

# FORT MYERS FLORIDA WEEKLY®

IN THE KNOW. IN THE NOW.

WEEK OF JULY 4-10, 2018

www.FloridaWeekly.com

Vol. XII, No. 13 • FREE

**TICKET TO RIDE**

■ Evan Williams leaves his car behind and traverses our state by foot, bike, bus and train, finding flavorful Florida stories.

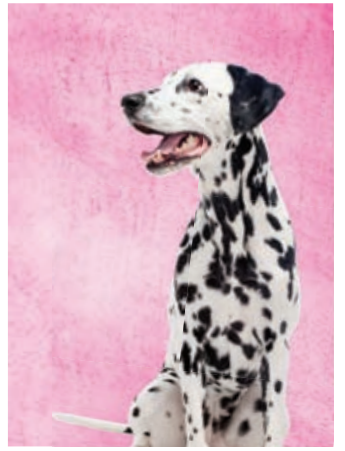
**I**N MID-JUNE, FLORIDA WEEKLY SENT ME ON a trip by bus and train around South Florida — by Greyhound from Fort Myers to Tampa, on Amtrak trains from Tampa to Orlando and to West Palm Beach, then on the spanking-new Brightline train from West Palm to Miami, then an OurBus home to Fort Myers. I

SEE TICKET, A10 ►

BY EVAN WILLIAMS • EWILLIAMS@FLORIDAWEEKLY.COM

**INSIDE:**  
Follow Evan's journey through Florida with photos he took at stops along the way. **A10-14 ►**

## INSIDE



### Dog Days Theatre

Butlers will see and screws will turn at Asolo. **C1 ►**



### Business

Pyure Brands keeping local talent in SWFL. **A30 ►**



### Behind the wheel

The Blazer wants to be the Camaro of crossovers. **A23 ►**



### Real estate

Go house hunting to 5385 Palmetto Woods Drive. **B1 ►**

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## We may love rabbits, but that can prove deadly to these popular pets

BY KAREN FELDMAN

Florida Weekly Correspondent

It's now almost three months after Easter and the annual carnage has begun.

The vast majority — 80 percent, according to rescue groups — of the adorable baby bunnies purchased cheaply at Easter to be children's starter pets are being abandoned in droves as people discover all the things they didn't know when they bought them. Some of those little-known facts include:

■ Rabbits aren't meant to be caged. They need exercise and become unruly and foul-tempered or depressed when caged for long periods.

■ They are not low-maintenance. They require more than dry, store-bought rabbit pellets to be healthy and they need to be kept clean.

■ Most children are apt to tire quickly of a pet that won't respond to them the way a dog or cat does, especially one that's kept in a cage for extended periods.



KAREN FELDMAN / FLORIDA WEEKLY

Billy Ray (named for his resemblance to Billy Ray Cyrus) gets a cuddle from Jennifer Macbeth.

SEE RABBITS, A17 ►

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COUNT ON



KEEPING YOU CONNECTED.





EVAN WILLIAMS / FLORIDA WEEKLY

The air cooling, I walked north through downtown to Tampa Heights and my Airbnb past a skatepark, under a highway overpass. The neighborhood's brick streets and dilapidated houses reminded me of where I grew up in Fort Scott, Kan. Flowers I don't know the names of were lush but wilting in the heat, bursting through chain-link fences in overgrown yards. My host, Luis, and two little dogs greeted me at the door of his century-old home. I collapsed on the bed in a cool room with long, dark drapes.

Later I walked four or five blocks down to the river to a place Luis recommended for dinner, an old brick streetcar factory that was converted into a home for several restaurants. At Steelbach, my waiter and I somehow talked about the universe being interconnected and he recommended the fried chicken (mmm ... good). He had immigrated to Pensacola from Bolivia 10 years ago, at 16, and showed me pictures on a phone with a cracked screen of himself in a red scarf with his dad on the cold, stark Bolivian salt flats. The name of the nearest town — Uyuni — he wrote on my receipt should I ever get the chance to visit there. Around 11 p.m., I walked back to my room. Heat lightning flashed over spooky old houses that I took pictures of.



