

after dark: MIAMI

Leaving flash, brash South Beach far behind, **Roberto Serrini** and **Miranda Kendrick** uncover Miami's cool underbelly.

Photography by **Roberto Serrini**

Mac's Club Deuce is a little like Italian opera: you'll laugh, you'll cry, you'll love it anyway.

THE A, B, Cs OF MIAMI: ART BASEL, bikinis, Crockett. Miami for the masses has always been a heliocentric, hedonistic party zone where chiselled bodies in hot-pink Sperrys fist-pump to killer house music. This is a town filled with epic beach parties and cavernous nightclubs; a town where gravity seems to have no effect on women’s breasts. While a classic night out here might mean drinks at the Delano, dinner at Casa Tua and dancing at Mansion, there is much more to this place than what’s on the postcards. At the city’s core, you’ll find a style of nightlife that is delightfully and uncharacteristically Miami. Smoky speak-easies, urban disco galleries and island hideaways are all awaiting discovery. This is where you’ll find those drive-through liquor stores, delicious sandwiches at petrol stations, the red to-go cup, and the people who actually reside here. On a Friday night we said to hell with reservations, the velvet rope and the all-mighty guest list and went exploring a different type of Miami. This is darkest Miami, after dark.



Don't try ordering an appletini at Fox's Sherron Inn.



Just try keeping your eyes on your date in Barú Urbano's effervescent environs.

6.30pm

It may seem early, but at Fox’s Sherron Inn, it is perpetually 9pm. This dark, hard-to-find hole-in-the-wall is the perfect place to start a night of Miami intrigue. Sidle up to the bar and let only the light – from the backlit stained-glass fox – illuminate your rusty nail or harvey wallbanger. There are potent two-for-one drinks, T-bone steaks and hearty nachos and, if you’re lucky, you’ll hear Peggy, who has seen and heard it all, tell one of her jokes. For your consideration: “What do you get when you cross a donkey with an onion? A piece of ass that brings tears to your eyes.” It’s funnier after two whiskeys, trust us.

Fox’s Sherron Inn
6030 S Dixie Highway
South Miami

8.00pm

After being submerged in a classic 60s throwback for a couple of hours, it’s common practice to shock your system with a little Latin love. It could never be denied that Miami is as much Latin as it is American, and the two are actually inseparable. Barú Urbano is a perfect example of this fusion. With ceviche, street art, caipirinhas and club music, this lounge/restaurant/club has a bit of everything. Barú is the kind of place Warhol would have visited if he was in Ibiza circa 2002. If that doesn’t make your head spin you should try the specialty rum drinks. This place is a triple

threat, having tasty tapas, a DJ who seems to only play songs you danced your ass off to while backpacking through Europe, and a wait-staff so hardcore and good looking you can’t tell if they are going to seduce you or mug you.

Barú Urbano
3252 NE 1st Avenue, Suite 124
Midtown
www.barurbano.com

9.30pm

Yep, this place would be ordinary... If you were standing on Bedford Avenue in Williamsburg. In Miami though, Blackbird Ordinary’s little bit of Brooklyn-off-Brickell is a very welcome addition. Jenga and Battleship, live music and pork sliders, craft beer and perfectly put together pasty white people make this joint a cathedral to hip. Blackbird is a city in its own right – you can get lost with a party of friends in giant booths, move around its endless bar or head outside to its alfresco arena and let the stars dance with you. It’s a jovial place, full of friends who’d rather talk than shout over club music, with plenty of room to spread out, get into an argument about selvedge denim, or cultivate some new Instagram followers.

Blackbird Ordinary
729 SW 1st Avenue
Brickell
www.blackbirdordinary.com

11.00pm

While the island of Cuba has made its indelible mark on Miami’s culture, there is another island that has some treasures to be discovered. After crossing the sexy MacArthur Causeway, many would drive right past Tap Tap, a Haitian stronghold marked only by a high neon sign. It is, however, as close as some will get to taking a trip to Port-au-Prince. The live music downstairs will syncopate with the beats of your heart as you fall in love with this vibrant feast for the eyes, ears and belly. Eat tasty Haitian delights like *zepina nan sos kokoye* (spinach with coconut sauce), *kabrit nan sos* (tasty goat stew) and *pwason neg* (blackened fish). The bold will have an icy-cold natif – part caipirinha, part anaesthetic – or three, which, combined with some high-school French, should give you a chance at understanding the menu. But have no fear: the staff here is friendly and engaging, and will have your bellies full and soul warmed in no time.

Tap Tap Restaurant
819 5th Street
Miami Beach
www.taptapmiamibeach.com



Blackbird Ordinary: so hipster it has irony built into its name.



Tropical Tap Tap.



The writing and the pictures are on the wall at Tattoos by Lou.



Showing the boys how it's done at Tattoos by Lou.

12.00am

Mac's Club Deuce is the kind of place your mother warned you about. Cigarettes, Johnny Black and a jukebox seemingly stocked by Johnny Cash himself have made it an institution for good-time guys and gals. Beach kids rub elbows with rough necks and trade stories about old lovers, missed chances and big scores. We've been told Deuce is where bartenders go to die – a sort of Valhalla for the keepers of our innermost secrets. It's the perfect place to turn one hour into three and end up with a new posse of friends.

Mac's Club Deuce
222 14th Street
Miami Beach

3.00am

If you can make it across the street from Deuce then you are sober enough to get inked. Tattoos by Lou is not your ordinary parlour – it's a Miami tradition draped in neon. If you have a reason, and enough gumption, sit down with Chief (yep, Chief is his actual name) and let him put some art on your canvas. Then, no matter what happened at the five other places you just visited, you'll have a permanent reminder of your Miami night out.

Tattoos by Lou
231 14th Street
Miami Beach
www.tattoosbylou.com

GET PLANNING



GET THERE

United Airlines flies from Sydney to Miami with stopovers in Los Angeles and Houston. Flights start at about AU\$1860 return.
www.united.com



STAY THERE

The Whitelaw Hotel is located on South Beach but costs a fraction of some of its fancy-pants neighbours. Rooms can be a bit on the small side, although they are very cool. There's always a party in the bar (light sleepers please take note) where the drinks, during happy hour, are free. Doubles from AU\$125.

www.whitelawhotel.com



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