

FORT LAUDERDALE magazine™

APRIL 2015

Miami Or Bust

NAVIGATING THE NIGHTMARE COMMUTE

**OAKLAND PARK'S
CULINARY DISTRICT**

***Bold
Prints for
Spring***

**BIG GOALS FOR
THE STRIKERS**



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THE BROTHERS BEHIND TAP 42

FLORIDA GETAWAYS

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Getting Foodie



Funky

in

Oakland Park

Oakland Park hasn't always been synonymous with gastronomic delights. But **Paul Pfeifer** found that its growing culinary arts district is adding new flavor to the city.

PHOTOS BY MALCOLM MAYO



AKLAND PARK'S DOWNTOWN IS A WORK IN PROGRESS.

But the operative word there is “progress” as the city continues to get its culinary arts district off the ground.

The district was part of a strategic plan set in motion in 2011 to kickstart development downtown. The city wanted to capitalize on already existing businesses but also lure in new ones with business development grants and programs.

“Culinary” might be in the title, but the city wanted the district to be about more than just restaurants. It’s a broad umbrella that includes eateries, but also handles food from the ground up – literally – at the Urban Farming Institute on Dixie Highway. There’s a weekly farmers market and even home remodelers eager to spruce up any kitchen.

Another benefit is bolstering the city’s image and branding Oakland Park’s downtown as a fun place to be. Aside from the Wednesday evening farmers market, the city’s new monthly outdoor concert series began in March.

“It’s bigger than just bringing the businesses in,” says Kathleen Margoles, the city’s special events coordinator. “It’s making the place a destination and making people aware it’s a cool place.”

The first addition to the culinary district has so far proven to be the most popular.

“The city commission decided to brand the area as the culinary arts district because of existing businesses of that kind,” Margoles says. “Then Funky Buddha came in and gave us a real boost.”

Funky Buddha Brewery has ridden the craft beer wave to great success in South Florida. It began in 2010 with the brewpub’s first location in Boca Raton. Not long after Oakland Park’s culinary district came into being, the brewery took over warehouse space in Oakland Station, citing its central location in South Florida. Funky Buddha then opened its Oakland Park taproom in June 2013.

“The city had a good vision of local food and creating a hub in



The brewery, which opened in 2010, has since become a catalyst for the development of the district.

Oakland Park where it could grow,” Funky Buddha brand manager John Linn says. “Oakland Park is a tight-knit community. People really take pride in it.”

Since opening in Oakland Park, the brewery’s growth has been explosive. Linn says they began with 20,000 square feet of space. In less than two years, they’ve doubled that amount as the brewery’s packaging, warehousing and distribution needs continue to grow.

The beers that Funky Buddha brews and bottles in Oakland Park will soon be available statewide. Linn said the brand is currently shipping from Key West to Orlando, and shipping to the Tampa/St. Petersburg market was scheduled to begin in March. They anticipate being available in north Florida by late summer.

But most of that beer stays close to home, as Funky Buddha pa-



The Farmers Market on a recent Wednesday evening.

trons can swig beneath the shadows of the brewhouse’s giant conical fermentation tanks in the Oakland Park taproom. The brewery offers tours on Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays. And for those that want a little fun mixed in with the bar’s stainless steel, industrial chic design, there’s full-size Jenga, bocce ball and more.

Without a kitchen on premises, the Funky Buddha has a natural fit with local food trucks. But as the business grows, Linn said an in-house kitchen (and food service) is on the horizon.

“[Funky Buddha] has been a huge success off the bat,” Margoles says. “It brought a whole new demographic into the city. We’re proud of them and proud that they use Oakland Park to identify where they are. It’s a great business model. Their last festival was incredible.”

In January, more than 7,000 people came out for the brewery’s Maple Bacon Coffee Porter party, queuing up for bottles of their sought-after creation. That’s twice as many people that showed up for the inaugural event in 2014.



The community garden.

We're becoming known for our big events.
We're psyched about doing them." —JOHN LINN OF FUNKY BUDDHA



Above, the Funky Buddha brewery in action.
At right, brand manager John Linn.

It was the fourth major outdoor festival hosted at the brewery after their grand opening and first anniversary. The numbers grow every time they close off the street and open their doors wide.

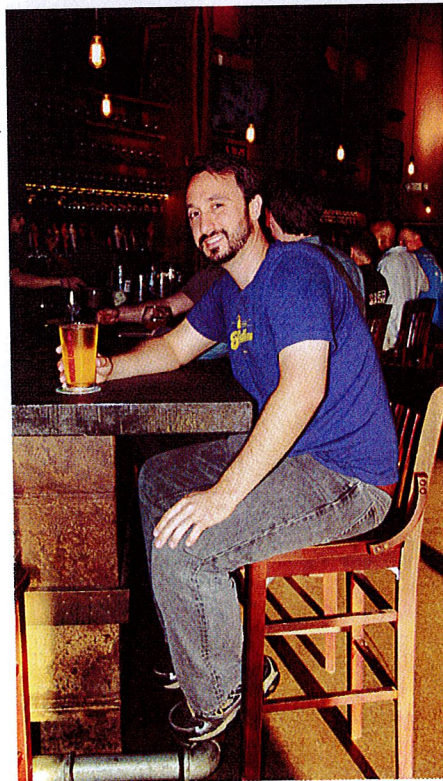
"We're becoming known for our big events," Linn says. "We're psyched about doing them."