## Friday, June 8, Tampa

I WAS SHOCKED TO FIND OUT WHEN I woke up and checked my phone that Anthony Bourdain was dead and that he hanged himself in a hotel room in France. The news was oddly linked with my mom, who introduced me to Bourdain in 1999 — mailing me a copy of that first New Yorker article that led to his fame and fortune — and who died the same way in Kansas City in 2010. I walked a mile or so into Ybor City and got on a street car, empty aside from an older British couple, rode it to the last exit downtown, found a Greek diner and ate eggs benedict, flipping through *Creative Loafing*, a local weekly.

I wandered toward the river to the downtown arts district.

I'd read in *Creative Loafing* that stories were going to be told that night at The Attic, an upstairs club in Ybor City where the podcast RISK! would be recorded. It was the first time the podcast took its traveling show, in which people tell candid tales to a live audience, to Florida. Per RISK!'s tradition for a first-time venue, creator Kevin Allison re-told the podcast's first story recorded in 2009, his own: as a young gay man, he escaped from sexually repressed Ohio and had an encounter that actually involves tying a pair of Converse sneakers by their laces to his balls. One storyteller took us to India. Another described the tragedy of a troubled street poet. But the star of the night was Jessica Pepper, with a story about navigating a breakup with a straight-edge boyfriend turned heroin addict while growing up in Pinellas Park.

"I'm going to tell a story that no one can relate to," she began, and of course it was a story anyone could relate to, even with a *Grey's Anatomy* reference that seemingly no one (including me) got, and a thrilling, bloody car wreck sequence. She inhabited her young protagonist — herself at 18 — with the right balance of empathy and gentle mockery. Funny and nerdy, her sentences were punctuated with well-timed ironic gestures, blowing her bangs in exasperation, or flipping off the audience (but really flipping off a character in the story). I was fully absorbed in one of her detours when the story succinctly slammed shut, leaving an echo amid a loud, sincere round of applause.



▲ My Amtrak train departs Tampa for Orlando on Sunday, June 10.

▶ A man shows off his snakes in Ybor City, Tampa, Friday, June 8.

▶ Ybor City — downtown Tampa's TECO street car.

## TICKET

From page 1

booked my tickets and Airbnbs and packed everything I needed for 10 days — clothes, toiletries and my office — in one backpack.



## Thursday, June 7 Fort Myers to Tampa

SOMETIMES PEOPLE CHATTERED BUT mostly the Greyhound bus, from the Rosa Parks station in Fort Myers to downtown Tampa, fell into a hush. As far as Port Charlotte, I sat in an aisle seat next to a boy from Punta Gorda named Luke Peterson, who is 17. Luke was coming back from Fort Pierce. He'd gone fishing with his cousins and caught his first mahi mahi. He was also concerned about his dad, whose arm was badly cut by glass from a broken window pane while he was away. Luke exited at a 30-minute stop in Port Charlotte by a Burger King.

I read the novel I brought, "American Pastoral" by Philip Roth, and didn't look up until the bus rolled over Tampa Bay, which looked as if gold coins had been spilled across it. People filed on at a stop



in downtown St. Petersburg: mint, soap, musk, smoke. An exhausted dude, maybe late 20s, with a tattoo of an hour-glass on his arm, plunked himself down by a pretty woman across from me and started face-timing. He was leaving for Ocala, he told the face on the screen. "You know why," he said, thumping his chest and making a rock 'n' roll hand sign, "Love you for real." He made another call. "Ocala," he said, "to get my life back together, so I can clear my head." The face on his phone blew out a mouthful of thick smoke. They discussed making a music video. A billboard over downtown Tampa read "Eat More Greek." When the bus parked at the station on Polk Street the smell of stale marijuana wafted through the cabin. "You smell that shit, huh, that shit is dank ..." someone said. Outside the sun was low in the sky behind downtown buildings. People smoked, made calls.



