

# The Miami Herald

July 9, 2007

Circulation: 312,109

## Beauty shop owner beautifies downtown

When Jose Goyanes returned to his native Miami after living two years in Manhattan, a yearning for all things urban drew him to the gritty Flagler business district. "The closest thing to New York was downtown Miami," says the 40-year-old entrepreneur.

Goyanes opened Metro Beauty Center in downtown in 1995 and now has three locations, including the newest in a building on Southeast First Street that he bought in 2001 and refurbished. In 2004, he added Churchill's Barber Shop.

The hard-driving Cuban-American grew up immersed in the retail trade; his father was president of a drug-store chain. Not that trailblazing in the decrepit downtown area has been a walk in the park.

"Sales over the last two years have been stagnant," he says, "but that's good, considering all the construction and lack of parking and the basic conditions of downtown."

In the 1990s, he sold mostly to Latin American tourists, but after currency crises stemmed the flow of Argentines and Brazilians in the early part of the millennium, he revamped product lines.

Now, he says, his shops and salons cater to downtown professionals, like lawyers and bankers. And he bolsters business with online sales of beauty supplies.

### PROMISING FUTURE

He thinks downtown's prospects will brighten once residents move in to the condos going up nearby. He expects to stay open later and add Sundays to the schedule. "That will give me 52 extra days of business."

But much more is needed to turn the corner downtown. "We need more police," says Goyanes, who believes the city should pay officers better to staunch the exodus to other jurisdictions. And he wants the city to crack down on code violations that range



CHARLES TRAINOR JR./MIAMI HERALD STAFF

**ACCENTUATING THE GOOD:** Jose Goyanes, who runs Metro Beauty Center and Churchill's Barber Shop, is among a pioneering group of business owners who are betting the blighted Flagler district will make a turnaround.

from ugly, cluttered signs to neglected buildings.

"Property owners need to take better care of their properties, and business owners need to take more pride in the way they look," he says. "Code enforcement is the one thing that could make a big impact in probably six months."

He paid \$800,000 for the two buildings behind Macy's at Southeast First Street and South Miami Avenue. He painstakingly remodeled them, borrowing against his home to raise cash.

Goyanes decided to open Churchill's when his search for tenants proved disappointing: "All I was getting

*'Property owners need to take better care of their properties, and business owners need to take more pride in the way they look. Code enforcement is the one thing that could make a big impact in probably six months.'*

— JOSE GOYANES, owner of Metro Beauty Center and Churchill's Barber Shop

was electronics and luggage stores" proposing to come in, he says. "I said 'I've got a great idea.'"

### CLASSY SETTING

The barber shop at 12 SE First St. — which charges \$20 for a basic haircut and \$25 for a deluxe shave with oil, hot towels and a face massage —

is stylishly furnished with brown leather barber chairs and dark wood shelving and counters; black-and-white photos depict the local history. A courtesy bar provides customers complimentary Scotch. A flat-screen TV dominates one wall. He has a manager, three full-time barbers and a cosmetologist, who

provides pedicures, manicures and facials.

He carries a wide array of men's personal-care products, including upscale Anthony Logistics for Men and Truefitt & Hill.

On a recent Tuesday, he was on his BlackBerry messaging the Downtown Development Authority, where he's a board member, and suggesting new trash cans be installed away from the curb after some existing cans were damaged. He's often out front on Saturdays helping pressure clean the building.

"You have to take pride," he says. "The business is a reflection of me."

— MARTHA BRANNIGAN