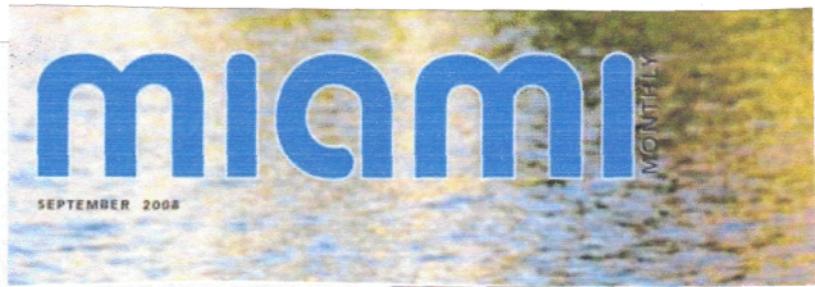


letters



A LANDMARK WORTH SAVING

I love Miami. Like a New Yorker loves the Big Apple, I love my city to the core of its color. I love how a seemingly refined woman driving by can flick you the bird for no reason, and that old men can sell red carnations, chilled bottled water or a blowup Spiderman at an intersection. I love the overall feel and energy of our streets and the beauty surrounding it, even if it's hotter than hell.

I was born in Miami and moved away after the birth of my first child. We moved to North Carolina ... now it's a trend. It is my understanding that there are only two families that have moved from Miami to NC and back to Miami, we are one. The other family is just as grateful to be home. The grass indeed may appear to be greener in NC, but after 12 years of living away from "home" it was time to move back.

Don't get me wrong, I loved our time in Raleigh, we made amazing friends, I perfected mint juleps, pecan pies and cheese straws, and even had the tendency to say "ya'll" in conversation. The one amazing lesson I learned in the "south," was the concept of preservation. Southerners love to preserve customs in food, dining, culture and especially in architecture.

This preservation thing is contagious. We renovated our first home, The Glenwood House (circa 1920), which was on the market for over a year prior to our purchase. We walked in, and knew it was the one - against the advisement of our realtor. It smelled of garbage, had residue of ro-

dents and other creatures, and the overall feeling of abandonment. We closed on the home within 30 days and started removing... not only the dead fragments of life but also the poor decorating choices inspired by the 1970s.

After a year of blood and sweat, we completed the home. It became an amazing showcase and come to find, the original owners were the founders of Southern Living Magazine. When we sold the home, we moved on to the next renovation which was built in the 1860s; it was

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obvious we hadn't given enough blood and sweat the first time around.

Many renovations later, we moved back home to Miami. To our delight, so many things have changed and yet so many have stayed the same. Some were shocks, such as Parrot Jungle now Watson Island, which my kids love. South Beach is another revamped locale that I have viewed in many stages. Through the years, it has gone through devastation to resurrection catering to the artful side of Miami. The Biltmore Hotel brings a smile to my face. I vividly remember seeing it in ruins and now I crave not only its menu but to dive into its pool.

One structure that brings me sadness is the Miami Marine Stadium and its current state. I recall so many memories of the Stadium and at a glance, every memory comes alive. The most profound one was the first time I attended a

concert there with my father.

It was a magical moment, not solely because of being there with my father, (I am a daddy's girl) but because the event was filled with cool ocean breezes (right out of a tourist commercial), people having a grand ole time (a saying I picked up in the South) and the most amazing music (Air Supply...which makes me laugh now with some embarrassment).

After the great memories flee, reality settles in, and the state of the Miami Marine Stadium is painful to view. Do we love our city enough to preserve a structure that was designed for us? Can we gather and unify to illustrate to our city our passion to revive a place where we can attend events and activities for our community? Do we understand its potential as another signature icon of our city, and perhaps its allure to the world?

If I could have another evening of Air Supply or Jimmy Buffett I promise to contribute my experience in removing unflattering objects, painting over the graffiti and scrubbing the floor...well...how about I bring the cheese straws, pecan pie and the mint juleps?

If you too are passionate about restoring and preserving this amazing structure, please visit www.marinestadium.org and become a friend of the Miami Marine Stadium.

Violette Sproul
Miami