Buzzed by the stories and a couple of Jack Daniels, I wandered down the stairs past the chandelier and onto 7th Avenue, Ybor City party central.



## Saturday, June 9 Tampa/St. Petersburg

I DID A LOAD OF LAUNDRY AND WALKED to La Segunda Central Bakery, a 103-year-old Ybor City institution, for a café con leche and an egg-and-cheese sandwich on pressed Cuban bread. There's no seating so I ate at a bus stop then walked around the neighborhood.

On 7th Avenue a man sitting on the street braided strips of palm fronds into roses. He held one out and asked me to smell it and it smelled perfumed, just like a rose, or so I imagined.

That evening I attended the Democratic gubernatorial town-hall debate at Pinellas Park High School, broadcast on Spectrum News channel 13. The four main characters for governor: Tallahassee Mayor Andrew Gillum, entrepreneur Chris King, former Miami Beach mayor Philip Levine and former U.S. Rep. Gwen Graham.

Things they said: "common sense reforms," "taking on the sugar industry," "because I believe in the American dream," "equal pay/equal work," "a livable wage," "zero tolerance for corruption," "we need transparency," "to make this economy work for more families," "public education is my number one priority," "when they go low I go high."

Behind me sat a group from National Nurses United, a union group, who had already decided to vote for Mayor Gillum. On the other side of the room, local grade school and high school attendees had the chance to ask questions. "What are you planning to do to keep me safe in my current school from gun violence?" a seventh-grader asked. "I want to be safe and not scared at school."

For the audience's gratification the candidates denounced Trump: "a danger to himself and the civilized world" and "a tragedy for the nation and we're living a national nightmare." After the debate people swarmed the stage.

It was a cool night outside the high school, cicadas buzzing in the trees. My Lyft driver, taking me downtown to Green Bench Brewing Co., did not agree. He didn't understand why people hate Trump so much. And yes, he's older, white. He used to live on Long Island ("miserable") and moved to Florida in the '80s. He voted for Roseanne Barr for president in 2012 when she put her name on the ticket as a Green Party candidate. He feels that Barr and Trump tell the truth. He doesn't identify with any political party anymore. I admitted I voted for Obama and Clinton, but could identify with his alienation from politics. I voted for the first time at age 28 during the 2008 presidential election.

At Green Bench, the beer was delicious and a crowd of 20- to 40-some-things were settled on the lawn out back where a fuzzed-out indie-rock concert was underway: Luxury Mane, led by St. Pete musician Billy Summer, performing songs of the band's new album, "The Secret Empire of Florida UK."



## Sunday, June 10, Tampa to Orlando

ON THE WAY TO TAMPA UNION Station I visited Sacred Heart Catholic Church, a cathedral built in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The silence was divine. I sat in a pew, flipped through a hymnal. I lit a \$1 prayer candle and said the Our Father, remembering pretty much all of it.

Union Station is a restored Italian

Renaissance-style building that opened in 1912, according to greatamericanstations.com. After early rail lines left, the station fell into disrepair. Amtrak started using it in the 1980s.

My train left at 5:27 p.m. Amtrak is long past its heyday, old and worn but more comfortable than the new Brightline I'd take a few days later. The countryside passed by my window like a movie as the train rumbled through Central Florida — Haines City, Lakeland, Kissimmee — pulling out from a station where a young kissed hello or goodbye, hurdling past backyards strewn with toys, a passing train with the word HYPE spray-painted on a boxcar, past orange groves. A child sitting across from me fell asleep his mother's lap. Then: the Orlando station, a Mission Revival-style building built in 1926 and renovated in 2014.

I walked up through downtown and then east toward my Airbnb. An industrial district faded into downtown, where I could hear jackhammers or something along with the rushing stream of highway traffic. A great blue heron stood in a man-made lake. Coming up Orange Street, I realized the jackhammers were actually the drum and bass of a DJ outside Aloft hotel. Distant lightning flashed over the city. I walked through a pretty neighborhood with houses painted olive, coffee, pale pink,

robin egg blue, and when I crossed Mills Street and saw a YMCA on the corner I remembered driving through this neighborhood years ago.

