

CORAL GABLES

JULY-AUGUST 2025

MAGAZINE

The Best of Coral Gables 2025



100 YEARS OF
Coral Gables
EST. 1925 - 2025
The CITY
BEAUTIFUL

The Best of Coral Gables 2025



It is time once again to celebrate the best of the Gables. Each year we ask our readers, and our staff, to decide what is the crème de la crème, the jewels in the crown, the pick of the bunch – you get it – the finest our city has to offer in food, shopping, entertainment, and public spaces. With such an embarrassment of riches, it is no easy task to decide what makes the top grade. So we asked our readers (several hundred gave us their opinions) and then we asked ourselves (being students of the city we report on each month) to pick the best there is. Sometimes we were in agreement, sometimes not. Here, then, are our choices for 2025. And, as always, we welcome your feedback. Let us know what we got right, what we got wrong, and what we left out. Send your thoughts to: editor@coralgablesmagazine.com.

COVER: BEST PICNIC SPOT: MATHESON HAMMOCK

BEST FOOD BY TYPE

BEST BAKERY



PEOPLE'S CHOICE: BACHOUR

Chef Antonio Bachour is considered one of the best makers of pastries in the world. This is immediately apparent with his breakfast croissant, and even more so with pastries that are works of art – and which they package in Tiffany-blue boxes, like the jewels they are.

STAFF CHOICE: MADRUGA BAKERY

The fanatical following for Madrugá Bakery is a testament to what a full-service bakery is all about, with everything from hearty loaves of artisanal bread to lemon poppyseed muffins – not to mention their cheesecake and apple pie.

BEST SEAFOOD

PEOPLE'S CHOICE: CALISTA GREEK SEAFOOD

Yes, they have spinach pies and baklava, as any good Greek tavern should. But they go deep into the Mediterranean seafood mix, with pan-seared branzino, grilled sardines, mussels “saganaki” (with feta cheese), grilled octopus, and lightly dusted calamari.



STAFF CHOICE: CVI.CHE 105

Peruvians are known for their seafood dishes, starting with the marinated chunks of fish known as ceviche. CVI.CHE 105 takes this to a whole new level, with colorfully plated dishes that infuse seafood with Asiatic sauces as well as traditional Peruvian flavors.

BEST SALAD

PEOPLE'S CHOICE: CRAFT CORAL GABLES

Forget your idea of the traditional green salad. These salads are wildly enhanced, by roast pumpkin, baked salmon, garlic shrimp, and pulled pork, with elements like cherry tomatoes, pickled cabbage, curried leeks – and some green leaves here and there.

STAFF CHOICE: PURA VIDA

The name says it all – the “pure life” – and the salads here rise to that occasion. These are salads – like the Thai almond with mixed greens, scallions, and red bell peppers, or their “citrus summer” with cucumber, grapefruit and mint – that make you feel healthier just eating them.

BEST STEAK HOUSE**PEOPLE'S CHOICE: RUTH'S CHRIS**

Part of the national chain that prides itself on USDA Prime steaks seared at 500 degrees and finished with butter and parsley, this family-friendly atmosphere with a proper dress code also serves non-steak dishes like lobster mac & cheese, BBQ shrimp, and stuffed chicken breasts.

**STAFF CHOICE: CHRISTY'S STEAK HOUSE**

This is the real deal, what a steakhouse is supposed to be: red walls, a Cole Porter soundtrack, superb Caesar salads, shrimp cocktails, and impeccably prepared steaks. The only place in town that serves prime rib and baked Alaskas. A trip to another time, when scotch and martinis ruled.

BEST COCKTAILS**PEOPLE'S CHOICE: CEBADA ROOFTOP**

The names alone may be worth it: the vodka/ginger/lime/guava drink “Bro, Why Are Your Pants So Tight” or the tequila/lime/cucumber/pineapple/serrano peppers drink “Relax, It Only Tingles a Little” are just two of the extensive cocktail offerings.

STAFF CHOICE: ARCANO

Lucas Miller, the general manager of the self-described “Hispanamerica” restaurant, invested serious time and engineering designing the cocktail selections here, which are both delicious and often come in fun, whimsical glasses.



BEST COCKTAILS, STAFF CHOICE: ARCANO

BEST SANDWICH**PEOPLE'S CHOICE: SANGUICH**

This is where traditional Cuban sandwiches have died and gone to heaven. All the classics are here, from Pan Con Lechon to Media Noche, with their special Sanguich de Miami adding a turkey, smoked bacon, swiss cheese monster to the mix.

**STAFF CHOICE: TINTA Y CAFE**

A truly neighborhood vibe, just off of Ponce de Leon in what was once a service station, with many inventive sandwiches, like their Madurito with plantains, pork, and caramelized onions, and their Francesita, with cream cheese, ham, and strawberry preserve.

BEST COFFEE HOUSECOFFEE AT
CAFÉ DEMETRIO'S**PEOPLE'S CHOICE: GROU COFFEE**

This cozy shop is one of the most welcome additions to the Merrick Park neighborhood abutting the Shops at Merrick Park, with specialty coffees and a cold brew that will perk you up on hot days – plus a co-working space so you can work as you imbibe.

STAFF CHOICE: CAFÉ DEMETRIO

Café Demetrio has superb Italian coffee-making machines, a sweet courtyard, and some of the most delicious brews you will ever taste, all in a historic building that was once the home of *Miami News* in a great central location on Alhambra Circle.

BEST PIZZA**PEOPLE'S CHOICE: CRAFT CORAL GABLES**

Maybe it's because Craft is essentially an Argentine restaurant, but its pizzas are born of the Italian immigration to Argentina that created its own pizza culture determined to out-do the za's of their home country.

**STAFF CHOICE: EMMY SQUARED**

One of the newest entries into the pizza game in the Gables, this was the favorite pie place of the recently passed CEO of the Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce, Mark Trowbridge. Anyone who knew him knew that he was the ultimate foodie.

