

## History of 2209 Wilton Drive


**Manor Market** opened at 2209 Wilton Drive in May of 1948 as a semi-open-air market with sawdust floors. It was Wilton Manors' first grocery and had the first telephone in town. In 1952 owners Lamar Braddy and Frank Starling enclosed and expanded the building and added off-street parking in the rear. Mr. Braddy was known for his elaborate promotions to get customers in the store. But it wasn't enough to match the competition from chain supermarkets like Food Fair, Grand Union and Stevens that had opened in the Manors. **Manor Market** went out of business in 1959. Braddy and Starling re-purposed part of the building that same year as the **Flame Restaurant**. But, despite the elaborate signage and good initial reviews, it only lasted something over a year.





In early 1961, Clayton Leaver, Al Hagen's contractor, and his wife Lou, today considered to be the matriarch of the Woman's Club, envisioned (for reasons uncertain) re-opening the venue as a Hugh Hefner-esque private supper club—**The Playmate Club**. While the key club concept was quickly dropped, other similarities remained. Cocktail waitresses were known as "Baby Dolls". Want-ads indicated that they must "...be attractive, age 23-32 [and] wear shorts to interview". A 1962 Sun-Sentinel review noted: "The Baby Dolls, who provide service and good viewing, engage in an impromptu twist number, led by Marie Martin, whose costume, ringed in fringe, gives the dance extra dimensions. The gal also shakes a cocktail while she twists and serves it at ringside...". The review went on to praise "**The Playmate's** excellence as a dining and dancing spot". **The Playmate Club** lasted until 1965—to be replaced by the **Back Door-A-Go-Go** lounge.

*Ft Lauderdale News Apr 06, 1962*



**The Playmate club**

*"Where the Beautiful BABY DOLLS Are"*

- **DAILY BUFFET LUNCHEON** **\$1<sup>25</sup>**  
All You Can Eat .....

**Dancing Nitely**  
(Except Tues.) to the Rhythm of **THE TEMPOS**

**Our Famous Steak** Baked Potato, Garlic **\$2<sup>95</sup>**  
U.S. TOP CHOICE SIRLOIN Bread, Salad, Coffee  
Private Dining Room Available for Banquets and Private Parties  
Phone LO 6-9252

2209 Wilton Dr.,  
Wilton Manors

**TODAY'S SPECIAL**  
Steamed  
**SHRIMP**  
or Broiled  
**LOBSTER**  
All You Can Eat **\$1.95**

After **The Playmate Club** closed in 1965, it was replaced that same year with **The Back Door Restaurant & Lounge**. **The Back Door** initially had a supper club theme like Playmate Club; but without the racy "Baby Dolls". But after a few years it came to embrace the disco era and was renamed **Back Door-A-Go-Go Lounge**. By 1975, the Back Door had an identity problem. There was a daily "businessmen's lunch" that included a lingerie and go-go show. Thursday nights were a male go-go show (with a Tahitian fire dancer?). Other nights it was a Blue Grass Band venue. The following year it settled on a "Country Music Supper Club" theme and lasted until sometime in 1978.

PHONE 565-0711 **BACK DOOR LOUNGE** 2209 WILTON DR. WILTON MANORS

**FEATURES MALE GO-GO DANCERS EVERY THURSDAY NIGHT!**


PRINCE HENRI  
★ TAHITIAN  
FIRE DANCER

★ BLUE GRASS BAND  
WED., FRI., SAT., SUN.

**BUSINESSMEN'S LUNCH and ...**

**LINGERIE SHOW EVERY AFTERNOON, FOLLOWED BY DYNAMIC GO-GO SHOW!**

BRING THIS AD & GET A FREE DRINK WITH LUNCH

The **Sir Nicholas Inn** opened at 2209 Wilton Drive in January, 1979. It began as a Polish/Eastern-European supper club. It was heavily advertised and a popular tourist destination. Strangely, in 1986 the venue was subdivided, with the **Sir Nicholas Inn** in one section and the **Tahiti Inn** in the other (perhaps as a mini Mai-Kai?). As reported by the Sun-Sentinel in late December 1986, both ventures failed, "...the **Tahiti Inn** closed and re-opened as **The Palms**. **The Palms** is quite different from its predecessors. It caters primarily to a homosexual clientele."



\*\*\*\*\*

**TAHITI INN** RESTAURANT & LOUNGE

- Rated finest Chinese Cuisine East of San Francisco
- Dinners served by candlelight
- Romantic entertainment
- Relaxing atmosphere
- Early Birds 5-6 P.M.

**2209 Wilton Drive  
Wilton Manors, FL 33305  
(PARKING IN REAR)**

**TEL: 564-4901 RES.**  
**OPEN TUES.-SUN. 5 P.M.**

Also featuring the Classic  
Polish-European Cuisine  
of

**Sir Nicholas Inn**

Including:

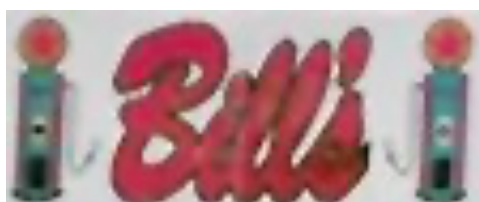
Pierogi Dinner	<b>\$7<sup>00</sup></b>
Sunday Buffet	<b>\$8<sup>00</sup></b>
Polish Experience Dinner	<b>\$10<sup>00</sup></b>

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In October 1990 Tony Dee, a strip mall/condominium developer, purchased the entire block. He re-imaged **The Palms** into an upscale supper club dubbed **Chardees**. It would be only the second gay restaurant in Broward and Palm Beach. According to an extensive 2005 NewTimes article it was “aimed specifically at silver foxes and their admirers”. It featured top-tier entertainers like Eartha Kitt, the Ink Spots, Pudgy, Jennifer Holliday, Judy Tenuta, and the Glenn Miller Orchestra. The New Times described it as “a glittering gay mirage in a desert of boarded-up strip malls, trailer parks, crack houses, and abandoned buildings strewn with garbage”. After a change in ownership in 2005, **Chardees** ultimately closed in 2007; after 17 years of operation.



Shortly after the closing of **Chardees** in 2007, **Bill's Filling Station**, a gay nightclub, quickly moved from its original location on N.E. 13th St. to take its place. The following year unknown Stefani Germanotta debuted her first single recording “Just Dance” at the Miami Winter Music Conference—using the stage name Lady Gaga. She began her first record release parties Memorial Day weekend 2008, with stops at Score in Miami and **Bill's Filling Station**. (below is a rare photo of that actual performance) And you know how that eventually turned out ...





**Wolf Bar:** Grand Opening 12/26/2015, closed early 2017.

**Southern Nights** opened early 2017

**Club Silver:** Opened 2018

**Eagle Wilton Manors: Bear Cave** opened Summer 2019, Grand opening Nov. 8, 2019



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- Dinners served by candlelight
- Romantic entertainment
- Relaxing atmosphere
- Early Birds 5-8 P.M.



Also featuring the Classic Polish-European Cuisine of

**Sir Nicholas Inn**

Including:

Perogi Dinner	\$7.95
Sunday Buffet	\$8.95
Polish Experience Dinner	\$10.95

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**NEW EXCITING**



Fine  
Polish-European  
Dining & Dancing  
**Sir Nicholas Inn**

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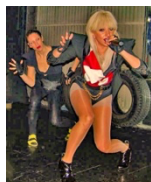


**CHARDEE'S**



*dinner-cocktails*

2209 Wilton Drive  
Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33305-2131







Ft Lauderdale News Apr 06, 1962





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