It took me a moment in the fading light to find the address, a duplex set back from the street. I got the keys from a lockbox per my host Casey's instructions, and at the top of the stairs was an air-conditioned apartment. No one was home, the door to my room was open, there were fresh towels on my bed.



## Monday, June 11, Orlando

I AM DRAWN TO THE DRUNKEN MONKEY Coffee shop when I visit Orlando, a laid-back institution a few blocks from my Airbnb with a hippie-ish vibe and an array of vegan goodies. Artists can display on its walls for no commission; on the bulletin board someone is giving away free tickets to a rock show; there is kombucha on tap. I have a latte with something called an anzac, a sweet crumbly biscuit redolent of lavender and thyme.

In Orlando Weekly, I read about a series of events that are happening all week across the city in conjunction with

SEE TICKET, A12 ►

▼ A cook at Due Amici Pizza in Ybor City, Tampa, Friday, June 8.



▲ The bartender boogies on the bar at Due Amici Pizza in Ybor City, Friday, June 8.

◀ Florida candidates for governor Andrew Gillum and Chris King (second and third in from the foreground) greet audience members after a debate at Pinellas Park high School, Saturday, June 9.



**Tuesday, June 12,  
Orlando to West Palm Beach**

**B**REAKFAST OF CHAMPIONS: STEAMED beef on a bun at Beefy King, the 50-year old Orlando institution. My train is running three hours late so I catch a city bus to the old Pulse Nightclub near the station. Traffic backs up about a mile from the nightclub. “Aww shit man this is that damn tribute shit,” a passenger says sort of just to himself. “Totally forgot it’s the Pulse memorial. Shit I might as well get off this mother\*\*\*\*\* and walk.”

I got off and walked. The nightclub has been turned into a memorial, with a wall around it covered by pictures of scenes from after the shooting. A volunteer told me it will be turned into a permanent museum. I looked through a plexiglass portion of the wall where there are still bullet holes. Michael Buble’s “Everything” played softly.

On the Amtrak with me to West Palm Beach: Sandra Kissonlal, 56, on her way to see her mom and then to her cousin’s wedding in Jamaica.

Angelo Girardi, 59, and Anna Marinano, 64, were the lounge car, a little bummed because the dining services advertised on the ticket were no longer available because the train was three hours late. She’s a retired jewelry store manager and he’s a high school social studies teacher. They’re friends traveling with their parents from DeLand to Hollywood. They return to their seats and I sit at the table for a while and look out the window: lakes. It starts to rain.

The West Palm Beach Station is a Mediterranean Revival-style structure that opened in 1925. Amtrak started passenger service here in 1971.

My Airbnb just north of downtown in Providence Park has an alleyway entrance to a two-story building separate from the main house. I have one of three bedrooms on the second floor, sharing a small kitchen and bathroom with other guests who come and go.

10 p.m. I walk down to Clematis Street to a Brooklyn band called Las Rosas perform at Voltaire. The woman collecting a \$5 cover is impeccably dressed, her skin so pale it’s almost violet.

Voltaire is an intimate upstairs club with old-fashioned couches by plastic pink-petaled trees. Huge Edison-style bulbs light the bar. Silent images from Stanley Kubrick movies are being projected in a palimpsest of colors on the wall behind the stage: Shelly Duval screaming in “The Shining,” Keir Dullea’s placid face in “2001: A Space Odyssey,” Jack Nicholson disappearing into a frozen maze.

I ran into Steev Rullman, who I’d met two years ago. He publishes Pure Honey magazine and now is a manager here, he tells me.

The bartender made me a gin cocktail with a slice of citrus floating in it that

**TICKET**

From page 11

the second anniversary of the Pulse Nightclub shooting (Tuesday, June 12) in which the murderer killed 49 people.

