

COCONUT GROVE

Grove Arts Festival at 60 to bring 280 jury-selected artists

By Abraham Galvan

The Coconut Grove Arts Festival is set to celebrate a 60th anniversary milestone.

The arts festival has gone from being a clothesline art display to an 888,400-square-foot, three-day festival featuring over 280 internationally recognized, jury-selected artists showcasing their works of art all along Biscayne Bay in Coconut Grove.

Some 60 years ago, Charlie Cinnamon put together an outdoor Parisian-style exhibition as a publicity stunt for the iconic Coconut Grove Playhouse's production of *Irma la Douce*. Fast forward to today, the festival is run by the Coconut Grove Arts and Historical Association, which has vowed to continue its tradition by putting on a show that can fund year-round arts programs and scholarships for students who attend fine arts programs in local schools.

"Before Art Basel, there was the Coconut Grove Arts Festival, and this year we're excited

to see a lot of new artists and previous exhibitors who wanted to come back to celebrate the 60-year milestone," said Camille Marchese, the festival's executive director. "In addition, we celebrate our president, Monty Trainer, as he prepares to retire."

At the end of this year's festival, Mr. Trainer plans to retire and transition to president emeritus. Ms. Marchese will take on all responsibilities and continue to lead as executive director.

The Coconut Grove Arts Festival is slated for Presidents' Day Weekend starting Feb. 17 at 2700 S Bayshore Dr. Festival-goers should expect that the art they'll see will be like nothing they've ever seen before, Ms. Marchese said.

"The 2024 Arts Festival will be an amazing event overall, with interactive kids' activities, a return of the Young Collectors Club, revised culinary experiences, and live demonstrations," Ms. Marchese said. "In addition to the festival's signa-



Young do-it-yourself festivalgoer.

ture programs, some brand-new activations will be unveiled just for its 60th anniversary."

The 2024 event programming include:

■The Young Collectors Club:

a collaboration focused on cultivating the next generation of art collectors. Over 100 artists have donated everything from bronze sculptures and ceramics to painting and photography.

■Inner Artist: a hands-on DIY project, tailor-made for all ages to discover. From painting and crafting to interactive installations, attendees will get the opportunity to explore, create and connect with their inner artist.

■Anniversary Lounge: the Anniversary Lounge is an air-conditioned haven where art lovers can enjoy a panoramic view of past art festivals and appreciate the creative journey that has brought the festival to this milestone.

■The Stacks: nestled within picturesque Peacock Park, this experience brings art to life with stacked containers housing live mural painting, live music and intimate DIY projects for all ages. Artists will transform blank canvases into vibrant masterpieces.

■Arts & Drafts: the beer gar-

den will feature a blend of craft brews and live artistry, where talented craft artists bring their creations. Visitors can experience the artistry of craft beer and the craftsmanship of local artists.

■Collectors Club VIP: Visitors can elevate their festival experience with the VIP Collectors Club, an exclusive and ticketed VIP offering at the Woman's Club.

Original pieces are set to be displayed in mixed media, painting, photography, digital art, printmaking and drawing, watercolor, ceramics, glass, fiber, jewelry and metalwork, sculpture, and wood.

"This year is really a celebration of the artistic element and the revolution of the festival," Ms. Marchese said, "because it's gone from a small little clothesline affair to being really arguably one of the top outdoor arts festivals in the country, and it's a pretty big deal."

Details: www.cgaf.com

Public café to open in spring as Vizcaya Village advances

By Genevieve Bowen

A new era of historic charm and vibrant community is dawning as a neighborhood café prepares to open its doors this spring in the heart of Vizcaya Village, which is undergoing a comprehensive restoration.

The hundred-year-old farming village across South Miami Avenue from Vizcaya Museum and Gardens is undergoing a four-phase renovation to revitalize the lesser-known working part of the estate and realize its full potential as a cultural hub. As phase one of the project wraps up, horticulture staff will be welcomed in February and a revived superintendent's house is to open as a public café in the spring.

The historic Village Vizcaya is comprised of 11 buildings situated on 12 acres to the west of the bayfront house and gardens. Built in 1916 as part of John Deering's original winter estate, the village was conceived



Vizcaya plans landscaped buffer of native pines with a uniform fence along Bay Heights neighborhood.

to make Vizcaya self-sufficient.

