



THE POW FACTOR

These changemakers are claiming power through food, movement, and even rest, reshaping the language of strength and influence in South Florida. ■ BY JENNY STARR PEREZ

The wellness aisle is crowded. But amid the kale chips, mushroom elixirs and adaptogen-enhanced everything, Erica Groussman managed to carve out a space. The Miami-based founder and CEO of TRUBAR, a clean-ingredient, dessert-inspired protein bar brand, has built a business on the radical idea that wellness should feel good, taste great, and never leave you bloated.

Launched in 2019, TRUBAR was born from Groussman's real-life problem: navigating life as a busy mom of young kids while trying to eat healthfully on the go. "I was always in my car, grabbing protein bars that either tasted terrible or made me feel worse after eating them," she says. "I thought, why can't there be a bar that's clean and indulgent?" That question became a company and a sensation.

TRUBAR bars are 100% plant-based, gluten-free, dairy-free, soy-free, seed oil-free, and free of sugar alcohols. Their whimsical flavors—"Oh Oh Cookie Dough," "Daydreaming About Donuts," "Smoother Fudger Peanut Butter"—read more like bakery case favorites than wellness aisle fare. But make no mistake, these are serious players in the \$50 million clean-snacking category, now sold at over 15,000 retail locations including Target, Whole Foods, and Costco.

The recent national launch with Target marked a major milestone. "Target is our customer," Groussman says. "It was thrilling to see bars flying off the shelves. We had to slow down our advertising because we kept selling out." This summer, she'll expand again—this time with TRUBAR Kids, a nut-free line that's lunchbox-ready.

If her products are driven by cravings, her leadership is grounded in self-trust. "Building TRUBAR has made me more resilient than I ever thought I could be," Groussman says. "You move forward, you adapt, you figure it out." Power, in her view, isn't performative. It's personal. "It's being strong in my body and confident in my decisions. It's creating something that helps other people feel good in their own skin."

Groussman's daily routine reflects the same intention she puts into the bars. She begins her mornings with meditation, follows a clean, plant-forward diet, and keeps her wellness rituals flexible enough to fit real life. "Some days it's lemon water and a workout," she says, "Other days, it's just remembering to breathe between meetings." She believes in listening to the body and making choices that feel supportive rather than strict, eschewing preachy rigidity. "Hydration, clean ingredients, movement and sleep—those are my non-negotiables," she says. "The perfect routine doesn't exist. It's just about feeling clear enough to lead."

Kosher Soul

Tradition meets creativity in Raz Shabtai's North Miami kitchen, where the Jerusalem-born chef serves up soulful food and a philosophy that feeds more than hunger.

“Food is holy,” says Chef Raz Shabtai, standing tall in his kitchen at Mutra, the North Miami restaurant named after his grandmother. The statement is not a tagline.

It’s the core belief behind everything he cooks, serves, and shares. “When you treat something as holy, you respect it. You learn it. You understand where it comes from,” he says. Shabtai and his cooks recently visited their mushroom farm in Loxahatchee to witness the delicate balance of light, water, and care required to grow each one. “When I give someone a mushroom on a plate, I want to know how hard someone worked for it. That matters.” Born in Jerusalem and raised in his grandmother’s kitchen, Shabtai was taught early how to feed people with love. “She called me ‘my son,’ not ‘my grandson,’” he recalls. “Every day before I left the house, she’d say, ‘Your name is more valuable than gold. Never forget that.’” The food at Mutra carries that same intention. The open kitchen hums quietly as handmade couscous, maitake mushrooms, and corn polenta—made from Florida-grown kernels and almond milk—come together. “Corn and mushrooms are best friends,” Shabtai says, smiling. “We plate that dish with roasted maitake



in a brick oven, seasoned with cognac olive oil, French salt, and black pepper. Nothing is rushed.” Shabtai didn’t attend culinary school. He started as a dishwasher and worked his way through every station. “I learned the technique later. But the joy? This came from my grandmother. She watched us eat like it was her paycheck.” When he met his wife during the pandemic, he invited her for Shabbat and cooked a Moroccan tomato-stewed fish from memory. “She told me she fell in love with me because of that dish,” he says. “I truly understood the power of food to create connection in that instance.” At Mutra, Shabtai cooks with full attention to each moment. The restaurant doesn’t always have every item on the menu. “If I’m out of something, I say it. I’d rather give you the freshest ingredients than compromise. That’s what conscious cooking is.” He sees guests as family and the restaurant as his home. “This is where I pray,” he says. “Not in the religious sense. I pray through my food. I’m giving you a memory. A moment. That is what people feel when they say, ‘We can taste the love.’” And for Shabtai, that kind of success stirs the spirit.