BEST ICE CREAM



PEOPLE'S CHOICE: SWEET MELODY

STAFF CHOICE: SWEET MELODY

Yes, they have all the classic flavors. But this home-grown shop pushes the envelope with flavors (which you can buy by the quart to take home) like Abuela's Flan, Guava Cream Cheese, and Café con Leche.

BEST HAMBURGERS

PEOPLE'S CHOICE: JOHN MARTIN'S

Hamburgers are the stuff of pub grub, and no one understands that better than John Martin's, where the burgers are big, juicy, and lathered with caramelized onions. Also, well-washed down with a beer on tap.

STAFF CHOICE: VINYA

We were as surprised as anyone else with the quality and tastiness of the burgers served at this establishment that prides itself on its selection of wines. A burger with a glass of burgundy? Go figure.

BEST RESTAURANT BY EXPERIENCE

BEST BREAKFAST

PEOPLE'S CHOICE: BIRDIE'S BISTRO

Formerly Burger Bob's, this neighborhood favorite was reborn this year after a makeover by the city (which included a new bathroom!). What hasn't changed is the old-fashioned approach to a bacon-and-eggs breakfast with toast, coffee, and a reasonable price tag.



STAFF CHOICE: THREEFOLD

Owner Nick Sharp brought the concept from Australia: a place where breakfast is served all day, with the first avocado toast in the Gables.



BEST NEW RESTAURANT, STAFF CHOICE: SRA. MARTINEZ

It continues to attract loyal eaters with its salmon scramble, chili eggs, and lemon curd French toast.

BEST ROMANTIC RESTAURANT



PEOPLE'S CHOICE: NOMA BEACH

Hard to beat a sunset over the lagoon in Matheson Hammock, with most of the seating outside. Add to this the superb seafood dishes created by Chef Donatella (along with the world's best meatballs) and you have an unbeatable date place.

STAFF CHOICE: FONTANA

The old courtyard at the Biltmore Hotel, with its Venetian fountain, is among the most elegant places to dine in all of the Gables. The menu is heavily Italian, with great pasta, but it's the ambience here that will woo the coldest heart.

BEST LOCAL HANGOUT

PEOPLE'S CHOICE: JOHN MARTIN'S

The new owners of John Martin's – one of the city's oldest restaurants – spruced it up with new flooring, new bar, upstairs seating, etc. But it still wins as the best information hangout for the afterwork crowd.

STAFF CHOICE: THE BAR

Feels more like a dive you'd find in Key West or maybe yesterday's Coconut Grove, this is where you come to drink and hang out with locals.

BEST HAPPY HOUR

PEOPLE'S CHOICE: BULLA

Maybe it's the sangria or the jovial atmosphere around the 360 degree bar, but few places can match the exuberance here. Plus, in addition to drink discounts from 5 to 7 pm daily, they have an amazing happy hour tapas menu.



STAFF CHOICE: AMERICANA KITCHEN

The large bar opens onto The Plaza Coral Gables, and its 5 to 7 pm happy hour runs seven days a week. Good discounts on classic cocktails, bar food, beer, and wine – plus, you can bring your dog.

BEST NEW RESTAURANT



PEOPLE'S CHOICE: MIKA

Amazing interior and traditional flavors from the Coastal Riviera by way of a six-Miche-

lin-starred chef. A bit on the pricey side (\$96 for Veal Parmigiana) but if you can spare the coin, the food is superb and the setting magical.

STAFF CHOICE: SRA. MARTINEZ

This long-anticipated Michelle Bernstein transplant from the Design District enhances the creative cuisine of the Gables, with unique dishes from this award-winning chef – like carbonara croquetas, wood roasted duck, and chicken liver pate on warm beignets. Plus, live music.

BEST FINE DINING

PEOPLE'S CHOICE: ZUCCA

Ultra sophisticated and now heir to the power lunch crowd that migrated from Caffè Abbracci, Zucca delivers a seamless fine dining experience with its Northern Italian menu – and its special dish of ricotta-stuffed zucchini flower.



TABLESIDE AT TULLIO

STAFF CHOICE: TULLIO

You feel pampered here, with exquisite service and many of the ingredients flown in daily from Italy. A lot of table-side service for its dishes, which are driven by the seafood recipes of the owner's Venetian family.

BEST OUTDOOR DINING

PEOPLE'S CHOICE: CEBADA ROOFTOP

The first rooftop restaurant in the Gables, it's open to the sky – with a nice view of Giralda Plaza below. The menu is a Spanish-American fusion, with, strangely enough, some of the best fried chicken in town.



STAFF CHOICE: BOUCHON

This pantheon to classic French bistro dishes solved one of its biggest problems – a noisy



BEST OUTDOOR DINING, PEOPLE'S CHOICE: CEBADA ROOFTOP

inside – with seating in the lovely courtyard of the restored La Palma Hotel just outside.

BEST PLACE FOR A FIRST DATE

PEOPLE'S CHOICE: CEBADA ROOFTOP

There is something about being outside with open skies and twinkling lights that takes away the pressure on a first date – not to mention the view of people passing below on Giralda Plaza.



STAFF CHOICE: AMERICANA KITCHEN

Again, it's about the open space of The Plaza Coral Gables that takes away the claustrophobia of a first date, plus the amusements of people watching and public art worthy of discussion.

BEST LATE NIGHT DINING

PEOPLE'S CHOICE: STEPHANIE'S CREPES

Open till midnight, this is the place where you go to soak up some of that excess drinking with a nice crepe wrap that can be nutritious as well as dessert.

STAFF CHOICE: COYO TACO

Open even later, this is the last night nosh for the more seriously partying crowd that is still roaming the streets past midnight.

BEST PLACE TO WATCH THE GAME



PEOPLE'S CHOICE: FRITZ & FRANZ BIERHAUS

The big screens outside were shut down by neighboring apartment dwellers, but the big screens inside their cavernous interior make up for the loss. Add a huge selection of beer and you've got the best place to watch the Heat win and the Dolphins lose.

STAFF CHOICE: SPORTS GRILL

Lots of screens, with the sports events significantly enhanced by the best chicken wings in the city – baked, and not deep fried.