Laborers, gardeners, and various staff worked and lived on the grounds which included a workshop, greenhouses and fields that supplied fresh flowers and produce, as well as barns that housed the cows and chickens that provided milk and eggs.

In January 2023, trenches were just being dug in the village to reroute underground powerlines and interior remodeling had

begun as part of phase one. Since then, non-historic structures have been removed to reclaim the entire site and a uniform fence has been erected along the Bay Heights neighborhood. Remodeling work at the superintendent's house has finished and the old paint shop has also been renovated to restore its integrity and function as the new base for horticulture operations.

As phase one is completed in

the coming months, a landscaped buffer inspired by the Pine Rockland consisting of native pine trees and other specimens is to rise around the property. There are also plans underway to launch urban farm programs with community partners.

Phase two of the project includes the restoration of five village buildings: the Diary Barn, Poultry Barn, Mule Barn, Carriage House and Staff Residence.

New programs for students and families will be hosted in the historic Farm Quadrangle, archival exhibits and a reference library will be located in the Staff Residence, and the public will be invited to participate in the museum's professional activities at a conversation lab in the Poultry Barn.

The driveway will be reconfigured to guide guests through a repurposed parking lot that leads to the new visitor arrival area in the Village Garage in phase three of the project.

The fourth and final phase will see a new community courtyard with public amenities built near the east edge of the village, additional greenhouses to accommodate site-wide horticulture needs and work spaces along the west edge.

The plan is to finish the restoration of all historic buildings in 2026 and complete the project by 2027, Alex Serna, director of marketing at Vizcaya, told Miami Today.

CocoWalk at maximum capacity for its shops, restaurants

By Abraham Galvan

Ring in the new year, CocoWalk continues to add extra layers of entertainment experiences to its fully leased lifestyle center.

CocoWalk at 3015 Grand Ave. has curated a lineup consisting of a collection of best-in-class local and national shops and restaurants, said Stuart Biel, senior vice president of regional leasing at Federal Realty Investment Trust.

"We have successfully reached our maximum capacity. As of now, there are no new upcoming tenants joining," he said. "However, our ongoing dedication to providing our community with a diverse and enriching retail and entertainment experience continues."

In pursuit of contributing to the growth of the Coconut Grove neighborhood and bolstering the local community businesses, Mr. Biel added, CocoWalk's vision for 2024 is centered on enhancing the retail and entertainment experience, fostering a vibrant and inclusive community, and playing a pivotal role in the resurgence of the Coconut Grove neighborhood and the prosperity of local businesses.

"We continually strive to enhance our offerings, events, and experiences available to our patrons, thus solidifying our reputation as a family-friendly hotspot where both residents and visitors can come together and foster a sense of community within the neighborhood," he said.

Toward the end of 2023, CocoWalk attracted two new restaurant concepts:

Eva & the Oyster Bar opened in October. The two-in-one restaurant focuses on Mediterranean-style dishes led by chef Michael Beltran and Ariete Hospitality Group. Eva offers a space where bar- and cocktail-style seating pairs with a menu offering a daily assortment of East and West Coast oysters, aguachile, ceviche and seafood-focused small plates.

El Bagel opened in December. The eatery offers hand-rolled bagels, sandwiches and schmears to the Grove's growing culinary community.

Around this time last year, the center welcomed retailers like Edward Beiner, Edite Mode and Coco Cigars, Europann and Gas Bijoux, Salt & Straw and Infinity fitness center.

In 2015, the newly reimagined 150,000-square-foot CocoWalk was acquired by The Comras Company, Grass River Property and majority partner Federal Realty Investment Trust, and went through an extensive renovation. The outdoor lifestyle center offers retail space and includes local, national and international restaurants and retailers such as Planta, Sushi Garage and Mister 01 Extraordinary.

"This achievement (being 100% leased) reflects the remarkable success CocoWalk has experienced in leasing both office and retail spaces and serves as a testament to how Coconut Grove is rapidly establishing itself as a dynamic space where commerce and leisure converge," Mr. Biel said.