Orange County Regional History Center is offering free admission for the week so people can see the exhibition “Another Year Passes: Orlando after the Pulse Nightclub Massacre.” The centerpiece of the exhibit is the 49 white crosses created by carpenter Greg Zanis. The center has catalogued and preserved items from the days and weeks following the massacre left at memorials across the city, even small toys, baby shoes and crumpled, torn scraps of paper filled with messages like this one:

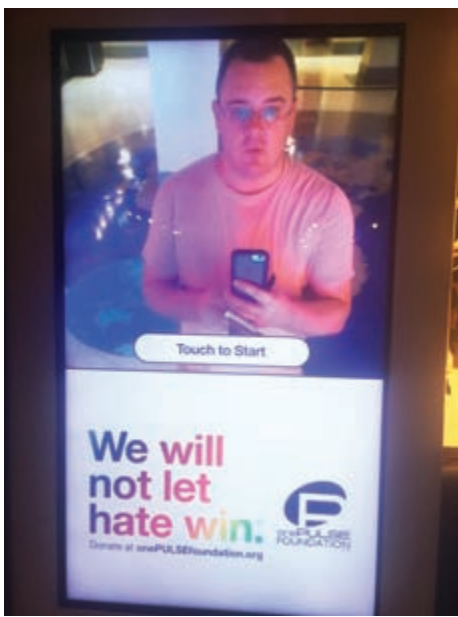
“Sorry I am so dried out. I came all the way from a vigil in Toledo, Ohio, and did not like 20 hrs in the car. Never hide who you are in fear of how others will respond. Love wins. Live with Pride.”

Before lunch I had a shot of whiskey at a dive called Lou’s, which features a lifesize model of Elvis Presley. A local news station was reporting that a guy held up a grade school at gunpoint. “Does it look like rain?” the bartender, a woman, maybe in her 40s, asked me. I told her it did. “It looked like rain on Saturday, it was all black and gray, and then,” she said, grimacing, waving her hand, “nothing.”

I had a noodle bowl at Saigon Noodle and Grill next door, a restaurant on the edge of The Mills 50 District with its thriving Vietnamese diaspora, one of the many reasons to visit Orlando besides the alternate reality of Disney World. For dessert I have one of my favorite foods, Vietnamese iced coffee, very strong and made with sweetened condensed milk. It’s about 4 p.m. and besides me the only other customers are a family. A boy went to the front door and peaked out. “Mom, it’s raining!” he called back. “Lloviendo!” They left and I stayed for a while, waited out the rain.

When I get back, my Airbnb host Casey was there with his roommate Scott. Casey is a bartender and I think Scott is, too. They’re both in their mid 20s, have the night off, and are opposites. I could see Scott partying with the cast of Jersey Shore while Casey

could have appeared on CNN’s “Parts Unknown” as a local guide to Orlando if the show had ever made it there. Scott and his friend were headed out to a club. Casey was hanging in with his friend, Meagan, and invited me to stay for dinner as well. He gave me some kind of delicious beer, a citrusy IPA. Meagan showed up with chicken in a homemade marinade — olive oil, lime zest, lime juice, cilantro, garlic, and (the secret ingredient) ras el hanout. They made fresh guacamole and roasted tomatoes for salsa. We listened to a tape of an Orlando indie band Casey introduced me to, The Pauses. And we sampled a vinyl collection that looked right up my alley — Against Me!, Lou Reed, and others I’m not familiar with, Nina Simone, and Led Zeppelin’s “Physical Graffiti.” Casey and Meagan reminded me of my 20s when I was waiting tables. We compared notes on restaurants we worked in, our culinary adventures in New York both as children and as adults, when your roommate has “loud relations,” and drugs. I admitted acid didn’t work for me (bad batch, I guess) but I had a great time tripping on mushrooms. After dinner there was a cooking show on TV featuring Asian soup dumplings. The ghost of Anthony Bourdain loomed and I slipped off to my room.



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▲ ▲ Sacred Heart Catholic Church in downtown Tampa.

