

NO. 23 FULL-SERVICE RESTAURANTS : SETTING AMERICA'S TABLE

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MARKET LEADER

The Heat is On

Miami's resurgence hasn't shown any signs of slowing down. *By Jen Karetnick*

When Miami Beach was incorporated first as a town and then two years later as a city, wealthy entrepreneurs such as John S. Collins, Carl Graham Fisher, the Lummus brothers, and the Pancoast family had high hopes for the tropical paradise. Exactly 100 years later, the collective vision these intrepid pioneers had of drinking tropical cocktails, dining on sumptuous treats, and cavorting in Eden-like circumstances has paid off, not only for Miami Beach but for the entire Miami-Dade County region. For 2015, the National Restaurant Association has predicted that Florida will be the No. 2 market in the country in terms of growth, with sales projected to reach \$34.6 billion. Miami is largely responsible for that position, and CREW-Miami, an association of commercial real estate professionals, confirms the Magic City is "fueling the growth of the entire state's industry."

Such a forecast is noteworthy for any market that isn't New York City, Chicago, or San Francisco. But it's even more remarkable for one that has been devastated by Category 5 hurricanes twice. A city that has absorbed wave after wave of political refugees from Cuba, Haiti, and other countries. And, one that was allowed to fall, during the '70s and '80s, into an economic slump that could have spelled the end of what is today considered one of America's most significant architectural districts. As it turned out, the inclusion of that Art Deco District (otherwise known as South Beach) on the National Register of Historic Places, and its subsequent rescue-by-renovation, was one of the most instrumental elements in Miami's extraordinary comeback and the city's current food-and-beverage market growth.

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SPIRITED SALES

As it is elsewhere, Miami's craft beer industry is exploding, with several breweries, including **J. WAKEFIELD, WYNWOOD BREWING COMPANY**, and **CONCRETE BEACH** all recently debuting.

Also impressive is the amount of promotion that imports such as **ESTRELLA DAMM** are willing to undertake. Brewed in Barcelona, Estrella Damm finds a unique way to market its product by pairing



the beer with prix fixe menus in local Spanish- and Latin-influenced restaurants including **DOLORES BUT YOU CAN CALL ME LOLITA, FOOD'S, JIMMY Z KITCHEN WYNWOOD**, multiple **NOVECENTO** locations, **PERFECTO GASTROBAR, PIRIPI, TAPAS Y TINTOS, THE EMBASSY, TONGUE & CHEEK, WYNWOOD KITCHEN AND BAR** and **XIXÓN**.

Additionally, the Miami

region is home to two national wine and spirits distributing companies: **SOUTHERN WINE & SPIRITS** and **PREMIER BEVERAGE COMPANY**. No doubt, the quality wine, beer, and liquors



RADIO BAR SOUTH BEACH

that flood this market as a result enhance restaurant numbers and inspire the city's reputation as a culinary destination. Festivals, including the **FOOD NETWORK SOUTH BEACH WINE & FOOD FESTIVAL**, are numerous. And launches of specialty liquors are commonplace—like **WHISTLE PIG'S** Old World 12 Year Whiskey at barbecue joint **PRIDE & JOY** in Wynwood.

Bacardi is also based

in Miami and debuted its **BACARDI TANGERINE** in July. While **AFROHEAD RUM**, crafted in small lots, was launched in Miami in January. Other luxury, independent spirits compa-

BROKEN SHAKER, who helped design many restaurant and lounge cocktail lists including **W SOUTH BEACH'S LIVING ROOM**. The booze boom has been beneficial to drinkers and distillers alike.

For the aficionado, there's now a host of bars and lounges where inventive cocktails are the norm not the revelation: The **DRAWING ROOM BAR & LOUNGE** at the Shelborne Wyndham Grand South Beach, for example, where mixologist **ALBERT TRUMMER** labels his menu "A Selection of House Medicines;" The Rum Line, an al fresco



WYNWOOD BREWING COMPANY



DRAWING ROOM BAR & LOUNGE

nies, such as **WILLIAM GRANT & SONS**, hold their national sales meetings in the city, precisely because the tourism, dining, and mixology scene enables sales associates to be tutored in a "show, don't tell" way.

Largely, then, the mixology scene is driving sales. Sparked by well-traveled barmen including **GABRIEL ORTA** and **ELAD ZVI** of **THE**

Caribbean-inspired bar on the terrace of the St. Moritz Tower at the Loews Miami Beach Hotel; the **REGENT COCKTAIL CLUB** in the Gale South Beach, where master bartender and managing partner **JULIO CABRERA** mixes classics; and **RADIO BAR SOUTH BEACH** and **BODEGA TAQUERIA Y TEQUILA**, both from Menin Hospitality.

BACARDI / AFROHEAD RUM / RADIO BAR SOUTH BEACH / WYNWOOD BREWING COMPANY / DRAWING ROOM BAR & LOUNGE