SHOPPING & RETAIL

BEST JEWELRY STORE



PEOPLE'S CHOICE: JAE'S FINE JEWELERS

A family-run shop that has been here since cars had fins, with a nice selection of vintage jewelry – and the ability to customize anything you want.

STAFF CHOICE: SNOW'S JEWELERS

Another long-time denizen of Miracle Mile, Snow's has a special focus on diamonds. Its showcases glitter with rings, necklaces, and bracelets.

BEST WOMEN'S CLOTHING STORE



PEOPLE'S CHOICE: NORDSTROM

The vast selection is one of the reasons why this was a first pick by readers. And there is something about a department store that is so wonderfully all-encompassing. Smells good, too!

STAFF CHOICE: ORIGEN

This boutique store has some of the most interesting new styles. Super colorful prints and dresses, bathing suits, footwear – all contemporary and affordably priced, in a comfortable, personal setting.

BEST FURNITURE STORE



PEOPLE'S CHOICE: CRATE & BARREL

It's a national chain, so that means they can buy in bulk and offer reasonable prices – as well as appeal to the tastes of a mass audience.

STAFF CHOICE: FINE-LINE FURNITURE & ACCESSORIES

Always interesting, with many one-of-a-kind pieces and a complete selection that includes floor lamps, ceiling lighting, dining room tables, consoles, chairs, couches – even planters and boxes.

BEST PLACE TO BUY FORMAL WEAR (MEN)

PEOPLE'S CHOICE: MY GROOMS ROOM/SARTORI AMICI

STAFF CHOICE: MY GROOMS ROOM/SARTORI AMICI



BEST PLACE TO BUY GIFTS, PEOPLE'S CHOICE: COCO BELLA



The service here is extraordinary, as is the understanding of what works for a given client. The pricing here is also a consideration, with less expensive options – including special lapels that can transform a serious suit into formal wear.

BEST PLACE TO BUY FORMAL WEAR (WOMEN)

PEOPLE'S CHOICE: NEIMAN MARCUS

This national chain never fails to offer a vast selection of dresses in good taste. Their women's department is an oasis of calm, with lots of off-the-rack that can be tailored to fit.



MAYDA CISNEROS

STAFF CHOICE: MAYDA CISNEROS COUTURE

When you want a one-of-a-kind dress that

is tailored perfectly to make the most of your physique, and from the finest cloth in the world, no one touches Mayda Cisneros, the go-to dress designer for the Gables' elite.

BEST MEN'S CLOTHING STORE

PEOPLE'S CHOICE: BOLADO CLOTHIERS

High-quality, hand-selected brands and custom suits, this is the kind of luxury clothing shop that you'll find only in Coral Gables.

STAFF CHOICE: PEPI BERTINI

Pepi is the man when it comes to custom fitted clothing for men. Never considered the least expensive shop in town, but for quality, what matters the price?

BEST PLACE TO BUY GIFTS



PEOPLE'S CHOICE: COCO BELLA

A great selection of gifts that are affordable and cater to a more bohemian taste than some other shops, self-described as "whimsical" and featuring things like candles, stationery, and gourmet cookies – plus, gift wrapping.

STAFF CHOICE: ROSE TREE COTTAGE OR VIOLETA'S

Rose Tree Cottage varies their gift selection for each season, with an almost overwhelming selection; Violeta's tends toward the more pricey gifts that are practically works of art.

PERSONAL SERVICES

BEST FACIAL



PEOPLE'S CHOICE: SILVER MIRROR FACIAL BAR

STAFF CHOICE: SILVER MIRROR FACIAL BAR

Mirror, mirror on the wall, who is the prettiest girl of all? That would be someone who just came out of Silver Mirror Facial Bar, where the service is superb and the treatments personalized.

BEST MESSAGE



PEOPLE'S CHOICE: THE BILTMORE SPA

STAFF CHOICE: THE BILTMORE SPA

Is it the serene Old World setting of the Biltmore, far from the madding crowd? Or is it the staff that is trained to satisfy the most demanding of standards of the international clientele who stay at the Biltmore? The spa experience here takes you somewhere far away, deeply relaxing.

BEST GROOMER



PEOPLE'S CHOICE: DOG FROM IPANEMA

STAFF CHOICE: DOG FROM IPANEMA

Okay, so it's located across the street from the Gables. But this locale for taking your beloved pooch for a trim, a bath, and nail clipping has



BEST DOG WALKER: EQUIPAWS

been the go-to place for discerning Gableite dog owners for years.

BEST DOG WALKER



PEOPLE'S CHOICE: EQUIPAWS PET SERVICES

STAFF CHOICE: EQUIPAWS PET SERVICES

This is the team of dog lovers who will come to your home to take your best friend for a stroll. Always friendly, always reliable, and always ready.

BEST HAIR SALON

PEOPLE'S CHOICE: AVANT-GARDE SALON & SPA

STAFF CHOICE: AVANT-GARDE SALON & SPA

If clothes make the man, then hair makes the woman. Here they take special care to create the look that will win the hearts of paramours, the envy of friends – or the respect of clients, if you want a more professional looking style.

BEST BARBERSHOP

PEOPLE'S CHOICE: THE SPOT BARBERSHOP

From hot towel shaving treatments to straight razor shaves, The Spot is "the spot" to go to for classic grooming services in Coral Gables.

STAFF CHOICE: NICEST BARBERS BARBERSHOP

What makes a great barbershop? Partly it's finding the barber who has your number, who

you come back to time and again. The other part is that you feel welcome in a place that is friendly in that old-fashioned way.

BEST MANICURE/PEDI

PEOPLE'S CHOICE: GLOSS NAIL BAR/GLOSS NATURALS

Nothing says sexy like a wickedly crafted set of nails. Theirs include the essential manicure plus an organic raw sugar scrub and a 10-minute relaxing hand and arm massage, finished with a butter hand cream.

STAFF CHOICE: MY TIME NAIL BAR

A great array of services and affordable prices, including a \$15 manicure for little girls (under 10) and an Any Time regular manicure for \$20. Of course, you can go more luxurious with hot towels, long lasting gel manicures, and much more.

