

Our guide to Art Week in Magic City: The hottest spots to eat, sleep and be merry

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The Best of Everything



NIBBLES

## MIAMI EATS

Our dish on the best new spots to dine during Art Basel

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### Casadonna

1737 N. Bayshore Drive

In October, David Grutman's Groot Hospitality and The Group Hospitality took over a space in Miami's historic Woman's Club in Edgewater. The result is Casadonna (below), an Italian Riviera-inspired restaurant based around the traditional antipasti, crudi and primi of Naples. 'Naormina, Bari, Postitano and Gaeta—with a modern twist, of course. Branzino (con pine-nut *grumolato*)? Tagliatelle (con lemon and cavari)? Wagyu carpaccio (con Parmesan and black truffle)? Check. Check. Check. And in true *moda italiana*, this place does it large: There's indoor and outdoor seating for 366 here in a space bedecked by designer Ken Fulk. While nodding to the room's clubby past, Fulk livens things up with gold and greenery.



### Tala Beach

2347 Collins Ave.

In October, I Hotel South Beach revealed its reimagined backyard, beachfront party hub. The former Tulum-inspired 1 Beach Club is now Tala (left), a 50,000-square-foot, Mediterranean-inspired playpen. All al fresco, this redesign sprawls with daybeds, overstuffed pillows, textured rugs, big umbrellas, palm trees and an outdoor bar and restaurant. Cocktails are king here. Have a Santorini Sunrise or an Eros Penicillin in the VIP lounge. Of course, this is Miami, so you could get bottle service—especially during its Saturday evening live-music party dubbed Tala Nights. Hot-weather faves like mezze dips, big umbrellas and lobster are all on the menu. Healthy eating is in the soul of Tala, which markets itself as a space "for spiritual seekers, daydreamers and unconventional thinkers." But we don't see a reason not to throw back a few quick ones and order the lamb kebabs.



### Pastis

380 NW 26th St.

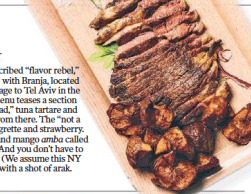
Keith McNally—the raconteur restaurateur behind several of NYC's favorite elbow-rubbing eateries—has arrived in South Florida. His iconic bistro Pastis is now operating eponymously in Wynwood. Opened in April, *plats du jour* are rotating Escottier-esque classics, from duck à l'orange and Dover sole à la meunière to bouillabaisse and crêpe complète (right). It's no stuffy Lyonnais bouchon either: The place sets the mood with globe lights, white tile, rustic wood furniture and an airy garden—all capped off with a certain anise-flavored cooler sipped under the Miami sun.



### Branja

500 NE Second Ave.

"MasterChef Israel" winner and self-described "flavor rebel," Tom Aviv makes his US restaurant debut with Branja, located just north of the Design District. An homage to Tel Aviv in the '70s, with retro design and flavors, the menu tosses a section named "Foreplay" (featuring "fish & bread," tuna tartare and cured salmon). Things get even kinkier from there. The "not a Caesar" salad comes with Parmesan vinaigrette and strawberry. There is a fish mélange with lobster tail and mango arbor called Fishwarma (not to mention the Falafish). And you don't have to be devout to order the steak frites (right). (We assume this NY strip is rabbi approved.) Wash it down with a shot of rak.



### Amelia's 1931

13601 SW 26th St.

Chef and restaurateur Eileen Andrade spent the last three years transforming her small Cuban diner, Amelia's, into the atmospheric, decidedly retro Amelia's 1931. Now serving pan-Latin cuisine (with an Asian twist), this slightly far-flung jewel box dining room is hidden behind a defunct dry cleaner. (There's even a wall of cleaned and bagged clothes to prove it.) Past the speaky-sexy curtain, the sultry dining room hums with classic cocktails (e.g. Clover Clubs, paper planes and miles) and zingy dishes like pochajany pasta, *arroz con pinto* and Frita sliders (below). Best of all—and very true to its dry cleaner-meets-speak-easy theme—there is a strictly enforced no-car dress code and a soft no-child policy.



### Brasserie Laurel

698 NE First Ave.

Brasserie Laurel, another brassy brasserie, is adding casual French flavor to South Florida, this time at the base of Miami Worldcenter's Caoba residential tower. Ariete Hospitality Group and Michelin-starred chef-owner Michael Beltran aim to take a bolle out of the competition with suave suppers and valiant wins. Caviar service kicks off the menu, followed by frog legs, foie gras and escargot. Need more classic French cookery? Try the turbot, *entrecôte* or *boeuf en croûte*. Toast bon appetit with a rum-based Beneath the Sheets (below) or snag a \$10 sparkling wine or a \$9 martini during happy hour.

### Tablé by Antonio Bachour

180 NE 40th St.

It's OK to be a flake when your game is pastry, and Antonio Bachour makes some of the flakiest. The renowned dough boy and award-winning chef is at it again with a new, modern Parisian-style brasserie in the Design District. Opened in March, Tablé has full brunch, lunch and dinner menus—chilled lobster Andalous, duck magret, crudi with avocado hummus (above)—infused with a France-meets-Middle East flair. The space is spread between a stylish interior dining room, a bar and an outdoor patio. But for those Bachour loyalists there is also a café section with grab 'n' go baked goods and sandwiches. But why not hang around for steak frites or some arugula and chips?



### Rao's Miami Beach

1604 Collins Ave.

Yes, this is that Rao's. And yes, you can make reservations. NYC's clubbiest restaurant and purveyor of jarred red sauce—known for yesteryear *muffino*, gigantic portions of pasta (including the *focchette*, above) and ultra-exclusivity—is now taking bookings at the Loews Miami Beach. Still like back home, Rao's Miami Beach serves its signature meatballs, Sunday gravy and even Uncle Vincent's lemon chicken. But in a nod to its fresher surroundings, the 127-year-old brand is adding a seafood tower, cavari and a catch of the day to the menu. The decor has also been Miami-fied. While its dark, downstairs Harlem location could be described as Martin Scorsese-core, these are airier here with marble tables on the patio and modern upscale decor inside. Gooatms welcome.

