

NON-PROFIT HUB

The House of Mosaics Hosts Historic Preservation Benefactor Group

By: Karelia Martinez Carbonell

President of the Historic Preservation Association of Coral Gables, INYBN Contributor

The Board of Directors of the Historic Preservation Association of Coral Gables recently celebrated its benefactors who support the George Giving Society — an annual fund campaign. Donations are unrestricted and benefit historic preservation and its resources. The invitation-only event was at the elegantly renovated 1926 home of Coral Gables residents Ray Corral and Alina Meledina. The property was one of the first homes built on Country Club Prado. The street — best known for its historic entrance on Southwest Eight Street — is one of the most famously photographed sites in Coral Gables.

The afternoon was picture-perfect and as bright as the natural sunlight that welcomed the group.

Guests delighted on savory and sweet treats that included, among other delicacies, Saint Andre cheese and raspberry spinach tea sandwiches and lo-

cal whole organic strawberries served with handmade organic whipped cream.

Champagne flowed nicely as guests flowed freely around the home enjoying camaraderie. All gathered during the lively presentation by Ray and the enchanting Alina, each detailing the ups and downs of restoration, all the while trying to keep the historic authenticity of the property. From plastering the walls, to refurbishing the stone fireplaces, to bringing back the luster of the original Cuban tiles, to carefully restoring the decorative wood balustrades on the spiral staircase, at the end, all proved to be worth the attention. According to Alina, “It was a labor of love.”

Ray, a mosaic artist who creates one-of-a-kind works of art, designed many of the decorative pieces found throughout his home— details that add a touch of modernity to the historic. From the ornate mosaic dining room tabletop, to the creative tiles on the bathroom floors, to the glistening pool’s exquisite pattern inspired by the relief on the stone fireplace in the liv-



Brett Gillis, Alice Goldhagen, Ray Corral, Alina Meledina, Karelia Martinez Carbonell



Barbara C. Zwick and Karen Moore
[Photos by J.P. Scholl]

ing room, each work captures a special kind of charm that adds color and newness to the 93 year-old property. Old certainly does not have to be boring and this house is young at heart.

Attendees included The Honorable Don Slesnick and his wife former Commissioner Jeannett Slesnick, Josephine Johnson, Jane and Steve Ma-

ranos, Barbara C. Zwick and friend Karen Moore, and many others. Joining the hosts Ray and Alina, were HPACG Board of Directors Karelia Martinez Carbonell, president; Mary Anne Danguillecourt, secretary; Lisa Bennett and Ann Goodman, past presidents; new member Brett Gillis, and returning members Pat Button, Alice

Goldhagen, and David Mitchell.

Historic Preservation Association of Coral Gables (HPACG) is a 501c3 nonprofit whose mission is to promote the understanding and importance of historic resources and their preservation. For additional information or to become a member, please visit www.historic-coralgables.org

#BIRDSTOCK crowns 10th Anniversary Conservation Concert Series

Perch with the Birds for Earth Month @TropicalAudubon, Saturday, April 27, 2019, 7 p.m.

A playbill of top-flight South Florida bands and solo performers will headline the much-ballyhooed #Birdstock to be staged at Tropical Audubon Society for Earth Month. This highly anticipated annual event serves as the finale to the 2019 10th Anniversary Conservation Concert series. The all-original music prerequisite that distinguishes #Birdstock from the Jan/Feb/March concerts that precede it, enabling performers to showcase their uniquely personal sounds. Be sure to catch this milestone 2019 #Birdstock as a bevy of premier singer/songwriters generously jam for the Birds.

The grounds, formally known as the Steinberg Nature Center, make for an idyllic outdoor concert venue, with picnic tables clustered beneath a grove of native hardwoods, and the bands playing on the Keystone stage. With the historic wood-frame vernacular Doc Thomas House anchoring the scene, it is an enchanting, fairy-like setting once night falls. A veritable green island in the midst of an urban crossroads, the property is often booked for private concerts, weddings, showers, milestone birthdays, commercial photo shoots and memorials. After one such service in 2009 — an indoor eulogy followed by a Keystone patio reception and bird walk in memory of Betty Hanson Kuehner — the High Pines resident, Elizabeth Smith, who had memorialized her mother here, was so inspired by the setting that she volunteered. In 2010, Smith launched the Conservation Concert series to raise funds to rethatch the property’s Miccosukee-built 20x30-



The finale of the 2019 Conservation Concert Series is Saturday, April 27. [Photo by Don J. Harris]

foot chickee, and in 2011 she joined the board.

Since 2010, the chickee has been rethatched twice with concert proceeds, and countless other improvements have been made to the property. “So much has been accomplished here simply because my mom loved birds,” Smith notes. “It’s the classic pebble-on-the-pond ripple effect.” (To hold an event here, contact events@tropicalaudubon.org.)

Food & Drink: Taco Fresh Food Truck and the donation Bird Bar featuring wines and beer courtesy of Republic National Distributing Co.

THE DETAILS

Picnic tables available on a first-come basis.

Gates open at 7pm; music begins at 7:30pm; lights

out at 10pm

CASH door: \$10 donation p/p, children 12 and under FREE Proceeds benefit capital improvements to the Steinberg Nature Center grounds and historic buildings.

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Parking: Limited free parking via our 55th Avenue auto gate; free parking along 56th Avenue; metered parking on Sunset Drive; various garage and valet parking options within 1-3 blocks; Metrorail service to South Miami Station.

Tropical Audubon Society: 5530 Sunset Dr., Miami, FL, 33143