



Miami-Dade



Trè Italian Bistro in downtown Miami is staying open later and drawing patrons after dark.

scene in the area north of the Miami River, stretching a few blocks east of U.S. 1. Goyanes says about seven businesses in the eastern part of downtown are open at night, catering to crowds like his: "Locals and people who don't want to get caught on I-95 traffic" leaving their offices.

While seven may be a small number, it's enough to create a critical mass of patrons that other businesses are noticing. La Epoca, a high-end department store that has been downtown for

44 years, now stays open until 7 p.m. for weekly "Mojito Tuesdays." With sales up 20% this year, owner Tony Alonso says he will soon try staying open until 8 or 9 on Friday nights.

Still, it's a slow change, composed almost entirely of local entrepreneurs. "I think this will become hip before it becomes safe" for the national chains, says Neisen Kasdin, chairman of Akerman Senterfitt's land use and entitlements practice and vice chairman of the Miami Downtown Development Authority. A former mayor of Miami Beach, he thinks the area is "on the same track as Lincoln Road" (that city's famed pedestrian mall).

The downtown area faces a long haul, despite a growing residential population. Even Goyanes still closes his three beauty stores and a barber-shop at 6 p.m. But the city is hoping that will change soon.

DOWNTOWN MIAMI

Open Later

It's 7 p.m. on a Friday night in downtown Miami, and people are spilling out of Trè Italian Bistro on Flagler Street, women are walking their dogs, couples are pushing strollers down the sidewalk and patrons are heading into Mia at Biscayne restaurant and club. Two blocks over, Ecco Pizzateca is serving dinner and getting its upstairs lounge ready for a late-night crowd. A year ago, this nighttime activity was "unheard-of," says Jose Goyanes, a partner in Trè and several other downtown businesses.

Businesspeople like Goyanes and the three siblings who own Ecco are driving a startling change in downtown, slowly developing a nighttime