

# How to save a memory

By Verticus • [www.miamivisionblogarama.blogspot.com](http://www.miamivisionblogarama.blogspot.com)

**Y**our heart quickens when you see her rising above the palm trees. The ocean breeze carries the smell of memory: jet fuel, salt air and the unforgettable, thrilling roar of Unlimited hydroplanes. You're high up in the seats, shaded by the largest cantilevered concrete span in the world, watching Miss Budweiser with the legendary Dean Chenoweth at the wheel, winning the season opening race in the Unlimited Series.

It's 1971 and everything was perfect at that one place and time.

Time passes. The Miami Marine Stadium is now 45 years old. As you approach her from Rickenbacker Causeway you quickly discover this isn't the kind of Memory Lane you want to drive on. You can see the graffiti a mile away. She's been tagged from head to toe. It's quite possible she's been turned into the biggest repository of graffiti on the planet.

You park your car and slip through a chain-link fence. There are no guards. The doors to the public bathrooms are missing on the ground floor. You walk into the eerie dark silence and see that the place has been ransacked. Every urinal and sink has been ripped from the walls, and what couldn't be salvaged was thrown helter-skelter across the junk-strewn floor.

You exit into the daylight and enter the stadium itself. Graffiti greets you everywhere you turn. Every inch of this tomb to boat racing memo-

ries has been tagged. You're surprised to see that most of the original seats are still there. They too are tagged, and you discover the salt air and lack of care has made them worthless. You walk up steps, grab a rusting ladder hanging from the ceiling and lift yourself up. You climb up and exit on the roof and discover the fabled roof has been tagged too and you wonder...

Why? What happened?

The official reason for her neglect is 1992's Hurricane Andrew. Hair-line cracks were found in the roof and the city closed it down, fearing it was unsafe. Nothing was done to fix it. Sixteen years later, the roof still stands. In 2002, Miami Mayor Manny Diaz promised to fix it. He never did.

In June the city held a charrette for the community, to get input on what to do with it and the land it sits on. You go and discover the marine stadium isn't in any of the proposed options. This makes you nervous until a poll is taken of the nearly 200 in attendance and you learn that almost everybody wants to save the stadium.

That was six months ago. No one has heard a thing since.

Rumor has it that it will be too expensive to fix. You suggest that maybe a private company can either absorb the full cost or split it with the city in exchange for naming rights. The Budweiser Miami Marine Stadium sounds so right.

To petition for the restoration of the Miami Marine Stadium, please contact:

Mayor Manny Diaz  
City of Miami  
City Hall, 3500 Pan American Drive  
Miami, FL 33133  
305-250-5300  
Fax: 305-854-4001  
email: [mannydiaz@ci.miami.fl.us](mailto:mannydiaz@ci.miami.fl.us)

**MIAMI, Fla. --Action in the Orange Bowl Invitational "250" Speed classic Powerboat Marathon thrilled a near-capacity group of racing fans at the City of Miami Marine Stadium Dec. 28, 1970.**  
Miami-Metro Dept. of Publicity  
and Tourism photo

