

ALCHEMY — A TASTE OF THE ART WORLD

The work of nine artists on view through January 10, 2017.

We invite you to come and get acquainted with their work.

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Riverside Wharf: A Vision on the River, for the People



Visitors coming off the water and pedestrians will be able to enjoy all that Riverside Wharf has to offer. [Photos courtesy of Alex Mantecon]

By: Chris Carson
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The Miami River is 5.5 miles of flowing water that accentuates part of downtown Miami. It is a place to which many residents and visitors congregate for water activities or to spend a day by the water. For many, the Miami River holds a special place in their heart,

and they would do anything to keep it thriving and healthy. Alex Mantecon is one of those residents; his passion for the region has blossomed into a vision he hopes will improve the region exponentially.

“I was born and raised in Miami and grew up spending a lot of time on the river. I’ve always been attached to it,”

commented Mantecon. His love for Miami led him to return to the area after several years away as an investor. He now wants to invest in his hometown through his vision of the Riverside Wharf. With fellow developer Guillermo Vadell, the pair plans to build a \$30 million structure along

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‘Do the District’ with Riverwalk Arts and Entertainment Group

By: Liz Kobak
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Planning a vacation or even a day’s getaway can prove challenging. But when it comes to scheduling activities and events through the Riverwalk Arts and Entertainment group in Fort Lauderdale, FL, it’s anything but difficult for a visitor. Riverwalk’s Project Manager Carmen Ackerman, who is in charge of operations, raves about her team’s ability to plan visitors’ itineraries across all six of her group’s partnering venues.

“We will tell you what to do,”

says Ackerman regarding how her team gets visitors revved up for their trip, “from the moment you wake up.”

She and her promotional team even provide guests with packing lists and an essential day’s worth itinerary that offers an hour by hour, play by play of activities. This makes guests within the district feel as comfortable as possible. Under the hashtag branding of “#Do-the-district”, anyone can choose to follow the seamless tour set forth. Ackerman describes it as the a perfect “girlfriends’

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The Villagers: Funding, Preserving, and Educating for a Better Miami

By: Chris Carson
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Many residents of South Florida are guilty of taking for granted the natural habitat and historical heritage of the region they live in. It can be easy to overlook how Miami’s pristine character is preserved, and many probably don’t know its origins. But many of the historical sites in the area are maintained just as they were built: through the locals’ hard work and determination. One of the leading organizations engaged in preserving the area sometimes flies under the radar: The Villagers. It is a group of citizens “dedicated to the restoration and

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Villager Victoria Champion checks in guests for the garden tour. [Photo courtesy of the Villagers]



Daniel Routhier Bonnet Slough. [Photo courtesy of Carmen Ackerman]

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The Villagers: Funding, Preserving, and Educating for a Better Miami



Villager President Mary E. Burke with award from The Florida Trust. [Photo courtesy of the Villagers]

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preservation of historic sites” in the Greater Miami area.

“People think of us as little old ladies—which some of us are—but we are a lot more than that,” laughed current president Mary Burke. “Many of us come from very successful careers due to years of hard work, and we are looking for a new outlet to focus our energy. What better place to put it than

back into Miami-Dade County and The Villagers.”

Not all the members of the Villagers are female, but the organization boasts a long list of leading ladies dating back to its inception in October of 1966. At that time, the Douglas Entrance was in danger of being destroyed. A concerned group of architects, designers and landscape professionals formed the Douglas Village Corporation to purchase and restore the historic building. Many of their wives got together and formed The Villagers with 39 charter members to help with restoration efforts.

Most people are unaware of The Villagers’ work, which not only includes contributing monetary support to restore and preserve important sites, but in the early years, hard physical labor.

Dolly MacIntyre, a member since the beginning, recalls her efforts on some of The Villagers’ first missions: “Once the Douglas Entrance was secure, it was decided we would broaden our scope and work to further historic preservation in general in Miami-Dade County. This led us to Vizcaya, where we started out by scrubbing the walls of the kitchen. Some of us can remember teetering on the tops of twelve foot ladders with Spic ‘n Span running down our arms as we reached up to clean the ceiling.”

Throughout the years, they have contributed brain-power and devoted extensive time to help sites complete the needed research and work to be placed on historic registers. After the work at Douglas Entrance and Vizcaya was done, The Villagers turned their attention to the endangered Biltmore Hotel.

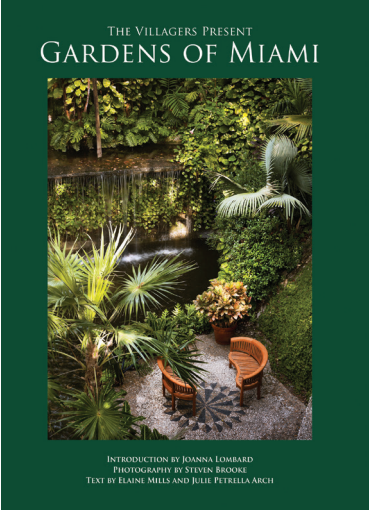
“I’ve only been a Villager for about eight years,” remarked



Douglas entrance today. [Photo courtesy of the Villagers]

President Burke, “but I can’t imagine Miami without some of the projects we’ve worked on, without the Biltmore Hotel or Vizcaya. Many of the beautiful buildings in Coral Gables wouldn’t be here without the work put in over the years.”

Many residents also do not know that the Dade Heritage Trust was formed as a result of The Villagers. They have expanded their reach to include not only early historical sites settled during George Merrick’s time, but structures and locations that hold significance for South Florida’s indigenous people. The Villagers are trying to weave together and preserve the complete history of Miami-Dade. Over the years, The Villagers have donated over \$1 million to more than 70 local organizations, as well as \$400,000 in scholarships to students in the historic preservation field.



Book Gardens of Miami by Steven Brooke Studios.



Villagers crowd tables laden with food at “Save the Biltmore” dance event featuring two bands in 1969. [Photo courtesy of the Villagers]



Three generations of Villagers: Dolly MacIntyre (center) with daughter Sheffield & granddaughter Sylver. [Photo courtesy of the Villagers]

Futurama 1637

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