



# OCEAN DRIVE

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A day at the Sacred Space "might start with a meditation in the Garden, followed by yoga," says cofounder Karla Dascal. "Our classes aren't just an hour; they are whole experiences paired with music—like YogArt—and other healing modalities." She also recommends lunch at the on-site restaurant, Plant Food + Wine. "We've got Wi-Fi, so you can get work done, too."

## ON SACRED GROUND

AS A COFOUNDER OF THE SACRED SPACE MIAMI, **KARLA DASCAL** IS TRANSFORMING THE ARTS DISTRICT INTO A HUB FOR PHYSICAL, SPIRITUAL, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLNESS.

BY LEE BRIAN SCHRAGER

An early staple of Miami's now-thriving event scene, Karla Dascal and her eponymous event design company have produced some of South Florida's most talked-about soirées of the past two decades. That is, until a life-changing diagnosis led her on a personal and professional journey that culminated in her cofounding (with Chira Cassel) the Sacred Space

Miami, a community gathering spot and mecca for meditation, yoga, education, and wellness, with a popular on-site restaurant, Plant Food + Wine. Dascal shares the intimate details with *Ocean Drive*.

**How would you describe the Sacred Space Miami?**

It's an epicenter for wellness and transformation. After being in the works

for so long, and with so many parts, it's hard to believe it's a reality. It was tied to my evolution. As out of control as I once was, so were my clients. I saw people who needed wellness in their life, but wanted them to know they didn't have to go to the Himalayas to find themselves.

**Did you have doubts that this would work here?**

No, my vision was very

clear. My late father, who didn't believe in the lifestyle, said, "Karla, people are going to come crawling to this space—not because they need it, but because they want it."

**What was your wake-up moment?**

Obesity, diabetes, anxiety, and depression, combined with the stress of the event business. I qualified for gastric bypass, and had

it, but it didn't change my mind or soul. I walked into a yoga class one day, and instructor Fred Bush was drinking this blue algae called E3Live. I asked him if it could help get me off antidepressants. **What did you do next?** In 2008, my event business came to a screeching halt. It allowed me to start traveling more and seek out teachers and healers. I

started taking care of the physical and soul. I opened my space up for these teachers to educate.

**Tell us about one of your programs.**

Prayerdansa is our signature movement practice. It was created when we were on a cruise with the late Debbie Ford, known for the Shadow Process [a three-day evolutionary workshop], and we wanted to bring it here.

**What brought you together with cofounder Chira Cassel?**

We were connected and spent hours talking about our conscious living principles. When I asked her to start the next day, she asked for two weeks because her brother was getting married, and I was producing the wedding.

**How is it working with Plant Food + Wine chef Matthew Kenney?**

Food is what healed me. His updated version of the daily food pyramid puts plants as the base and on the top. I'm very committed to it because it works. It's about using a more holistic system.

**When you look at the conscious community, who are some of the leaders who form its foundation?**

Rachel Levy, my life coach. The team at Unity on the Bay. Sadhu, my meditation coach and Kundalini teacher. Dr. Etti, who was instrumental in introducing juicing to Miami. Fred Bush, my yoga instructor. Among many others.

**Your parents are known for their generosity; it seems like it's come full circle.**

This is my giving back. My father is the true founder here.

**What do you want people to take away from their experience at the Sacred Space?**

A sense of well-being and peace.  
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The small East gallery is one of four Sacred Space galleries, which are used for wellness events, workshops, corporate functions, and social gatherings. BELOW: The outdoor deck of Plant Food + Wine, where the emphasis is on "living foods."