▲ Selfie taker machine at Orange County Regional History Center’s “Another Year Passes: Orlando after the Pulse Nightclub Massacre,” Monday, June 11.

► Orlando Airbnb host Casey and his friend Megan make dinner, Monday, June 11.



looked like a flower. Ben Katzman's DeGreaser plays a song called "Jontraband" in which Katzman shouts, "Oh how I wish I was..." and the crowd responds, "John Travolta."

Las Rosas headlined the show, a blast of shimmering guitars and melodic, psychedelic rock. The lead singer looked like Lou Reed on the cover of "Transformer." I took some video and danced with this edgy woman who sort of freaked me out. She warned me that it's a very dangerous neighborhood around here (it's not) and then flashed what looked like a police badge and said, "I know what I'm talking about." I asked her if she's "like a sheriff's deputy or something" and she rolled her eyes and danced away. Then I drank too much without eating. And I told Steev I still have a recording, an interview with him from two years ago that I never transcribed, taped on a rainy day someplace near Lake Worth in which I'd asked dumb questions he'd answered many times before like how do you think technology is changing music?



### Wednesday, June 13, West Palm Beach

THERE WAS A NEW GUEST IN THE morning, a young motorcyclist, in the room across from mine. The Airbnb host was out of town, in Washington D.C., and a boy, maybe 12 or 13, came into the kitchen and asked me if I would like anymore of the pastries and orange juice that had been left out for breakfast. He also offered to do my laundry but I didn't really want to give him all my stinky clothes so instead he showed me the washer and dryer.

I plodded through the day, hungover. At the Norton Museum of Art I was struck by the luminous green background of José Bedía's "Si se pudiera (If Only I Could)" that I saw on closer inspection had been made with his handprints. At dusk, my hangover finally dissipated on Palm Beach island's municipal beach as the tepid, green Atlantic tide came in. Opposite the beach, just north of Trump's Mar-A-Lago resort, are multi-million dollar mansions. Along the island's quiet neighborhood streets, massive hedges and trees hiding homes are trimmed into perfect geometric shapes. And closed shop windows glowed along vacated, ritzy Worth Avenue, including a rare book shop filled with amazing first editions from authors such as Hemingway and Einstein, and an art gallery with Marc Sijan's poignantly real, life-size "Security Guard" (\$75,000).

I caught a late showing of the film "Hereditary" at the two-story AMC City-Place 20. It was horrific, scary, thrilling AND boring — quite a combo.



### Thursday, June 14, WPB to Miami

CLEMATIS STREET, DAY. AT THE PALM Beach Photographic Centre's museum there is an exhibition called "Renewal: Going Native" with prints of Florida flowers — a spurred butterfly pea, a scarlet hibiscus, a yellow-flowered butterwort, a purple-headed sneezeweed.

I left my rented SkyBike at its port at the new Brightline station that opened this year. It's so clean and bright it almost doesn't look real, an artist rendering of a train station with Ikea-like interior design. The train left promptly at 2 p.m. and rolled into Miami at 3:17 p.m. through the Wynwood neighborhood, with some of its famous street murals, and into downtown.

It was drizzling when I got to Miami, as I walked up through downtown by the City Cemetery into midtown and Wyn-



◀ People hanging out in Ybor City, Friday, June 8.

▼ Orlando Pulse Nightclub memorial, Tuesday, June 12 (second anniversary of the shooting.)



▲ Amtrak stop at Winter Haven.

wood, an old industrial and traditionally Puerto Rican enclave that fell into decline before it was turned into a tony arts district starting in the aughts, along with the gentrification that such a transformation always implies. The high rents have probably only begun to push businesses and galleries west in to Allapattah (Little Santo Domingo) and north in to areas such as Little Haiti, where a fun store called Exile Books recently popped up, next to an art gallery. When I visited Exile, which sells artbooks and zines, it also had an exhibit featuring Sister Corita Kent, known as "the pop art nun."

