

The New York Times

WHAT'S NEW IN 2022

In Miami, a Pandemic-Fueled Boom

A Michelin-starred Korean steakhouse, new public art installations and native-plant gardens under the Metrorail: Here is what's new in the Magic City.



The 266-room Good Time Hotel in South Beach, featuring a 30,000-square-foot pool club, is only one of many attractions and accommodations that has opened in Miami during the pandemic. Credit... Scott Baker for The New York Times

Unlike many cities, Miami has boomed over the course of the pandemic. Thousands relocated to South Florida where restaurants, attractions and retail shops remained open, with Miami's tropical sparkle seemingly a panacea for life in lockdown.

"The pandemic caused Miami's stock value to go up," said Craig Robins, a real estate developer who has helped reinvigorate South Beach and other parts of the city in recent years. "In the Design District alone, there are eight new restaurants and two hotels under construction. This growth is happening throughout the city."

The number of visitors are booming too: For the week ending May 21, the number of air passengers transiting at Miami International Airport was 1,010,657, an increase of 20 percent from 841,892 recorded for the same period in 2019, according to STR, the hospitality benchmarking analysts. For the same week, hotel occupancy (or rooms sold) clocked in 345,091, a 14-percent rise from 301,648 booked in 2019.

Here is what's new in the Magic City.

A steakhouse and a strip-mall gem, both Michelin-starred

At [Cote](#), the only Korean steakhouse in the world to hold a Michelin star, the fun factor is as important as the beef. The owner Simon Kim opened the Design District location in February 2021 with psychedelic lighting and a red-light dry-aging room that doubles as an art installation. Serious carnivores favor the 10-course steak omakase (\$185 per person), which is cooked tableside on smokeless charcoal grills and served with pickled seasonal vegetables. Another popular choice is the “steak & eggs,” a dish of filet mignon tartare and caviar (\$58).

Image



Crispy polenta with marinated eggplant is one standout dish at Boia De. Credit...Scott Baker for The New York Times



Dishes like spicy rigatoni are on the menu at Carbone Miami, a restaurant that is a collision of Sinatra-era elegance with South Florida flash. Credit... Scott Baker for The New York Times



In Buena Vista, the 27-seat [Boia De](#) from Luciana Giangrandi and Alex Meyer that sits in a sun-scorched strip mall recently received its own Michelin star. The two chefs, who, between them, have worked at Scarpetta, Carbone and Eleven Madison Park, turn out Tuscan-inspired small plates (from \$15) that are humble and a bit surprising. Crispy polenta sticks with marinated eggplant, and hangar steak tartare topped with tonnato sauce and crispy capers are standout orders.

Eric Demby, the founder of [Smorgasburg in New York](#), brought his open-air food market to Wynwood this March when he noted how many restaurant professionals were looking for work. “We offer food entrepreneurs a huge public platform,” Mr. Demby wrote in an email, allowing them “to do their own thing with minimal upfront investment.” [The event unfolds](#) each Saturday afternoon with more than 60 vendors.

Image



The Dirty French Steakhouse sells \$275 Wagyu Tomahawks — bone-in rib-eye steaks served with the entire rib bone. Credit...Scott Baker for The New York Times



But the biggest impact on South Florida’s culinary landscape has been the arrival of [Major Food Group](#), the Manhattan-based hospitality outfit known for splashy restaurants like Carbone and Dirty French. Jeff Zalaznick, a partner with the group, was in Miami with his family when the coronavirus hit there in the spring of 2020. They extended their vacation, and Mr. Zalaznick said he saw “an opportunity to raise the bar, to bring our style of high energy, fine dining to Miami.”

Major Food Group delivered, with a crop of restaurants whose elevated glamour is matched by sky-high prices. First came [Carbone Miami](#), which debuted in South Beach in January 2021 and is a collision of Sinatra-era elegance with South Florida flash; dishes include spicy rigatoni (\$33) and veal Parmesan (\$69). Next, a Miami version of the Tel Aviv dance party that is [Ha Salon](#) with the Israeli chef Eyal Shani, followed by brunch spot [Sadelle’s](#) in Coconut Grove with \$125 bagel towers. On Brickell Avenue, in a zebra-print and velvet-walled dining room fit for Tony Montana, the [Dirty French Steakhouse](#) sells \$275 Wagyu Tomahawks — bone-in rib-eye steaks served with the entire rib bone.

Image



The “Fly’s Eye Dome,” by R. Buckminster Fuller, can be seen in the Design District. Credit...Scott Baker for The New York Times

Throughout the pandemic, the Design District neighborhood proved to be as much a cultural hub as a shopping destination. Locals and visitors flocked to the boutique-lined, 18-block area to view public art by Zaha Hadid, John Baldessari, Marc Newson and Buckminster Fuller. Beyond new shops, there are newly commissioned artworks to visit, including a window installation by the Argentine photographer Lucía Fainzilber, and two murals, “Interdimensional Portal,” by the Afro-Brazilian muralist Criola, and “[Baltimore’s finest: Mr. GirlYouCrazy and Dev, 2021-2022](#),” by Amani Lewis.

Image



Ten miles of barren lands beneath the Metrorail system are being transformed into native-plant gardens. Credit...Scott Baker for The New York Times

[The Underline](#), a civic project in Downtown Miami, is in the process of transforming 10 miles of barren lands beneath the Metrorail system into native-plant gardens. You can stroll from Miami River to S.W. 13th Avenue, taking in the cityscape and functional artworks like Cara Despain’s terrazzo-topped Ping-Pong tables, which speak to rising sea levels.

Hotels influenced by Art Deco and Spanish-Mediterranean revival

Those interested in a hotel fashioned by the nightlife impresario David Grutman and the artist Pharrell Williams will not be disappointed in the influencer fever dream that is [the Good Time Hotel](#) (rates from \$243), which opened in April 2021. Inspired by its Art Deco environs, the 266-room property in South Beach features vintage scalloped bar seating, hand-painted hothouse murals and a 30,000-square-foot pool club (yes, there is a D.J. booth), which brims with scantily clad, selfie-taking millennials.



The Esme Hotel runs the length of a city block with its 145 rooms and five restaurants spread across eight Spanish-Mediterranean revival buildings. Credit...Scott Baker for The New York Times

Also in South Beach, a former artist's colony has been reimagined as [Esme Hotel](#) (rates from \$250). The property runs the length of a city block with its 145 rooms and five restaurants spread across eight Spanish-Mediterranean revival buildings. Fun Fact: Al Capone once ran an underground gambling operation from the property's main building.

Twenty-five minutes north of the hubbub of South Beach is [St. Regis Bal Harbor](#) (\$1,050/night), located on a stretch of dune-studded beachfront. Non-hotel guests can tap into an afternoon of tranquillity by booking one of the property's private oceanfront day villas.

[A Guide to Miami: Restaurants, Attractions and Where to Stay - The New York Times \(nytimes.com\)](#)