RECREATION

BEST GYM



PEOPLE'S CHOICE: LIFETIME

STAFF CHOICE: LIFETIME

This is the place that has it all – huge selections of equipment, great high-ceilinged spaces, easy parking, and classes of all sorts to help you get in shape or bulk it up.

BEST YOGA STUDIO

PEOPLE'S CHOICE: TRUFUSION

Some like it hot, and this is the place for them, where most (but not all) classes are heated so you can sweat out toxins while practicing more than a dozen yoga methodologies with instructors who pace things to your skill level.

STAFF CHOICE: CASA VINYASA

Embracing a community spirit, the “guides” in this light-filled studio are so knowledgeable about the practice of yoga that they also train instructors in the ancient art, which they make contemporary – and fun.

BEST PICNIC SPOT



PEOPLE'S CHOICE: MATHESON HAMMOCK

STAFF CHOICE: MATHESON HAMMOCK

And you thought that the Gables had no waterfront parks? Matheson abuts the great bay with its beachy lagoon and marina, where you can spread out with a blanket or find a picnic table with nearby grill.

BEST TENNIS COURTS

PEOPLE'S CHOICE: BILTMORE

STAFF CHOICE: BILTMORE

They are well maintained, with clay as well as hard court. Lots of easy parking, verdant surroundings, and pros on hand if you need instruction. The finest tennis experience in the Gables.

BEST PICKLEBALL



PEOPLE'S CHOICE: SALVADORE PARK

STAFF CHOICE: SALVADORE PARK

This craze has taken the Gables by storm, so



BEST PERFORMANCE VENUE, PEOPLE'S CHOICE: ACTORS' PLAYHOUSE

Salvadore rose to the occasion, converting several of their tennis courts for the practice of pickleball. Just make sure to make reservations.

BEST PERFORMANCE VENUE



PEOPLE'S CHOICE: ACTORS' PLAYHOUSE

Amazing productions of Broadway musicals on the main stage, and smaller more focused dramas and comedies on their upstairs stage, Actors' Playhouse is one of the cultural institutions that make it worth living here.

STAFF CHOICE: SANCTUARY OF THE ARTS

The most recent of the cultural venues to appear in the Gables, the Sanctuary filled the need for a stage where dance could be performed, as well as classical and contemporary music. No bad seats in this transformed church across from City Hall.

BEST LIVE MUSIC

PEOPLE'S CHOICE: ARMSTRONG JAZZ HOUSE

The owners here are devoted to the idea that Coral Gables should have a place where jazz can always be heard, any night of the week, in a packed space that feels very West Village. Young musicians perform the classic riffs.



STAFF CHOICE: THE GLOBE

If it's Saturday night, then you'll find us at the Globe – listening to Afro-Cuban jazz in a setting that feels like you are somewhere in Europe. Nothing else compares for a sophisticated jazz experience.

ARCHITECTURE & PUBLIC PLACES

BEST HISTORIC LANDMARK



PEOPLE'S CHOICE: BILTMORE HOTEL

The Biltmore is the icon of the city, the great hotel that founding father George Merrick built in the heart of what is now the historic section of the city. Extraordinary lobby with

bird cages and vaulted ceilings, not to mention the pool where Tarzan once frolicked.

STAFF CHOICE: VENETIAN POOL

Created from the rock quarry from which much of the original coral stone was cut for the first homes of Coral Gables, the Venetian Pool was also designed to look like an Italian canal, with gondola poles, waterfalls, and its own grotto.

BEST PLACE TO WALK YOUR DOG



PEOPLE'S CHOICE: GRANADA GOLF COURSE

The Granada Golf Course is the central park of the Gables, slicing right through its most historic section. Walking the perimeter with your dog is another way to experience this open space.

STAFF CHOICE: COUNTRY CLUB PRADO

On the western edge of the city lies Country Club Prado, which has a long, open green space between the streets on either side. A

BEST PUBLIC ART



PEOPLE'S CHOICE: THE PLAZA

STAFF CHOICE: THE PLAZA

No other development comes close to the public art on display in the one-acre open space that creates The Plaza's courtyard, from a golden sculpture taken from the streets of Chicago to the giant father-and-son mice in front of Americana Kitchen. Other fountains and sculptures as well, a veritable garden of art.

BEST PARKING PLACE

PEOPLE'S CHOICE: VALET ON MIRACLE MILE

The people who voted for this have obviously given up on what it takes to find street parking – or the patience to park in one of the many local garages. But hey, there is something to be said for convenience.

STAFF CHOICE: ALHAMBRA CIRCLE

Those who are willing to walk a couple of blocks to where the action is can always find a place to park on Alhambra between LeJeune and Douglas Roads.

BEST PARK



PEOPLE'S CHOICE: SALVADORE PARK

STAFF CHOICE: SALVADORE PARK

This is the park that has it all: tennis courts, pickleball courts, inclusive playground gear for everyone, a dog run for large canines, and more. The most popular park in town.

BEST PLACE TO TAKE OUT-OF-TOWNERS

PEOPLE'S CHOICE: BILTMORE HOTEL

Maybe other cities have older landmarks, but few can match the majesty of the Biltmore. It also comes with three restaurants and a fascinating history, including the tower with its magnificent presidential suite, and Florida's largest swimming pool.

TAFF CHOICE: FAIRCHILD GARDENS

South Florida has a semi-tropical environment that is unique in the nation, and nowhere is this better displayed than in the 80 acres of tropical plants that Dr. Fairchild brought from around the world to display here.



BEST SECRET PLACE

PEOPLE'S CHOICE: SOSPIRO WINE BAR

There is a courtyard in back of this charming place that few know about. Now you do.

