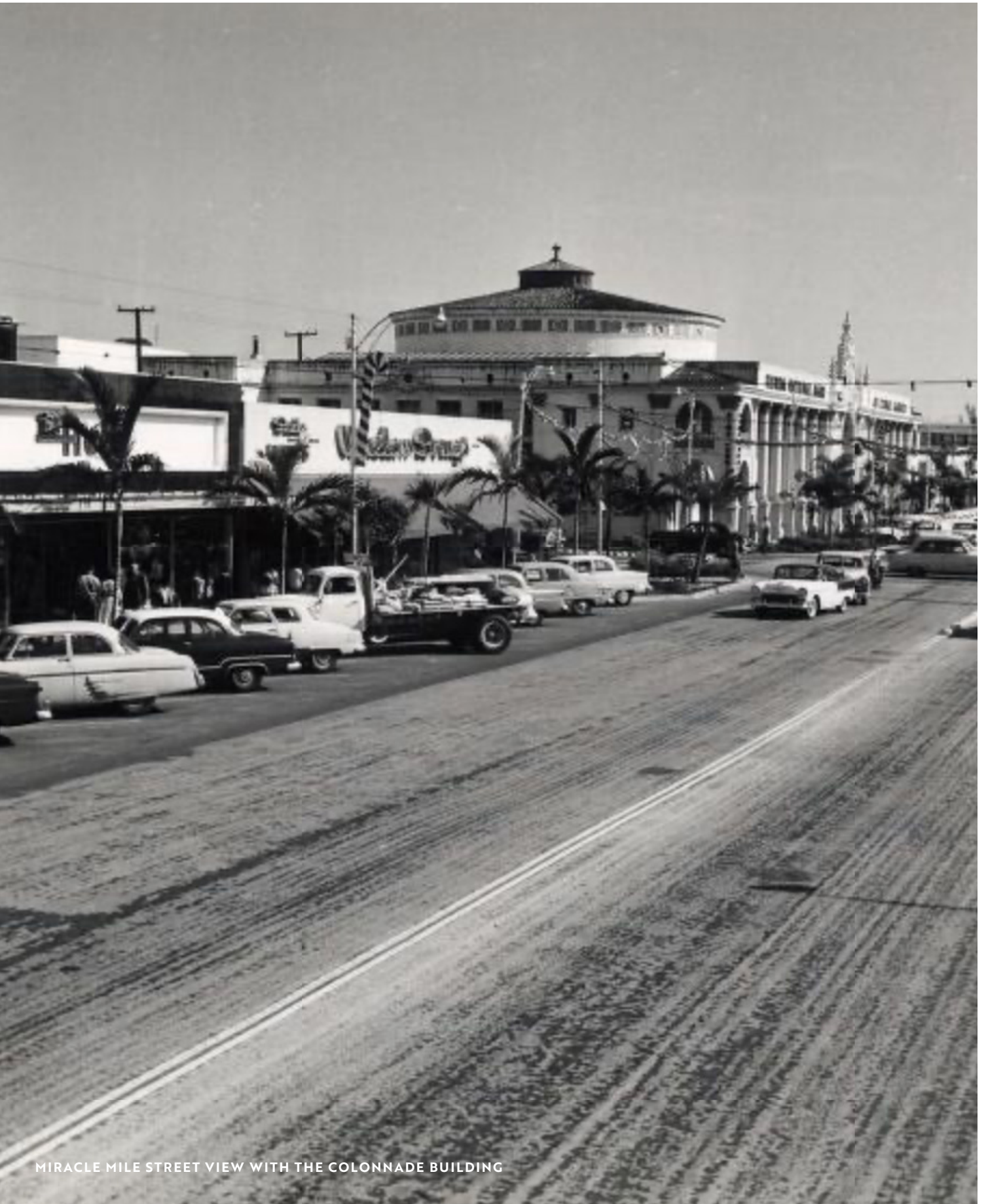
World Class Parking
Mr. Ray Lainez
(786) 452-7153
worldclassparking.net
Parking Facility Manage-
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Wragg & Casas Strategic Communications
Ray Casas
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keting

Y Your Legal Outsource, LLC
Ms. Yvonne M. Menéndez
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Attorneys - Business/Com-
mercial Law

Z Zoo Miami Foundation
Ms. Natalie Canelas
(305) 255-5551
zoomiami.org
Zoo Attraction

Zyscovich Architects
Ms. Anabella Smith
(305) 372-5222
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MIRACLE MILE STREET VIEW WITH THE COLONNADE BUILDING



GEORGE MERRICK

George Merrick (GEM) Level Membership

The 31 companies at the GEM investor level membership are among the most engaged institutions with the highest profiles in our community. Launched in 2017, the GEM premier membership tier – an acronym for George E. Merrick – was created to provide exclusive access and extended benefits in recognition of the contributions these organizations make to our Chamber and community.

- AMERANT BANK
- AMERICAN AIRLINES
- AUDREY ROSS TEAM – COMPASS FLORIDA
- AVANTE-NEA INSURANCE GROUP LLC.
- BAPTIST HEALTH SOUTH FLORIDA
- BERKSHIRE HATHAWAY HOMESERVICES EWM REALTY
- CITY NATIONAL BANK OF FLORIDA
- EQUITABLE ADVISORS
- FIRST CITIZENS BANK
- FLORIDA BLUE
- FLORIDA POWER & LIGHT
- GROVE BANK & TRUST
- INTERMEDIA TOUCH, INC.
- KASEYA CENTER
- KOZYAK TROPIN & THROCKMORTON, P.A.
- MERCEDES-BENZ OF CORAL GABLES
- MIAMI-CFO
- MIAMI-DADE COUNTY
- NICKLAUS CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL
- NOMI HEALTH
- PRIVATE WEALTH
- MANAGEMENT OF CORAL GABLES
- QUEST WORKSPACES
- REGIONS BANK
- SER & ASSOCIATES, PLLC
- SOUTHSTATE BANK
- THE ALLEN MORRIS COMPANY
- THE BILTMORE HOTEL
- UHEALTH
- UNIVERSITY CREDIT UNION
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- VIM WEALTH MANAGEMENT

Experience The Best Of Coral Gables With The Audrey Ross Team!



From Left to Right: Will Powers (North Coconut Grove), Lauren Wheeler (North Coral Gables), Jeanie Vidaurreta (Miami Beach), John Hopkins (Miami Beach), Audrey Ross (Coral Gables/Gables Estates), Janet Tralins (South Coral Gables), Cristina Cipolletti (Pinecrest), Carolina Caraccia (South Miami), Camden Marks (Marketing), Rie Nakai (Key Biscayne), Giancarlo Jaramillo (Brickell), Guinevere Borja (Marketing), Sebastian Garcia (High Pines), Lisa Sayfie (Coconut Grove)

Discover the Audrey Ross Team difference – where real estate meets extraordinary service! We go beyond the conventional, offering a unique blend of local expertise, an expansive network and personalized service to turn your property dreams into reality. Whether you're buying or selling, our intimate knowledge of the community and the market gives you a distinct edge. We live where we work!

Imagine not just finding a house, but a home that perfectly matches your lifestyle and vision. With our team, you gain a dedicated partner who prioritizes your goals and works tirelessly to ensure your experience is seamless and gratifying. Join our family and let us guide you to the home that truly speaks to you. Contact us today!

COMPASS

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MIAMI REAL ESTATE
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INNOVATION
MEETS **IMPACT**

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