



VELVET UNDERGROUND

Get a taste of Club Med at Miami Beach



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Miami Herald.com/Read Lesley's blog, Scene in the Tropics

Unable to get to the Mediterranean this summer because your yacht's in the shop or because of a little problem called being broke? Don't worry, the Med is coming to you via a -vis the Mediterranean Experience Wine Challenge on Saturday at the Miami Beach Convention Center. At the event, a panel of winos — er, judges — taste and rate all sorts of wines to choose the Best in Show. The panel includes *Hell's Kitchen* season five contestant **Seth Levine**, among other expert swishers. Although you don't get to drink those wines, your \$35 ticket allows you into the rest of the expo, which features the best of all sorts of Mediterranean fare and spirits. According to a publicist, "Everyone will leave full and probably a little buzzed." Doors open at 10 a.m., wine challenge ceremony is at 3 p.m. Call 305-567-2822.

Also on Saturday and for free, the official, official launch of the pool party at **Sole on the Ocean**, 17314 Collins Ave. in Sunny Isles Beach, which we could have sworn officially launched weeks ago. This official event begins at 3 p.m. and features spirited performances by **The Hep Cat Boo Daddies** and **DJ Baby Dre** as well as a runway show by swimwear purveyor **Betty Bangs**. Food and drink specials, too, of course.

Now that *Gossip Girl* is over for the season, **Da Vittorio**, 264 Giralda Ave. in Coral Gables, has taken Wednesday nights and turned them into *Gossip*, a women's dinner party featuring three glasses



OUT AND ABOUT: Top left, at Vagabond are Vaso Spirou and Darlene Mayorca. Top right, David and Christy Martin at the Raleigh. Bottom left, Scott Pacheco and Emily Joy at Crazy Piano in Coconut Grove. Bottom right, actress Sofia Vergara at the Green Society afterparty for *Chicago* at the Arsht Center.



of red, white, champagne or the Da Vittorio Perfect Martini with its entrees as well as a dessert sampler for those gaggles that include three or more gabbers at the table. A cocktail hour from 6-7 p.m. offers half-price cocktails and \$26 pitchers of sangria.

Discuss among yourselves but not for too long, as on

Thursday nights at **Maxine's Bistro & Bar** at **The Catalina Hotel** it's **Chat Noir** Thursdays, an allegedly interactive burlesque cabaret dinner show in which the headliners, **The Queen's Cabaret**, will invite guests to join in on the camp. It sort of reminds us of the old school South Beach days when drag

dinners at **Mulberry Street Cafe** at the city hall building brought out the likes of **Madonna** and **Cher** — the real ones. Blues singer **Brendan O'Hara** and harmonica player **Randy Singer** will perform poolside. Drink and dinner specials are featured each week. Performances are at 9 and 11 p.m. For reservations, call 305-674-3527.

Speaking of performances, you truly have to be something special with a name like **Hot Tuna** and apparently the Washington Avenue hot spot is quite the spectacle, especially Wednesdays, when women get free sushi rolls from 7-9 p.m. and free drinks from 9-11 p.m. with the libations going half-price after 11. In addition, of course, is the restaurant's signature eye and ear candy — dancers and singers performing every 30 minutes on the center bar, making **Hot Tuna** the truly South Beach version of a supper club. Also pretty clubby in a burger and beer-y way are places like our fave, **Clarke's, 8 Oz.** and soon enough, **The Burger and Beer Joint**, a self-explanatory gourmet burger spot, sports bar and lounge coming to the old Ouzo space at 18th Street and Bay Road in South Beach. Our pals at **Chowhound.com** already report that the place may have up to 150 beers and possibly a microbrewery inside.

Lastly, one more pool party to add to your weekend, this time **Sarava Sundays** at the **Ritz-Carlton South Beach** where, from 5-9 p.m. this Sunday and the last Sunday of every month, you can sip on \$7 Leblon Cachaca cocktails to the tunes of DJ Sage spinning Afro-Brazilian house. Reduced-price valet parking is available. Call 786-276-4008.

Hangover the next morning? Blame it on Rio! You may not be able to get outta Dodge this summer, but you can sure pretend you did pretty easily.