STAFF CHOICE: KADAMPA MEDITATION CENTER

Who knew there were monks teaching you how to meditate in a special place on the second floor along Miracle Mile? Now you do. ■



BEST PLACE TO TAKE OUT-OF-TOWNERS,
PEOPLE'S CHOICE: BILTMORE HOTEL

64 of the Best Restaurants

THE DINING GUIDE

Each month we publish a select list of restaurants that we recommend for our readers. We cannot, of course, include the Top 100 each month, so this month we are featuring 64 of the best in the categories of American, Asian, French, Italian, Seafood, Spanish, and Pubs & Cafés. Next month we will include the best of Latin American and Mediterranean restaurants, along with some of our other perennial favorites.

July 2025



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

Prices are per person for appetizer and entrée, without tax, tip, or drinks. Prices are approximations.

AMERICAN

Bachour

Chef Antonio Bachour was lured to the Gables by developer Armando Codina after winning the award for best pastry chef in the world. But this airy, industrial chic spot has become much more, including the best power breakfast place in town, with amazingly good eggs benedict and challah French toast. Also open for lunch and an early dinner, with great Greek salad and roast chicken breast. 2020 Salzedo St. 305.203.0552 \$\$

Beauty and the Butcher

Michelin-starred Chef Jeremy Ford is no longer with Beauty & The Butcher, but Chef de Cuisine Jeremy Kermisch has proven himself an able replacement. The highlight here is still the Australian Wagyu beef, either as a filet or top sirloin, but the smoked lamb Denver ribs glazed by date honey BBQ sauce, with sides of pineapple jicama slaw and polenta bravas, is a real contender. 6915 Red Rd. 305.665.9661 \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Cascade Pool Café

Handheld snacks and salads make up most of the menu here, with some nice entrees like a great poke bowl, turkey Cobb salad and a Caribbean grilled snapper. If you're eating poolside, you're probably more interested in the drinks though – of which there are many, including some frozen. 1200 Anastasia Ave. (The Biltmore Hotel) 305.445.1926 \$\$

Cebada Rooftop & Raw Bar

It's hard to pigeonhole this rooftop restaurant by Chef Jorge Ramos (fresh from his acclaimed Barley restaurant

in Dadeland). He calls it “contemporary American with a Latin overlay” which means roast bone marrow with salsa verde and baby back ribs with pimiento marmalade. A good raw bar, a great view. 124 Giralda Ave. 786.409.2287 \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Doc B's Restaurant + Bar

Doc B's Restaurant + Bar serves craveable American fare dishes made from scratch daily. Offering brunch, lunch, dinner, and a solid happy hour, signature dishes include the Wok Out Bowls. But our favorites are the candied bacon, the oven-roasted chicken wings, and the Southern fried chicken. 301 Miracle Mile 786.864.1220 \$\$

Eating House

Chef Giorgio Rapicavoli's maiden Coral Gables restaurant returned with fanfare after closing in the summer of 2021, this time on Giralda Plaza. Serving brunch, dinner, and a new lunch menu, the food here is an exciting stretch of the palate – like roasted Brussels sprouts with green goddess dressing. Try their prix fixe tasting menus. 128 Giralda Ave. 786.580.3745 \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Emmy Squared

This Detroit-style pizza spot is the first of its kind in the Gables, featuring rectangular pan pizzas with thick, crispy crusts. We love the VIP, which is topped with crispy slices of pepperoni, spicy Calabrian chiles, and parsley pesto, and features a sesame seed crust and a homemade vodka sauce base. There's also an award-winning burger! 230 Miracle Mile. 786.607.3669 \$\$

Fairway

Though the food is great, and the drinks even more so, it's the ambience and the views that wow at this golfer's paradise by the Biltmore Hotel's golf course. Sunset views of the course and a beautiful outdoor patio pair with an airy interior – plus the best BLT in Miami. All-day breakfast items are a huge plus. 1200 Anastasia Ave. (The Biltmore Hotel). 305.445.8066. \$\$

The Globe

The Globe is a Gables icon, and

one of the coolest places to eat in the city – assuming you like a smart, Euro-style bistro. Decorated with classic paintings (and globes over their old-world bar), the menu is mostly American dishes – salads, burgers, fish, steaks, etc. – perfected over the years. Best conch fritters. 377 Alhambra Circle 305.445.3555 \$\$

Hillstone

There are very few restaurants in the Gables where clients will wait in a line outside. Hillstone is one of them. A power lunch spot, a happy hour singles anchor, and a family restaurant at night, the food and service are consistently top notch, with an elegant interior that is both comfortable and sophisticated at the same time. 201 Miracle Mile. 305.529.0141 \$\$\$

John Martin's

The venerable pub that closed during COVID has returned, updated as a “21st century” Irish pub. This means a bright new bar and lots of light from floor-to-ceiling windows. Along with the new look is a significantly upgraded menu, with things like Guinness-glazed meatballs and duck flatbread added to the Shepherd's pie. 253 Miracle Mile. 305.209.0609 \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Seasons 52

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

Tap 42

Tap 42 is big, noisy, and fun, with a huge island bar and lots of booths. Reliably good ribs, steaks, and burgers, and it shines in the sides (roasted brussels sprouts with maple mustard, truffle mac & cheese with parmesan crust). Nice random Asian dishes (grilled salmon Zen bowl, Asian coleslaw) and a good happy hour. 301 Giralda Ave. 786.391.1566 \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

The Collab

When we first heard Chef Niven Patel was leaving his two concepts at the THesis Hotel, Orno and Mamey, we were despondent. But we're happy to report that Orno's replacement, Chef Nicolas Mazier's The Collab, is a gastronomic success. We love the beef tartare, served on bite-sized pieces of crispy bao buns and combined with black garlic aioli, pickled mustard seeds, chives, and an onion jam that elevates the beef to culinary heaven. 1350 S Dixie Hwy. (THesis Hotel). 305.667.6766. \$\$\$

Vinya Table

A wine lover's retreat and former pop-up, Vinya is a full restaurant with seafood, pasta, charcuterie, and a 42-ounce tomahawk steak, among other meats. But if you're not looking at the wine list first, you might be in the wrong place. Categorized by region, rarity, price, flavor profile, winemaking, and varietal, Vinya has wines for every kind of sommelier wannabe and then some. 266 Miracle Mile. 305.203.4229 \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Yard House

