

RESTAURANT NEWS

# New food truck in West Palm Beach already has loyal ‘VeGang’ following

Liz Balmaseda

Palm Beach Post  
USA TODAY NETWORK

When you ask Rhona Nain what makes her vegan-burger food truck different from other mobile-kitchen concepts, she'll tell you it's all about the VeGang. That's what she calls the plant-based devotees, the vegetarians, flexitarians and open-minded carnivores who make up Dope Vegan's roadside fan base in West Palm Beach.

Sure, there's the mix of Jamaican spices she sprinkles on her dishes to recall the flavors of her native Kingston. And there's the fact her Dope Burger just earned second-place raves from the judges at the Seed Food and Wine vegan festival in Miami in late January. But the VeGang is what keeps the truck running, she says.

"Our VeGang is a melting pot of so many different people, ethnicities and ages. They feel like they're at home when they come by. I love that," says Nain, 35. "I want our customers to feel loved. It's easy to serve food, but we're serving an experience, a memorable moment of some sort."

The hot-pink-accented Dope Vegan truck made its debut in May 2022. Emblazoned with an image of a juicy burger atop a mound of fries, it is parked at 175 N. Military Tr., just north of Southern Boulevard, on the west side of Military Trail.

This is where Nain serves a half-dozen types of vegan burgers and sandwiches, fries, sweets and "extra dope flavor" in the form of toppings such as plant-based bacon, jalapeños and caramelized onions.

The menu's centerpiece: the prize-winning Dope Burger, an Impossible brand patty loaded with vegan burger, vegan cheese, caramelized onions, lettuce, tomatoes and Nain's special Dope

Sauce.

"I always say it's like the vegan version of the Big Mac sauce. Everyone wants us to bottle it," says Nain, who moved here from Jamaica at age 13. "In general, we also use vegan butters and oils. We have a seasoning blend that has the flavors of my Caribbean roots, all the things I grew up cooking with."

Nain says she's planning to add a jerk "chicken" sandwich that gets its meatiness from young jackfruit.

Her devotion to plant-based cooking is not entirely about her own diet. Nain describes herself as "not completely vegan."

The vegan food truck idea was sparked by a hardship that hit close to home, she says. Her sister Romanyne Davis was diagnosed with lupus six years ago, says Nain.

"No matter what they tried, it wouldn't work. She went raw vegan and, basically, her symptoms went away," Nain says. "That's when I became a believer."

She left a corporate job in marketing and sales after the pandemic hit.

"I loved my job but it wasn't my passion. When the pandemic hit, it changed the game and it showed how short life is," says Nain, who is mother to a 4-year-old child. "I thought, 'Let me do what I always wanted to do.'"

A longtime health-and-wellness devotee, Nain says the vegan world feels familiar to her. In fact, she called upon her vegan dad to help her set up the truck and its outdoor dining area.

Her dad, Hander Nain, arranged hand-painted barrels as dining tables near the truck. He hung lights to illuminate the space at night.

"He created an outdoor space for us," she says of her dad, a former chef who taught her to cook when she was 7. "He would say, 'Come to the kitchen with me.' That's how I started to cook."



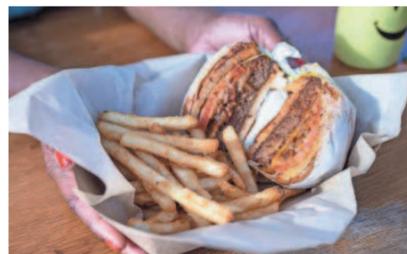
Sisters Rhona Nain, left, and Romanyne Davis share a moment at Nain's Dope Vegan burger truck in West Palm Beach. Nain took inspiration from Davis' plant-based diet when setting up the vegan venture. ANDRES LEIVA PHOTOS/THE PALM BEACH POST

## Dope Vegan

**Where:** 175 N. Military Tr., just north of Southern Boulevard on west side of Military, West Palm Beach

**Contact:** 561-788-5139, EatDopeVegan.com

**Hours:** 11:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday; 11:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. Friday and Saturday



Meet the Dope Burger, the signature burger at the Dope Vegan truck in West Palm Beach. The burger recently won second place at a vegan festival in Miami.

Now, when she peers out of the food truck window and spots VeGang regulars, she wants to celebrate them, she says.

"People have so many options on where to spend their money. People work hard for their money. When they

patronize your business, it should be celebrated," says Nain. "They made a choice."

# Burning hot flashes continue after stopping Eligard injections



To Your Health  
Dr. Keith Roach

**Dear Dr. Roach:** I am 63 and was diagnosed with aggressive prostate cancer in 2020. I had my prostate removed. Unfortunately, they found that the cancer had spread to the lymph nodes. I have since had 35 treatments of radiation and also started hormone suppression treatments (Eligard).

In April 2022, after extensive imaging tests, I was told that I was cancer-free, and my PSA was 0.0 ng/ml.

My last injection of Eligard was given at the end of February 2022. I was scheduled to receive the next injection at the end of August 2022, but my urologist said that we will not do the injection anymore, since the PSA was still 0.0 ng/ml and all imaging indicated I was cancer-free.

Unfortunately, I have experienced all of the usual possible side effects from the Eligard injections: weight gain (45 pounds), terrible muscle loss (especially in my legs), horrible hot flashes, lack of energy, etc. And, as is expected, my testosterone levels are almost at 0.

My urologist stated that my body should start to bounce back to normal and start producing testosterone within about six months after stopping the Eligard injections.

