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CORAL GABLES

JULY/AUGUST 2022

MAGAZINE

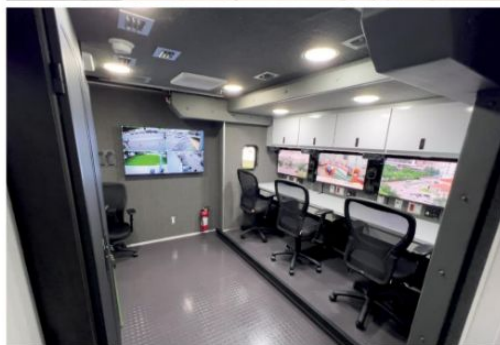
**The Best of
Coral Gables**

**Nino Perneti
1945-2022**



STREETWISE

Talk of the Town



Not the Batmobile, but still...

On a recent morning it straddled a half dozen parking spaces in front of City Hall, its antenna raised some 50 feet into the air, its sides emblazoned with city seals and the words "Mobile Command Center." On display for the public and city commissioners, it is the city's latest high-tech tool to deal with emergencies – a rolling package of computers and communication systems that can serve as a command central should anything happen to the Public Safety Building. "The idea is that, in this unit, if we were to lose our main 911 center and our backup 911 center, we could run the entire city's operations – police and fire – all from this vehicle, via satellite," said Police Chief Ed Hudak. "Everything is computerized and self-contained." The \$1.2 million command vehicle had been on Chief Hudak's wish list for years and was only affordable through the sale of property confiscated from criminals by the city's police department. Inside are seats for five operators, each with a screen that can monitor the city's street camera system – or use cameras atop the satellite poles to see miles in any direction. There is also a mini conference room (accommodated by the outward expansion of the vehicle's walls) where city officials can meet to deal with emergencies. We are not sure what kind of natural disaster could level the Public Safety Building, but it's good to know that we can handle it.



Kudos for Fairchild

The USA TODAY 10Best travel guide, which is a reader's choice award, just voted Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden as the best Botanic Garden in the nation. Something about "the warm climate of Coral Gables" that allows tropical plants to grow all year outdoors. Plus, those exotic butterflies in the conservatory. But we knew that!



A Win for Autistic Kids (and their parents)

After years of lobbying by parents and healthcare activists, the Miami-Dade County school system is adding a self-contained autism program at Ponce de Leon Middle School for the 2022-2023 school year. Previously, parents of middle-school age children with autism had to enroll in private academies or leave the Gables. "This is a huge win for Coral Gables residents," says Mary Palacio (above), founder of the Crystal Academy [for children with autism].

Jeannett Gets It

Former city commissioner and realtor Jeannett Slesnick has been feted with the 2022 Martin Hughes Coral Gables Citizen of the Year Award by the Rotary Club. The award cited Slesnick's numerous contributions, including as president of the Jr. Orange Bowl, chair of the Coral Gables Community Foundation, secretary of the Coral Gables Museum, vice chair of the Historic Preservation Board, and for ten years 1st Lady of Coral Gables (when husband Don was mayor). She and Don recently donated \$100,000 to the foundation for scholarships. Jeannett also publishes *Jeannett's Journal* with news about the town. ■

LIVING

Best Bets

FOR JULY-AUGUST



FAIRCHILD: NATURE CONNECTS

Take advantage of the last months of Fairchild's Nature Connects. This display of 30 giant sculptures, each built with over 700,000 LEGO bricks by renowned artist Sean Kenney, will be available until August 28. Enjoy daily 10 am to 5 pm. Non-member tickets are \$11.95 to \$24.95 at www.fairchildgarden.org. Members enter free. 10901 Old Cutler Road.

SANCTUARY OF THE ARTS

Sanctuary of the Arts will conduct a "Summer Intensive Choreographic" July 11-16, aimed at semi-professional and professional students 15 to 30 years old. Classes include Ballet Technique, Pointe Technique, Musical Jazz, Contemporary, Repertory, Pas de Deux, and Choreographic Composition. Meanwhile, the Summer Dance Program for Kids runs July 25-29, with classes 9 am to 12 pm. This is an opportunity for students (7 to 14 years old) to improve technique in the modalities of Ballet, Jazz, Choreographic Composition, and Acro dance. The final performance will be July 30. Visit <https://www.sanctuaryofthearts.org> for more information. 410 Andalusia Avenue.