A cavernous space with huge screens for sports fans, oversized paintings, classic rock in the background, and large booths, all making for a comfortable space in which to pick and choose from an immense and reliable menu of American classics with Asian dishes interspersed. Literally something for everyone, and great selection of beer on tap and bottled. 320 San Lorenzo Ave. 305.447.9273 \$\$

ASIAN

Benihana

There's nowhere else in Coral Gables where you can see an onion volcano made at your table, and that kind of showmanship is why we can't help but love Benihana. Great place for a kid's birthday – or just to have some fun – with hibachi steak and teriyaki chicken. 242 Miracle Mile. 305.567.2000. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Ichimi

This off-Mile eatery has developed a

DINING GUIDE

cult following, with diners content to stand in line and stare just for the opportunity to eat Ichimi's ramen and rice bowls. And the wait is worth it. Delicious, rich, and faraway flavors in dishes you can't find just anywhere, in a raw, cool space. Pro tip: try the scallion pancake. 2330 Salzedo St. 305.960.7016 \$-\$\$

KAO Sushi & Grill

Not sure of the vibe here – the décor inside feels oddly like you're in Las Vegas – but the outside seating on the Mile is quite nice. Menu-wise, there are specialty rolls with an interesting Peruvian spin that includes a wide selection of ceviche, along with empanadas and chorizo. 127 Miracle Mile. 786.864.1212 \$\$

Khaosan Road

Formerly Bangkok, Bangkok, this Giralda Plaza mainstay – with plenty of outdoor tables – has reinvented itself as the new home for Thai street food. Think you know Thai food? Be prepared for new and delicious tastes, from curry street sausage to the best crispy duck. 157 Giralda Plaza. 305.444.2397 \$\$

Kojin 2.0

There must be something in the air at 804 Ponce de Leon, the spot which formerly hosted Chef Giorgio Rapicavoli's Eating House and Chef Michael Bolen's Lion & The Rambler. Today, the address belongs to Kojin 2.0, where you can find twice-cooked chicken, scallops with white bean sauce and pork, and a Japanese take on the traditional chicken sandwich. Tasting menus from \$85-plus with constantly changing ingredients. 804 Ponce de Leon. 786.747.1404 \$\$\$

Su Shin Izakaya

Located across the street from the Colonnade building, this tiny, bustling Japanese restaurant serves a great bento box – along with an impressive array of daily specials that are posted on the wall in chalk. Super popular lunch spot, for good reason – a much deeper take on Japanese food than just sushi and rolls. 159 Aragon Ave. 305.445.2584 \$\$

Mai Sushi Tapas & Bar

A large portion of the menu here is on sticks, a variety of skewers and sushi pintos inspired by the Spanish bar snacks but reinvented to spotlight sea ingredients like freshwater eel, sea urchin, and octopus. And as the name suggests, there's sashimi – both traditional and elevated – and beverages made with shochu, the distilled Japanese spirit. 98 Miracle Mile. 206.696.0674 \$-\$\$\$

Malakor Thai Isaan

This eatery on Miracle Mile prides itself on delivering true, tasty Thai food. That means pork skewers with sticky rice, grilled fatty pork neck sliced and tossed with lime juice, or the Gang Aom, a Thai curry with fish sauce, dill and herb paste. And they can really spice it up. 90 Miracle Mile. 786.558.4862 \$\$

Moon Thai & Japanese

Can't decide between Japanese or Thai food? No problem. Here, you can have a Japanese house salad or miso soup as an appetizer and Pad Thai as an entrée. Truly the best of both worlds. Comfy booths inside and umbrella-covered outdoor tables. Across the street from UM. 1118 S. Dixie Hwy. 305.668.9890 \$\$

Namaste

Hidden on a side street off Ponce, the last standing Indian restaurant in the Gables is small and humble ("namaste" means "I bow to you") yet superb in its

rendering of classic Indian dishes, from tandoori to biryanis. Our favorite is the mango curry chicken, followed by the chef's special black pepper shrimp. 221 Navarre Ave. 786.534.2161 \$\$

Osumi

Offering elevated Japanese-American fusion cuisine with a Latin flair, this cocktail and sushi bar pulls out all the stops to cater to Gableites, from its sophisticated low-light ambiance to its signature drinks by mixology masters from Café La Trova. The star here is the Tuna Sumibiyaki (\$22), made up of thin slices of tuna laid in a creamy sesame sauce and topped with Asian pear and cassava chips. 110 Giralda Ave. 786.452.9902. \$\$\$

Sakura Japanese

A vast menu for rolls, along with selections of noodles, yakitori, katsu, tempura, teriyaki, etc. But they serve some of the best sushi and sashimi in town, if raw fish is your thing. We also love their seating – a half dozen alcoves that line the walls and provide a sense of private space. 440 S Dixie Hwy. 305.665.7020 \$\$

Sawa

Delicious take on Japanese flavors served in parallel with Lebanese Mediterranean, Sawa offers seating inside or outside at the Shops at Merrick Park. A vast selection of sushi rolls and tapas that range from chicken yakitori to octopus ceviche, along with super fresh Middle Eastern comfort food. Also has a doggy menu and late-night happy hour. 360 San Lorenzo Ave. (Shops at Merrick Park) 305.447.6555 \$\$\$

Shingo

If you're looking for a luxurious experience, consider the omakase menu at Coral Gables' first Michelin-starred restaurant. Located in the historic La Palma building, the restaurant is the brainchild of now twice-starred Chef Shingo Akikuni, previously of Hidden in Wynwood. Every element of the restaurant is carefully curated, from the pristine 14-seat table to how each course is served. 112 Alhambra Circle. shingomiami.com. \$\$\$\$

Sushi Maki

Flagship of the Ng family food empire, Sushi Maki has some of the best sushi service anywhere, albeit in an unsophisticated space. No matter. Good prices, fresh fish and some over the top desserts to balance all that protein – like deep fried oreos. 2335 Ponce de Leon Blvd. 305.443.1884. \$\$