Funky Buddha may have been among the first to embrace the culinary district, but they certainly won't be the last. More businesses coming into the district means more potential customers will follow, Linn says.

"I see the future of the area being pretty bright," he says. "I would think in the next few years we're going to see a lot of growth in Oakland Park."

Of course, the culinary district hasn't been without its hiccups.

Build-out was completed for a Stork's Bakery and Coffee House location at Oakland Station, but it stands empty. Margoless says the popular Wilton Manors bakery won't open in Oakland



Park because of financing issues, but added that the property owner is actively seeking a tenant to take over the turnkey space.

Other prime ideas for the district, including a culinary arts school and a European-style central market, have fallen through.

"Things take time," Margoless says.

Meanwhile, other businesses have taken notice of the district. Margoless said the Filling Station and Garage Bar gastropub will be taking over the space on 12th formerly occupied by By Word of Mouth. Agora Market Place, a Greek

and Mediterranean specialty shop, has submitted plans to the city.

Home remodeler Allied Kitchen and Bath is itself working through the permitting process and expects to open a new 7,000-square-foot design center in the culinary district within the next six months. The new location is near the business's main showroom on Oakland Park Boulevard and its warehouse facilities.

For years, the 20,000-square-foot building on Northeast 12th Avenue served as the home to Sikes Tile Distributors. Later this year, it will allow Allied to showcase new products, appliances and outdoor living spaces.

"The home, food and family all go hand in hand," says Allied co-owner Bill Feinberg. "To us, it's all about the home and family."

The design center will soak up about half of

and Stout Sports Bar and Grill on May 13.


The farmers market runs from 4 to 8 p.m. every Wednesday at the corner of Dixie Highway and Northeast 38th Street. This is the second year for the market, which begins its season in November and wraps up in May.

The market attracts a small but varied group of local vendors, from chocolate made in a Coral Springs kitchen to the full array of the sort of organic, artisanal produce you would expect. There's also music and a wide selection of prepared meals, from ceviche to lobster rolls to smoky and savory barbecue.

"It's so obvious, it's location, location,

location," says Glen Turpening, who distributes for Nutty 4 Chocolate, a cottage industry that has big dreams of breaking into the market for organic, fair trade candy bars. "It's a great market. It's one of my best."

Jon Albee, the founder and president of the nearby Urban Farming Institute, runs the farmers market. He says vendors are up and attendance is up. It makes sense as Oakland Park continues to push to make the conversation about food.

"Oakland Park deserves a tremendous amount of credit" Albee says. "Others talk about it. Oakland Park said 'this is our concept and this is what we are going to do.'" 

OAKLAND PARK FARMERS MARKET

What: A full farmers market, featuring fresh produce, food stands and community vendors

When: 4-8 p.m., Wednesdays through May

Where: Southwest corner of Dixie Highway and NE 38th Street in Oakland Park

Farm to Chef: The second Wednesday of each month features cooking demos by chefs from select area restaurants. April 8 will feature El Guanaco and May 13 will feature Stout Sports Bar and Grill

For more farmers markets, see *Grazings* on page 69.

MUSIC ON 12TH

What: Outdoor concerts

Where: Downtown Oakland Park on 12th Avenue, near City Hall

April 10: Bemol Telfort Jazz Band (instrumental jazz)

May 22: Bluefire Band with Randi (jazz rock)

June 26: Pan Paradise (calypso/steel drum)

the building's square footage. Feinberg says that leaves three other bays that would be perfect for restaurants or other related businesses.

So why Oakland Park?

"We felt the culinary district was starting to pop," Feinberg says. "We think it's going to be a great experience and change the face of Oakland Park. We're excited about what's going on."

On a recent Wednesday night at the Oakland Park farmers market, chefs from the highly anticipated Bar Rita restaurant in Fort Lauderdale put their cooking skills on display. And, of course, distributed some tasty samples.

From the same restaurateurs that brought about the wildly successful Tap 42 in Fort Lauderdale (see page 70), the Bar Rita chefs were taking part in the Farm to Chef Showcase, which features cooking instructions from local restaurants on the second Wednesday of the month. Upcoming events include El Guanaco on April 8



FEATURED LISTINGS

MID-CENTURY FABULOUS



2514 Yacht Club Blvd., Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33304

\$885,000

3BR/2.5BA + Den | Mid-Century | 2198 SF | Flawless Top-to-Bottom Renovation
All New Kitchen and Baths | New Plumbing & Wiring | Impact Windows/Doors
New Terrazzo Floors | Garage | Bayview District

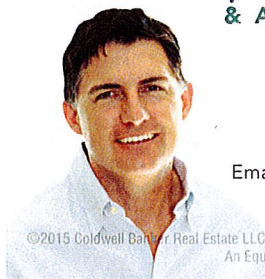


1616 Northeast 8th Street, Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33304

\$845,000

3BR/3BA | Mid-Century Modern | 2100 SF | Beautifully Renovated & Restored
New Kitchen | Restored Baths | Fireplace | Family Room | Pool | Walled & Gated

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