ACTORS' PLAYHOUSE

Actors' Playhouse has two new shows in store. From July 7 to 31, catch the children's theater performance of "Young King Arthur" Saturdays and Sundays at 2 pm. Tickets \$25 to \$30. From July 13 to July 31, "Hank Williams: Lost Highway," a musical biography of the legendary singer-songwriter, will take the stage. Tickets \$40 to \$75. Visit www.actorsplayhouse.org for more information. 280 Miracle Mile.

COMMUNITY ARTS PROGRAM: SUMMER CONCERT SERIES

Until August 18, every other Thursday (first and third of each month) at 8 pm, the Community Arts Program Summer Concert

Series is back for its 37th season: "Starry, Starry Nights Return!"

Concert goers will be entertained by an array of talented classical and jazz musicians. Takes place at the Coral Gables Congregational United Church of Christ. Tickets \$35 to \$190. Visit www.communityartsprogram.org for more information, including performance schedules. 3010 De Soto Blvd.



BILTMORE CULINARY CAMP

The Biltmore Hotel's acclaimed culinary academy has returned. This summer, children ages 9 to 16 can enroll into a unique hands-on culinary camp led by renowned Biltmore chefs. Sessions are July 11 to 15, July 18 to 22, July 25 to 29, August 1 to 5, and August 8 to 12. Prices are \$750 per session. Sign up and get more information at www.biltmorehotel.com. 1200 Anastasia Avenue.



GABLESTAGE

GableStage will present the legendary Ruben Rabasa as he takes the wheel of his own one-person show, "Rubenology," driving us through the wild ride of his life. Showing from July 14 to 31. Tickets \$25 to \$40. From August 20 through September 18, enjoy "Fade," a witty dramatic comedy about class, integrity, and culture. Tickets \$35 to \$65. Visit www.gablestage.org for more information and ticket purchases. 1200 Anastasia Avenue, #203.

SOUTH MIAMI-DADE CULTURAL ARTS CENTER: FLAMENCO PURO

Enjoy a stunning flamenco performance at SMDCAC's Black Box Theater on July 9 and 10. This choreography features flamenco dancer Clarita Filgueiras accompanied by an outstanding cast of flamenco artists from Spain and Latin America who put their experience towards a soulful and passionate performance. Priced at \$25 in advance, \$30 at the door. Visit www.smdcac.org for more information and ticket purchases. 10950 SW 211 Street. ■

BEST FACIAL: BILTMORE SPA

Yes, they have traditional facials, but it's their new mask with an electric current that has us wanting more.

PEOPLE'S CHOICE: FLAWLESS BY MELISSA

Melissa was once the apprentice to celebrity skin guru Dr. Brandt, and she carries the skills forward.

BEST NEIGHBORHOOD HAIRCUT: PHULA

Why do we feel like we're in a hair shop in Brooklyn at Phula? The raw walls or the chatter?

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT**BEST LIVE MUSIC: THE GLOBE**

On Saturday night, nothing beats the Afro-Cuban jazz at The Globe, and now they've expanded to Wednesdays.

BEST LIVE THEATER EXPERIENCE: MIRACLE THEATER

Whether it's a Broadway musical or an Agatha Christie mystery, the professional quality is superb.

**BEST MOVIE THEATER: GABLES ART CINEMA**

Foreign films, indie flicks, family favorites, and some mainstreamers, all in a theater that has no bad seats.

READERS' CHOICE: LANDMARK THEATER

On the top level of the Shops at Merrick Park, it's got big lounge chairs for the latest action blockbusters.

BEST PLACE TO DANCE: COPPER 29

It might be the high-octane fuel, or the ladies' nights, but either way you can let go on the dance floor here.



GABLESTAGE

BEST DANCE STUDIO: FRED ASTAIRE

Fear not – an atmosphere of warmth and kindness awaits you as you learn Latin and Ballroom dancing.

BEST MUSEUM: CORAL GABLES MUSEUM

The building itself is part of the city's history it portrays, along with a new tilt toward visual arts.

**READERS' CHOICE: LOWE MUSEUM**

Those who have not gone to this museum on the UM campus will be stunned by its art collection.

BEST ART GALLERY: CERNUDA

Light and bright, it feels more like a multi-floor museum than a gallery, with a hyper focus on Cuban art.

READERS' CHOICE: AMERICAS COLLECTION

An excellent open space to see the latest and greatest art from Central and South America.