Zitz Sum

Brought to you by Chef Pablo Zitzmann of No Name Chinese fame, this "pop up" dinner restaurant off the huge lobby of the 396 Building is here to stay. The result of a year-long pandemic dive into dim sum by Zitzmann, the dumplings, hand-rolled daily, are superb. Other menu items are highly inventive and flavorful. 396 Alhambra Circle. 786.409.6920 \$-\$\$\$

FRENCH

Bouchon Bistro

Michelin-starred Chef Thomas Keller is considered one of the top masters of French cuisine in the country, which he proves with aplomb at his latest venture into traditional French fare. With romantic courtyard seating outside at the restored La Palma Hotel and an elegant interior, to sup in Bouchon is to dine in late 19th century Paris. Try the Poulet Roti and the rainbow trout. 2101 Galiano St. 305.990.1360 \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Chocolate Fashion

Known primarily for its baked goods – in particular anything made with chocolate, including the best chocolate cakes anywhere in the Gables – it also serves up good basic French fare, with a couple of cute tables streetside. Good coffee as well, and an excellent place to break croissant for breakfast. 248 Andalusia Ave. 305.461.3200 \$\$

Frenchie's Diner

A little on the pricey side, but really good bistro style dishes served from a new blackboard selection daily. Among our favorites here is the roast chicken, the sautéed trout and the bucket of mussels served with French fries. Sacre bleu! 2618 Galiano St. 305.442.4554 \$-\$\$\$\$

Pascal's on Ponce

Chef Pascal Oudin has been at his craft for several decades, and no one does better with haute French cuisine. His food is the stuff of legend, done old school style in a way that would make Julia Child jealous. His chocolate souffles are beyond compare and the good news is that they are now open for lunch. Great place of a special date. 2611 Ponce de Leon 305.444.2024 \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Stephanie's Crepes

It is a small, humble place off the mile, though nicely done with lots of woodwork. Their specialty is, of course, crepes, but done as a roll, sort of like a French ice cream cone but with sweet or savory fillings. Our favorite: Brie cheese with apple and walnut. The dulce de leche pistachio isn't bad either. 2423 Galiano St. 786.402.1732 \$

Sweet Paris

The new home for that quintessentially French phenomenon: the crepe. And they have all the varieties here, from the savory chicken, ham, turkey, and salmon – even a Philly cheesesteak – to the sweet dessert crepes such as Nutella, dulce de leche, and our favorite: lemon with whipped butter and a dusting of vanilla bean sugar. You can also get salads (goat cheese!) and paninis, all in a bright, open setting. 3005 Ponce de Leon Blvd. (The Plaza Coral Gables). 786.360-3519 \$\$

ITALIAN

450Gradi

With so many Italian restaurants in Coral Gables, it's incredible how hard it is to find a good slice of pizza. But 450 Gradi's pizzas are wonderfully inventive and deliciously layered, featuring ingredients like Italian buffalo cheese, basil pesto, pork cheek, and truffle cream. Under the direction of Chef Antonio, dishes like the branzino, veal, and salmon filet are equally full of panache. 130 Miracle Mile #101. 786.391.1276 \$\$\$

Bugatti

Bugatti prides itself on its pasta – and for good reason, since the restaurant started as a pasta factory. The décor is simple and contemporary, with lots of booths, and the service is crisp and superb, with most of the staff having worked here for over a decade. The dinner menu is straightforward, with pasta dishes under \$20 and entrees under \$30. And as many dessert listings (12) as pasta choices. 2504 Ponce de Leon Blvd. 305.441.2545 \$\$

Caffe Abbracci

A Gables icon, Nino Pernetti's Italian restaurant is both a power lunch favorite for the business elite and a cozy evening gathering place for families and couples. Abbracci is quiet and elegant, and the food

DINING GUIDE

is so consistently good that Perneti had to publish his own cookbook. Plus, unique sound dampers mean you can always be heard. 318 Aragon Ave. 305.441.0700 \$\$\$

Caffè Violetto

Not a huge menu, but when it comes to risotto, pappardelle, fettuccini, and ravioli, they do it right. And we love their Wednesday and Thursday “family” dinners for \$100, with lots of great dishes, that serve four or five diners. Reservations required, always full. 4019 Le Jeune Rd. 305.446.5659 \$\$\$

Fontana

The ambiance is as elegant as it comes: the Biltmore’s famed fountain courtyard. You can sit under the stars, in a covered archway, or inside to enjoy classic Italian dishes. Fresh ingredients, from the salads to the homemade pasta. Excellent seafood. One of the most romantic restaurants in the Gables. 1200 Anastasia Ave. (Biltmore Hotel) 305.913.3200 \$\$\$

Fugato

They will tell you they serve “continental” fusion cuisine, and yes, there is a touch of French and Spanish cooking here. But the chicken Florentine, ravioli aragosta, ravioli zucca, golden calamari, and veal ossobuco say otherwise. Well-prepared dishes in an intimate setting make this a romantic choice. 325 Alcazar Ave. 786.420.2910 \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Fratellino

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

Il Duomo Dei Saporì

Yet another entry into Coral Gables’ spate of Italian eateries, Il Duomo Dei Saporì appears to have simply materialized as a fully formed fine dining restaurant on Ponce. Our favorite here is the chicche di patate al tartufo (\$35), which is code for “creamy gnocchi with truffle.” Excellent cuisine. 2312 Ponce de Leon. 305.381.5604 \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Luca Osteria

An Italian fine dining spot by local celebrity Chef Giorgio Rapicavoli (Eating House), Luca Osteria is a reservation-only hit for dinner on Giralda Plaza. Rapicavoli’s inventive take on classic Italian food is fresh and new; the pasta al limone and mortadella toast with fig balsamic are just the beginning. Great Italian cocktails. 116 Giralda Ave. 305.381.5097 \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Portosole

