

Beating the recession

Hands-on approach keeps Goyanes' Miami businesses afloat

by [Oscar Pedro Musibay](#)

Jose Goyanes is too busy seating diners at his new downtown Miami restaurant, **Tre Italian Bistro** on Flagler Avenue, to talk business.

The 42-year-old owns two restaurants, a barbershop and three beauty-supply stores in a retail and tourism market hammered by the economic downturn. He says it's his hands-on approach that keeps his businesses afloat in a sea of retail trouble.

"I see myself as a handyman in the morning, a host at lunch and a bookkeeper in the evening," said Goyanes, whose apartment balcony at 50 Biscayne overlooks Tre.

Goyanes spent more than \$700,000 to renovate the former luggage store, securing financing from a former partner for Tre, which generated 24 jobs. The other restaurant is La Loggia, across from the historic courthouse, a downtown favorite he opened with the same partners, **Jennifer Porciello and Horatio Oliveira**. He also owns **Churchill's Barber Shop and three Metro Beauty Centers**.

In addition to his businesses, Goyanes also oversees the services committee at the **Miami Downtown Development Authority**, which is downtown's advocate to the city of Miami. As a DDA board member, he often campaigns for more police walking the area's sidewalks and the funding of storefront upgrades.

Goyanes said the biggest change he's seen in the neighborhood since he opened his first Metro Beauty Center in 1995 is the completion of the high-rise condominiums and what they bring. A study the DDA commissioned concluded that 62 percent of the 80 buildings built in Miami's downtown since 2003 are primarily occupied by full-time residents.

"It's still kind of surreal seeing women and couples walking at night with their dogs," Goyanes said.

Eatery 'should set an example'

Rafael Kapustin, a property owner and manager in downtown Miami who partnered with the **Related Group** on the downtown Loft projects, raves about Tre and what it represents.

"That will do more for Flagler than all the millions of dollars put into Flagler," Kapustin said. "That should set an example."

Kapustin, a longtime DDA critic, noted that Goyanes had trouble getting approval to open the 40-plus-seat eatery at 270 E. Flagler St. Goyanes acknowledged he had permitting issues, but said he got help from Miami Commissioners Tomas Regalado, Marc Sarnoff and Joe Sanchez, who is also chairman of the DDA, which helped streamline the permitting process.

"If that could happen to me, that I know people, imagine the little guy who is trying to open a business," Goyanes said.



PHOTO CAPTION: Jose Goyanes spent more than \$700,000 renovating a former luggage store for Tre Italian Bistro. At right, co-owners Horacio Oliveira and Goyanes.

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“[The city of Miami] needs to bend backward to attract people to do that,” Kapustin said.

Macy’s has been another outspoken critic of downtown. The focus of the criticism has been on the quality of storefronts and the upkeep of streets and sidewalks. Macy’s has even threatened to leave downtown if things do not improve.

Goyanes bristles at the mention of Macy’s, which he said has not followed its critique with its own investment.

“At some point, Macy’s is going to be irrelevant from downtown Miami,” he said.

Jay Caplin, who left as head of **Cushman & Wakefield’s Capital Markets Group** to join Miami-based **Steelbridge Capital**, said investors in commercial property are looking for positive signs like Tre’s opening when they consider purchases.

“It definitely means something positive for downtown,” Caplin said. “You are getting more butts in the beds. People are beginning to recognize that downtown Miami has an infrastructure. It has a big impact on the viability of a market.”