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## THE NEXT FRONTIER

*Miami's artists and developers pioneer the 'it' neighborhood of tomorrow*

**W**hen Pete Kirill, a 42-year-old neo-pop artist, put the last strokes of exterior latex paint on his massive street mural of Elvis Presley, he joined a legion of artists responsible for turning a forlorn corner of Miami into one of the city's hottest areas — Wynwood.

Wynwood is the hipster hub that paint built. But when Kirill arrived in Miami in 2002, it was a place to avoid. "It was an area of town you'd never go to. Dilapidated homes, prostitution, crime," he recalls. Then the shuttered warehouses and abandoned factories of this old manufacturing district north of downtown slowly became the realm of galleries and artist studios. "I got to see the birth of it," Kirill says. The tipping point came in 2009 with the creation of the Wynwood Walls, a rotating mural exhibit by elite international street artists that's now one of the largest open-air art installations in the world.

Kirill's 30-foot-high *MC Elvis* mural, in which Elvis Presley is reimagined as a hip-hop star, was completed in 2012 after two weeks of six-hour days. The mural helped turn a nondescript wall of a courtyard into a destination and changed the landscape. "It just took some fresh paint and an interesting concept to turn Wynwood into a place of interest," he says. A restaurant now operates where the homeless once congregated.

Wynwood has reached the level at which a place becomes an idea: *Wynwood-ization*. It's the notion of using art and innovation as catalysts to create vibrant

cultural districts, à la New York's Chelsea, Williamsburg and Dumbo. Wynwood is a mecca for artists and a hotbed of creative entrepreneurship. Where art goes, commerce follows.

But when prices go up, artists move out. Creatives seeking refuge from high rents and developers seeking opportunity are finding fertile ground in places like Little Haiti, Little River, Little Havana and the emerging Arts + Entertainment District. Hialeah, with its Leah Arts District, and Allapattah, where one of Wynwood's pioneers announced it will relocate its private museum in 2018, are also generating buzz as people wonder what area — or areas — are poised to be the next Wynwood.

"These places are what Wynwood once was, which was so underground and cool you had to know somebody to go there," Kirill says. "When I want to enjoy some music or go to some new funky restaurant, these are now the cool, hip places to go."

Some high-profile galleries have already pulled up stakes in Wynwood and made the move north to Little Haiti, an area that's a quick trip to downtown, though off the tourist radar. Some are predicting Little Haiti will be

*Continued on M8*

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Completed in January 2017, this masterful 240-unit luxury condominium by Argentinian art mogul and real estate developer Eduardo Costantini pays homage to its museum-worthy art collection, recently unveiled as part of the property's grand debut during Art Basel Miami Beach. The collection on view in the residence's palatial lobbies is composed of masterworks by internationally acclaimed contemporary artists Jeff Koons, Callum Innes, An Te Liu, Jorge Mendez Blake, Taryn Simon, Juan Usle and Garth Weiser. Unprecedented, the entire multimillion-dollar collection — shared assets of the residents of Oceana Bal Harbour — is composed of abstract, conceptual and site-specific commissioned pieces in different art forms. "Art transforms, surrounds and educates a community, very much like museums do, and homeowners end up loving home more because of its ability to move them and enhance their quality of life," says Costantini.

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*Continued from M7*

South Florida's hottest housing market this year. Ines Hegedus-Garcia of Related ISG International Realty, who is both a real estate agent and an architect by training, says Little Haiti's lure is more than just cheap rents. "Little Haiti is no longer the area next to Wynwood. It is the next great area."

Little Haiti's evolving streetscape includes the Little Haiti Cultural Complex, a popular indie record store, nightclubs and monthly culture walks. An ambitious plan to expand a music venue into an innovation district of restaurants and shops is now in its first phase.

An enormous mural from artist Kirill dominates a wall on 64th Street next to a bus stop. People waiting for a ride get to admire the work called *Foxy Loren*, a mashup of actress Sophia Loren and the rapper Foxy Brown. "Some of these buildings were just drab with old paint peeling off, and now there are these bright, colorful pieces against the Miami skyline. It makes people happy," Kirill says. "The neighborhood is changing."

These days, a clutch of food trucks and a good coffee roaster are seen as signs of a neighborhood on the cusp. But it takes more to lure millennials. Cultural influencers entice a younger demographic to these enclaves by building community and creating places they'll embrace. In the process, these neighborhood pioneers are redefining the sun-and-beach notions of Miami that outsiders know from decades of splashy tourism campaigns.

The new Arts + Entertainment District is a prime

example, described by one local as "very, very early Brooklyn." Look at a map and A+E is a puzzle piece between Brickell, Wynwood and Biscayne Bay. Like many of Miami's transitional areas, it has the advantage of being close to downtown as well as a stone's throw from cultural institutions like the Adrienne Arsht Center and the Pérez Art Museum.

Developers see promise in tapping into the large market of urban professionals priced out of other downtown Miami markets, and they're upping the ante beyond affordability. One rental complex features street art and concerts on a fifth-floor poolside deck overlooking the downtown skyline. A condominium set to open first-quarter 2018 is planning a rotating gallery showcasing the works of local and international artists. Free foodie events, outdoor yoga and movies under the stars are already staples. Folks by the thousands flock to the Miami Flea, featuring scores of artisan vendors.

Art is the economic driver of a model that has seen success in South Florida and across the country. A struggling residential area or wasteland of closed-down warehouses is claimed by investors and real estate developers or adopted by artists and plucky entrepreneurs.

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— JOHNNY LARA

in Little River, an area abutting Little Haiti, was rehabbed into a 24,000-square foot co-working space called MADE at the Citadel.

"We fell in love with the architecture. A building like this is hard to find in Miami, unless you go to older parts like Miami Beach or Coconut Grove," says director Johnny Lara. MADE, built in the style of MiMO, or Miami Modern, is an example of adaptive reuse, the process of renovating old buildings for new purposes. About 75 freelance artists, designers and entrepreneurs share desk space or rent one of 48 private offices. Many are local and bike or walk to work.

Lara touts Little River's accessible location, diverse culture and friendly vibe. "For the most part, Little River has a lot of small shops and mom-and-pop joints where families cook recipes passed down from generations," he says. "Since we sit on the outskirts of Little Haiti, we've got really good Haitian food, which I've grown to love. I can get a huge plate of Haitian rice and beans with fried plantains for five or six bucks. That's always a plus."

Later this year Miami's first food hall, The Citadel, is slated to open just across the street from MADE. Similar to Manhattan's Chelsea Market, the culinary complex with retail and event space will inject an extra shot of hipsterdom into a neighborhood on the rise.

Lara happens to live in another area that's enjoying a rising profile: Little Havana, between Coral Gables and the Brickell area. One section known as the Calle Ocho Arts Corridor has about a dozen art galleries alone. Galleries stay open late on the second Friday of each month for the Little Havana Art Walk. The last Friday is Viernes Culturales, or cultural Fridays, a celebration of art, food and music that draws some 4,000 visitors.

"I'm invested in Miami," Lara says. "I used to believe if you're going to make it, you have to go to New York or L.A., but young creatives are staying here and creating the same opportunities."