When they bring the pecorino cheese

wheel to the table to toss your pasta, you’re in heaven. Short of that, they do a fine job with the fritto misto, a mixture of calamari, shrimp, filet of sole, tiny artichokes, and zucchini, all lightly fried. Equally appetizing is the fresh burrata with heirloom tomatoes, a deceptively simple salad of tomato and burrata cheese. 2530 Ponce de Leon Blvd. 786.359.4275 \$\$\$

Salumeria 104

Trattoria-style Salumeria is now two years old, with a loyal clientele, especially at lunchtime. Partly, that is because the food and ambience is authentically Northern Italian and rustic. It may also be thanks to their inventive pastas, and sandwiches of artisan cured meats, always fresh and flavorful. Those sliced salumi meats are buono! 117 Miracle Mile. 305.640.5547 \$\$

Terre Del Sapore

Terre started out as primarily a pizza place, and their Neapolitan style pizza – cooked in a massive wood-burning oven – won the Best Pizza in the Gables from Coral Gables Magazine. Now they have expanded to include a signature osso Bucco, along with an array of pasta dishes. Nice seating outside as well. 246 Giralda Ave. 786.870.5955 \$\$

Tullio

The brainchild of Lucio Zanon and his son Sebastiano – who previously

launched Portosole – Tullio is Italian cuisine with a northern Venetian sensibility, a focus on seafood, and some very inventive pasta dishes. The fish is exceptionally fresh, the branzino flown in from the waters of Italy, the shrimp from the waters of Argentina, and the lobster from the waters of Maine. Winner of Coral Gables Best Fine Dining 2024 award, always a table-side show of impeccable hospitality. 2525 Ponce de Leon. 305.926.4208 \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Zucca

Located at the elegant St. Michel hotel, this is a star in the galaxy of Italian eateries in the Gables. Distinctly northern Italian, with recipes that Chef Manuel Garcia developed in a career that included the legendary Casa Tua on Miami Beach. Modern Italian design, sophisticated, with great service. Moving to the Regency Parc development in 2026, but for now still in the old hotel – and the hands down power lunch place in town. 162 Alcazar Ave. 786.580.3731 \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$

SEAFOOD

MesaMar

Some of the best – if not THE best – seafood in the Gables with inventive fusions between Peruvian and Japanese cuisine. Their fish is caught daily in local waters and brought to your table for inspection. The whole

fried fish is a marvel. Also, make sure to try the lobster tacos and the rock shrimp with mushrooms and ponzu sauce. 263 Giralda Ave. 305.640.8448 \$\$\$

NOMA Beach at Redfish

Redfish is born again, this time as NOMA Beach at Redfish, under the command of celebrity chef Donatella Arpaia. The pricey haute cuisine of Chef Adrienne has been replaced with simpler, more moderately priced dishes that feel much closer to the old Redfish, albeit with an Italian seafood spin. Award winning meatballs and romantic views of the bay that are unbeatable. 9610 Old Cutler Rd. 305.668.8788 \$\$\$

Sea Grill

Sea Grill is a popular weekend destination for lovers of Mediterranean seafood. A large, brightly lit and futuristic space with lots of energy, it serves fish that is caught in the Aegean Sea and flown to the Gables. Their octopus, which takes two days to prepare, is simply the best. Lots of outdoor seating, big screens inside showing visions of Greece. 4250 Salzedo St. (Shops at Merrick Park) 305.447.3990 \$\$\$

SPANISH

Bulla Gastrobar

As valued for its cocktails as for

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

La Taberna Giralda

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

Tabanco

The newest edition to Coral Gables' tapas scene has arrived. Tabanco has all of the usual suspects: croquetas, patatas bravas, Jamón Iberico, etc., most under \$17, except for the Iberico slices. Our favorite dish is the puntas de Ssolomillo entrée, an Iberian pork tenderloin that comes swimming in a Cabrales blue cheese sauce. With hand-cut potatoes on the side, a perfect bite is a combination of each of the three elements. 327 Alhambra Cir. 786.449.5203 \$\$\$

PUBS & CAFES

Bagel Emporium

And you thought all the great Jewish delis had disappeared. Not this one. Rated the best bagels and deli sandwiches in Miami, it's also a great breakfast spot (waffles, blintzes, French toast). But this is where you come for a real pastrami or corned beef sandwich on rye. Yes, \$20 a pop, but a time machine to New York's lower East Side. Soon to relocate to Ponce de Leon Blvd. 1238 S. Dixie Highway. 305.666.9519 \$\$-\$\$\$

Café at Books & Books

Healthy eats and a beautiful (mostly) shaded outdoor courtyard make this the perfect place for a quick catch-up or a solo lunch with a good book. Live music on Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday nights gives this bookstore café a touch of the romantic. 265 Aragon Ave. 305.448.9599 \$\$

Fritz and Franz Bierhaus

Be transported from Coral Gables to Oktoberfest. Enjoy German comfort food like Weisswurst and Heringsschmaus and German beers straight from the source. Naturally, you must order a beer, but here you can have it served in a giant glass boot – and the selection, like the place, is huge, with outdoor seating. 60 Merrick Way 305.774.1883 \$\$

Sports Grill

A go-to spot for any major sporting event, but also a popular destination for any given night of the week. You don't even need to look at the menu: the pub is home to the Special Grilled wings, dipped in their signature sauce, then charbroiled and lightly covered in a secret sauce. The Coral Gables Magazine winner for best wings. 1559 Sunset Dr. 305.668.0396 \$

Threefold Café

You have to love a place that is dedicated to breakfast all day long. But who needs dinner when you can get shrimp tacos for breakfast, along with salmon scrambled eggs, chicken parma, and that Millennial favorite, smashed avocado toast? Also popular for Sunday brunch. And the coffee is some of the best around. 141 Giralda Ave. 305.704.8007 \$\$

Tinta y Café

Funky and comfortable, this former gas station turned Cuban café has 1) the best Cuban coffee, 2) great fluffy eggs for breakfast, 3) furniture that makes you feel like you are in someone's living room, and 4) some of the most inventive Cuban sandwiches you will ever eat, way beyond the media noche. 1315 Ponce de Leon Blvd. 305.285.0101 \$