

Island News

Home tour will raise money, highlight island living, businesses

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Vivian Gallego-Mendez is Home Tour Committee chair.

Criss-crossing the island and offering a peek inside some of the iconic homes that give Key Biscayne its charm and prestige, the Chamber of Commerce's second annual

"Homes of Key Biscayne: Lifestyles in Paradise" tour will showcase what makes island life so unique.

The event, a Chamber fundraiser, is Saturday, February 4, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Tickets are on sale for \$30 in advance (\$40 at the door), and organizers continue to seek volunteers.

Some 600 people are expected to take in the sights, making their way around the island via mini-buses boarded at the Key Biscayne Presbyterian Church. Buses will leave the church at intervals throughout the course of the event to ensure a good flow of traffic at the homes.

Vivian Gallego-Mendez, Home Tour Committee Chair, noted, "Six homes will be included in the 'Homes of Key Biscayne: Lifestyles in Paradise' tour, and will cover all kinds of homes that make our island so special. We're looking forward to showing off our beautiful island and these different homes from different architects and different developers."

There will also be a raffle – tickets are \$5 or three for \$10 – to win gift certificates to local stores and restaurants. "We have wonderful prizes from our local merchants," Gallego-Mendez said.

Also, guests will be treated to some of the best food Key Biscayne has to offer. At the last home, Gallego-Mendez noted, "Visitors will be able to sample delicious food provided by participating local restaurants," including 100% Natural, Archie's Pizza Café, Boaters Grill, Briciola Deli, Chief's Seafood & Sushi, Costa Med, Domino's Pizza, El Gran Inka, La Mela, Lighthouse Café, Llanllyr SOURCE organic water from Wales, Novecento of Key Biscayne, Patagonia, Puntino Key Biscayne, The Golden Hog, Vito's Italian Restaurant and Parties by Pat.

While the list of restaurants can start getting participants' mouths watering right now, the visual treats included on the tour remain a closely-guarded secret: Gallego-Mendez said the list of homes guests will be visiting will not be released until February 4.

"It's going to be a surprise on the day of the event," she said, but guests can rest assured that "the houses we're choosing are absolutely gorgeous – they really depict the lifestyle of the Key."

Gallego-Mendez added at each stop on the tour participants will get a chance to tour much of the home and also learn about its history and architecture.

While the event will provide for a fascinating experience for people from all over – last year's tour drew 300 guests from as far south as Homestead and as far north as Palm Beach County, as well as from abroad – Gallego-Mendez stressed it is also the Chamber's signature fundraiser.

She explained the tour was organized

"to raise much-needed funds that will allow the Chamber to continue providing support services to its members. It's our biggest fundraiser for the Chamber, so I'm hoping the community comes out to see what we have for them."

And of course, the event also includes the vital mission of promoting local businesses.

"It is a great opportunity to showcase your business and how it contributes to our extraordinary island lifestyle," Gallego-Mendez said.

For example, she noted, by serving food from local restaurants at the last house on the tour, organizers hope to in-

spire guests to stay and have lunch or a snack on the Key. They also hope to encourage participants to visit local retailers and other businesses while they're in town.

"It's really about promoting our businesses," she said. "It's great exposure."

Gallego-Mendez added businesses had the chance to gain even more exposure by signing on as sponsors.

Consultatio Key Biscayne LLC, which is redeveloping the former Sonesta Beach Resort site is the "presenting sponsor" for the event.

Meanwhile, Gallego-Mendez said anyone interested in volunteering at one of

the homes should contact her at galegomendez.v@ewm.com or the Chamber office at 305-361-5207. Volunteer shifts are 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. and noon-3:30 p.m.; volunteers are needed to serve as greeters and answer questions about the homes on the tour.

Meanwhile, she said, tickets are available for purchase at most local real estate offices, from all Chamber members and at the Chamber office at 88 West McIntyre Street.

She encouraged everyone on the island – and from the greater South Florida community – to get involved. "It's a wonderful event – it's a lot of fun."



Photo by Santiago Sabogal

Winter concert series

Key Biscayne's Winter Concert Series kicked off Saturday with a piano concert performed by professional musician and Winter Concert Committee member Amarylli Fridegotto, and two gifted students, Ian Barnett and Diego Arevalo.

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Date	High Tide	Low Tide	Sunrise/Sunset	Moonrise
Thu., Jan. 19,	5:04 a.m. 5:13 p.m.	10:45 a.m. 11:11 p.m.	7:08 a.m. 5:54 p.m.	3:37 p.m.
Fri., Jan 20,	6:05 a.m. 6:14 p.m.	11:44 a.m. -----	7:08 a.m. 5:55 p.m.	4:37 p.m.
Sat., Jan. 21,	6:59 a.m. 7:09 p.m.	12:07* a.m. 12:38 p.m.	7:08 a.m. 5:56 p.m.	5:33 p.m.
Sun., Jan. 22,	7:48 a.m. 7:59 p.m.	12:59* a.m. 1:28 p.m.	7:08 a.m. 5:57 p.m.	6:23 p.m.
Mon., Jan. 23,	6:33 a.m. 8:46 p.m.	1:48* a.m. 2:16 a.m.	7:08 a.m. 5:57 p.m.	7:08 p.m.
Tue., Jan. 24,	9:15 a.m. 9:31 p.m.	2:34 a.m. 3:00 p.m.	7:07 a.m. 5:58 p.m.	7:49 p.m.
Wed., Jan. 25,	9:55 a.m. 10:13 p.m.	3:19 a.m. 3:44 p.m.	7:07 a.m. 5:59 p.m.	8:25 p.m.
Thu., Jan. 26,	10:33 a.m. 10:55 p.m.	4:01 a.m. 4:26 p.m.	7:07 a.m. 6:00 p.m.	9:00 p.m.

* Strong tides