I still have a very odd variation of hot flashes; when they come on, I feel a terrible burning sensation under my skin. This starts in the groin, spreading up my torso into both inner forearms and down my legs. When I told both my urologist and oncologist about these, they both stated that they have no idea what may be causing this and have never heard of this type of problem before. They are both assuming that it must be some type of variation of hot flashes. The frequency of these has been increasing lately, not

diminishing the way I expected.

So, I just wonder what your thoughts might be. How long should it take for my body to bounce back to "normal" post-Eligard? And do you have any ideas as to what might be the cause of these terrible burning sensations I continue to experience?

— M.M.

**Answer:** I agree that these burning sensations are likely to be a kind of vasomotor instability. That's the medical term for the cause of a hot flash. The blood vessels in the skin open up inappropriately and cause the person to get very warm and flushed, often sweating. The person can lose so much heat that they will be cold once the hot flash is over. The term "flash" can be a misnomer — the heat sensation may last anywhere from a few minutes to 20 minutes.

There are effective treatments for hot flashes. Cyproterone is an anti-androgen that is effective for treatment in men with low testosterone levels due to treatment

for prostate cancer. Venlafaxine is a non-hormonal treatment, normally used for depression, that is modestly effective at improving symptoms. Megesterol is a progestin-type of drug that is effective but can cause progression of prostate cancer.

I have read experts say that the hot flashes begin to get better as soon as treatment is over, while other experts have noticed that they may last long-term. My experience is that most men start to get relief about a year after stopping the leuprolide (Eligard and others), although it is highly variable. I would definitely ask your doctors about your treatment options, and I suggest trying the least-risky treatments initially.

*Dr. Roach regrets that he is unable to answer individual letters, but will incorporate them in the column whenever possible. Readers may email questions to ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu or send mail to 628 Virginia Dr., Orlando, FL 32803.*

# Ritz

Continued from Page 1D

for your senses" will transport you back in time to a turn-of-the-century show with whimsical characters, magical positions and world-class artistry.

Run by the infamous Mr. B.S. Swindler and hosted by Dr. Elixir and Ms. Sin, this outrageous, Barnumesque event features drama, Vaudeville-style comedy, acrobatics, music, beautiful costumes, sets and more.

Some of these acrobatic acts will include The Spinologist, Suspended Passion, The Gravitational Wheel and The Tangled.

Need an extra shot of wild? There's also a contortionist, a mouth-juggler and an old-school strongman.

No nosebleed seats here either; their custom-made big-top tent has only seven rows, making for an up-close experience that creates tons of energy between the audience and performers. All the seats are individual and padded, and the tent itself is climate-controlled with heat and air conditioning.

The adults-only theme also applies to the pre-show revelry at the Drink-Ory Garden. An hour before the show starts, guests can indulge in all manner of cure-all elixirs and potent potions from beer and wine to top-shelf cocktails. There will also be catered Mexican food.

Produced by Salto Entertainment, the 90-minute show was written and designed by Salto owners Allison Blei and Ivan Espana.

Blei said the show originally debuted



Mr. Swindle's Traveling Peculiarium and Drink-Ory Garden will be at Mizner Park in Boca Raton on Feb. 16-26 and at Carlin Park in Jupiter on March 2-12. PROVIDED PHOTOS

in 2018 and traveled the country until the pandemic. It reopened in October 2022 with a four-week stint in Boston and are currently on the west coast of Florida in Punta Gorda, she said.

Though the show has been around for a few years, Blei said they are constantly reworking it so that it is fresh and even repeat audience members will see things they did not see before.

So come one, come all! Step right up for some seriously cool entertainment!

**What:** Mr. Swindle's Traveling Peculiarium and Drink-Ory Garden

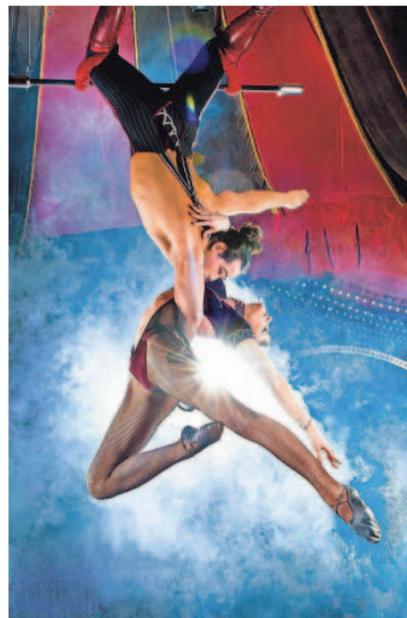
**Where:** Mizner Park, 590 Plaza Real, Boca Raton; Carlin Park, 400 A1A, Jupiter

**When:** Mizner Park shows are Feb. 16-26; Carlin Park shows are March 2-12. Show times for both locations are 7 p.m. Wednesday to Thursday; 4 and 7 p.m. Saturday; 2 and 5 p.m. Sunday

**Cost:** \$50 and up

**Information:** mrswindles.com; instagram.com/mrswindlestravelingpeculiarium

*Eddie Ritz is a journalist at The Palm Beach Post, part of the USA TODAY Florida Network. He has lived in the West Palm Beach area for more than 30 years and, from mild to wild, will cover noteworthy community happenings. You can reach him at eritz@pbpost.com. Help support our journalism. Subscribe today.*



Suspended Passion is just one of the high-flying acts you'll see.



One of the mind-blowing acts and twisted fun is The Contorted.