BEST ART CLASSES: FAIRCHILD TROPICAL BOTANIC GARDENS

Lovely watercolor classes in a setting that is rich with floral subjects.

READERS' CHOICE: PEACE LOVE ART YOGA

It's all about expressing yourself in a loving environment where you can also do a few stretches.

BEST RETURN OF A CULTURAL INSTITUTION: GABLESTAGE

With the passing of Joseph Papp, a light went out. Now it's back with director Bari Newport.

SPORTS & RECREATION**BEST PLACE TO SWIM: VENETIAN POOL**

Merrick had it right when he turned this stone quarry into a pool of fresh, chilly groundwater.

BEST GYM: LIFETIME

It's new, it's vast, it's state of the art, it's loaded with classes, and Trader Joe's is next door.

READERS' CHOICE: EQUINOX

It's about positive attitude, plus a good juice bar and location above the Merrick Park courtyard.

**BEST YOGA STUDIO: @REVETE**

Yoga to a curated soundtrack in a cool urban setting with mistress Revete.

READERS' CHOICE: PRANA YOGA

Traditional yoga on a floor above Giralda, with the focus on Hindi icons.

BEST GOLF COURSE: BILTMORE HOTEL

Already stunning, the course was recently redone to lengthen key holes.

BEST PICNIC SPOT: MATHESON HAMMOCK

Nothing beats a breeze coming in from the bay and being surrounded by natural hammocks.

**BEST PLACE TO BIKE OR JOG:
OLD CUTLER BIKE TRAIL**

One of the luxuries of the South Gables, with abundant natural beauty (shade!).

BEST TENNIS COURTS: SALVADORE PARK
Good courts, nice service, and all in a quiet leafy neighborhood.**PUBLIC PLACES****BEST HISTORIC LANDMARK:****BILTMORE HOTEL**

Until the hurricane hit, 1926 was a good year, and its opulent elegance lives on at the hotel.

BEST VIEW: FROM REDFISH GRILL

At sunset it's a perfect postcard as the golden light fades behind a horizon of palms.

READERS' CHOICE: BILTMORE HOTEL

What we are talking about here is the view OF the Biltmore, as a thing of skyline beauty.

**BEST PEOPLE WATCHING SPOT: GIRALDA PLAZA**

If for no other reason than volume of passing humanity, this is people-watching central.

**BEST PLACE TO WALK YOUR DOG:
COUNTRY CLUB PRADO**

What else would you use that great, green swath of commons for?

READERS' CHOICE: WEST MATHESON HAMMOCK
There is literally nowhere else in the city where you can let a dog off the leash.

FAIRCHILD TROPICAL BOTANTIC GARDEN

**BEST MUSIC IN A RESTAURANT RESTROOM:
SEASONS 52**

Not that we go around listening to bathroom soundtracks, but this one is the best.

**BEST PUBLIC ART: A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM**

A giant stone bench under a massive Ficus tree, to make children of us all.

READERS' CHOICE: GIRALDA PLAZA

Well, we haven't seen anything as good as the umbrellas, but keep it hanging.

**BEST PLACE WE MISS THE MOST:
TARPON BEND**

With walls that opened onto the Mile, the happy hours would spill into the street.

READERS' CHOICE: JOHN MARTIN'S

It was the real deal Irish pub, right down to the bar and woodwork from the old country.

**BEST PLACE TO TAKE OUT-OF-TOWNERS:
FAIRCHILD TROPICAL BOTANTIC GARDEN**

Recently voted the best attraction in the country, it's a unique marvel of tropical flora.

BEST PARK: SALVADORE PARK

Besides tennis, it has the coolest playground, including for kids cognitively challenged.

**BEST PLACE TO MEET MEN (UNDER 35):
HILLSTONE**

At least you know they have good taste and make a good income.

**BEST PLACE TO MEET MEN (OVER 35):
BOOKS & BOOKS**

At least you know they have good taste and are well-educated.

**BEST PLACE TO MEET WOMEN (UNDER 35):
SOUL CYCLE**

At least you know they are fit, fun, and firmly in control of their lives.

**BEST PLACE TO MEET WOMEN (OVER 35):
PERRY'S**

At least you know they have that je-ne-sais-quois appreciation for a piano bar.

BEST PARKING PLACE: ANDALUSIA GARAGE

Its old and funky but there's always a parking space there, perfect for the Theater and the Mile. ■