My Airbnb was in a Wynwood neighborhood off Northwest 33rd Street, a converted studio behind the main house. Over it hangs a mango tree, home to a bird (I don't know what kind) that dive-bombed me every time I arrived, swooping down near my face and then up into the tree, squawking. Later I returned to Wynwood Yard, an open-air a few blocks away where I spent last New Year's Eve. Everything looked the same except it's June, warmer and less crowded. The herb garden was swollen with rain. A band played and people gathered around a bar or ordered from half a dozen food trucks parked on the perimeter. I found the same truck I loved before, Brazilian Fire, which serves rodizio-style meats — chicken, sausage, steak — cooked over wood coals. As I ate, a passenger jet cruised low overhead toward the ocean,

one of a constant flow coming in and out of Miami International Airport.



### Friday, June 15, Miami

MIAAMI'S ART SCENE COMBINES THE sensibilities of high-end fashion and old-fashioned graffiti. The area's dazzling wealth of ethnic diversity is also a key source of vibrancy, with Latin influences being the most predominant. The conversations I heard were at least as likely to be in Spanish as English.

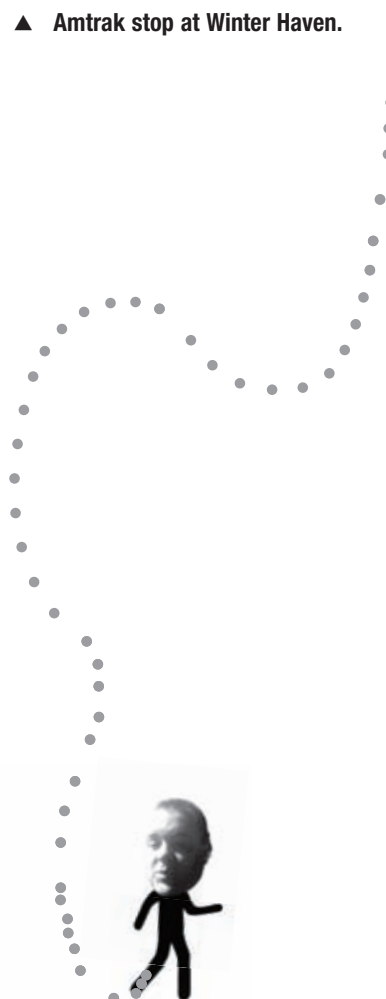
"Art can be everything — fashion — it's like a different vibe," said Stephanie Hausammann, who along with her husband, Federico, runs Hausammann Gallery on funky NW 5th Avenue near the western edge of Wynwood.

The gallery features a well-known Miami street artist, Atomiko, whose giant grinning orange I recognized from the sides of buildings. Federico, in his early 30s, is a third-generation gallery owner, but this gallery takes a new direction from his family's more traditional Italian roots.

"I'm more interested in this urban art, graffiti art," he said.

Across the street from Hausammann's, I seek out a street vendor for lunch. She

SEE TICKET, A14 ▶





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## TICKET

From page 13

▲ Brooklyn-based band Las Rosas performs at Voltaire in West Palm Beach, Friday, June 15.

► The bartender at Ghee Indian Kitchen in Miami pours toffee over the sticky date cake, Saturday, June 16.

► Students on a guided tour of the Institute of Contemporary Art in Miami view Robert Gober's early 1990s work, "Untitled."

▼ City bus and train station in Orlando.

grills me up a traditional Colombian arepa, corn patties filled with cheese, along with a sausage topped off with Pik Nik shoestring potatoes.

The Design District, afternoon, the Museum of Contemporary Art. The three-story silver building is across from a parking garage covered with large-scale works by different artists; "Urban Jam" by Clavel Arquitectos features a wall hung with silver and gold cars all headed in different directions.

Its collections included early paintings by Donald Judd, who went on to become a major 20th century sculptor, and a lovely, dark installation piece by Robert Gober. Gober's early 1990s work first appears to be a sewer grate set in the middle of the floor. You do a double take and then walk over to it. When you peer into the grate you see brick walls going down maybe six feet and at the bottom a life-size male torso with water flowing over its hairy chest and down a drain planted in its middle.

The museum was nearly empty except for a summer school group that I followed around for the next hour on a guided tour. When they get back to the drain piece, the kids stared down at the body for at least a few minutes, fascinated. "It's horrific," one of them said, unable to look away. The guide said the



piece suggests both a drowning and a baptism, and can be read as Gober's commentary on the AIDS epidemic, including that people with AIDS were treated as "dirty" objects, such as those found in a sewer. "It goes in many directions," she said.

## ■ ■ ■ Saturday, June 16, Miami

I NEVER PLANNED TO BE ON THE RADIO, but that's where I found myself on a Saturday nearing 5 p.m. on June 16, 2018, the year of our Lord, at the comfy Jolt Radio studio just west of Wynwood in Allapattah. Jairo Ariza, who lives in the neighborhood and goes by "Guapo" for his regular variety show from 9 to 10 p.m. on Thursdays, Ladies Love Radio, was leading me through the process of putting on my own show. Then we did it, streaming live in Miami. He sent me a recording afterwards.

Jairo recently started offering this chance to make up a radio show to any-

one through Airbnb's advertised "experiences" (\$35, at least for now). His upcoming guests include a bachelorette party.

He lit some incense and I sipped a strong cup of coffee he'd made me while we proceeded through the hour-long show based on a playlist of music from my trip that I'd put together the night before: Luxury Mane's "Sitting Still," David Bowie's "Here Comes the Night," The Pauses's "Little Kids," Las Rosas's "Mr. Wrong," and so on.

Between each track, I talked about my trip and where I heard these songs, and asked Jairo some questions about himself. Outside of his radio show, he's going to school for accounting.

"Honestly, I feel like this area is going to get gentrified soon enough," he said, pointing to one example: a dive bar just down the street called Las Rosas with a fairly happening crowd. But the same could be said of the Jolt studio building which also houses Brooklyn Vintage and Vinyl record store. I told him that that night I'm planning to attend a death metal show at Las Rosas. I've never much listened to death metal, but I'm curious. Why not?

Before the show I crossed off a must-do on my list with a visit to Ghee Indian Kitchen, a place I discovered last New Year's Eve. It's small and crowded with an open kitchen and a lime-green banquet along one wall. Sitting at one of a handful of bar stools, I ordered three dishes served all at once. The red snapper was perfectly cooked with a crispy skin and served with a mellow curry sauce studded with charred okra cooked to just the right creamy consistency.

The beef bone marrow was pure opulence, served with a slightly oversalted sauce with fresh curry leaves and coconut, which I scooped up with naan on the bartender's recommendation. And the vegetable salad with rose turnips, tomato, shredded carrots, crushed peanuts and cilantro was lightly tossed with a black-mustard seed and citrus dressing. For dessert, I had sticky date cake covered with a warm, buttery, jaggery toffee sauce contrasted with cold ginger ice cream which provided a sharp bite. Ghee's chef Niven Patel's progressive style for some brings up the elusive, ongoing debate about authenticity. Some call it fusion Indian. The bartender preferred the term new Indian, explaining that no matter how traditional a dish, it may pick up local influences. Call it what you will, it was up there with my best meals ever.

The night before I finally left Miami, Las Rosas, 11:30 p.m. The crowd looked mostly early 20s; there was a chandelier over the bar. In the back room, a shoulder to shoulder crowd listened to Wrong ("As in, not correct," someone told me) fill the room with massive black waves of guitar sustain. A huge red neon rose bloomed behind the stage. The headliner, Crud, roared on until about 2 a.m. The sheer theatricality of the performer excited me and there was humor behind the doom. Everything about Crud projected Satanic vibes, the thundering bass and drums, the wailing guitars, and especially the heroin-thin lead singer's terrifying demonic howl. He crowd-surfed, started a mosh pit, sprayed beer across the room, tore pillows off the couches, mimed cutting his throat with the microphone, looked in need of an exorcist. "Come to me," he beckoned the crowd evilly, "or I will come to you." ■