Everyday Alignment

With her Pilates-inspired practice, Nofar Hagag helps clients reconnect with their purpose through mindfulness and consistency.



On any given morning, you’ll find Nofar Hagag at the front of her sleek Miami Beach studio, cueing her clients through slow, deliberate movements on Reformers and Cadillacs. The room is silent except for the sound of breath and her voice. “You don’t need noise to feel something,” she says. “When you’re fully present in your body, you’ll hear everything you need.” That sense of presence is the foundation of the Nofar Method, her namesake fitness program that blends anatomical precision with intuitive movement. Built from years of athletic training, medical study, and one-on-one client work, her method has become a word-of-mouth phenomenon in New York and Miami. The focus is not on performance, but on connection—to the muscles, the moment, and yourself. “I see every person as a story,” Hagag says. “You can’t teach a class if you’re not paying attention to the people in front of you. You must acknowledge who they are, where they are, and what their body needs.” The method is structured around a 50-minute class, with time equally divided between the Reformer and the Cadillac. Both machines are used with purpose, offering sequences that challenge strength, improve posture, and increase range of motion. The

programming shifts weekly, with each session designed to deliver a complete experience. Hagag’s own story is layered: a former NCAA Division 1 water polo athlete, a fitness instructor in the Israeli army, and a longtime student of anatomy and physical therapy. She draws from that background to create programming that adapts to real bodies, real injuries, and real lives. “I started teaching people who didn’t come from dance, people with scoliosis, arthritis, pain, pregnancy,” she says. “My goal is always to help someone walk out feeling aligned and clear.” Even as the method has expanded—with two studios in Manhattan and one in Miami Beach—Hagag continues to teach regularly. “If I don’t move my body every day, I feel off,” she says. “Teaching grounds me. It reminds me why I started.” The community built around the method is loyal and deeply connected. Instructors are trained directly by Hagag. Clients are greeted by name. Modifications are offered without request. Music is soft. Movements are specific. “There’s energy in the room,” she says. “Everyone is doing the same thing, but for different reasons. That creates a rhythm that feels supportive.” Her approach to her work is the same as it is in life: structured but personal. “There are a lot of ways to get stronger,” she says. “This is one of them. One breath, one rep, one intention at a time.”

Cool Under Pressure

Plastic surgeon Dr. Gregory Albert keeps the Florida Panthers playoff-ready—one carefully repaired cheekbone at a time.

The crowd at Amerant Bank Arena might never see the man behind the curtain, but Dr. Gregory Albert is often just steps from the ice—ready, composed, and focused. For 20 years, the Boca Raton-based plastic surgeon has been the go-to medical professional for the Florida Panthers, guiding players through high-pressure moments that happen as quickly as the game itself.

Albert's role during a game involves urgency, adrenaline, and the realities of impact. His presence is constant, and his focus is immediate. Or else. "Most of the time, I'm doing the work right there," he said. "Lacerations, broken noses, orbital fractures—it's fast, and I have to be faster." Whether it's a suture mid-period or a full facial reconstruction between games, his hands don't hesitate. Neither does his voice.

Reassurance, he insists, is as crucial as the repair. "It's the most underrated part of the job," he said. "The players need to know they're okay. That they can still get back out there." Sometimes, that means cracking a joke. Other times, it means a firm reminder of how little time they'll miss, or even a direct challenge: "Now go out there and make it count."

Working alongside NHL and NFL athletes, Albert brings the same care and precision to his private practice. His patients, often athletes and performers, seek not only aesthetics but performance-enhancing solutions. "A 1% improvement in nasal breathing can make a difference," he said. "And sometimes, that's all someone needs to feel better."

Though he's stitched his share of heroes and helped many return to the game, Albert keeps his mindset rooted in daily rituals. Each morning begins with a pause, and a wristband inscribed with positive affirmations. "I check it first thing," he said. "It's about taking a breath, thinking about yesterday, and setting intention for the day ahead."

As for the back-to-back Stanley Cup triumphs, the wins carry weight beyond the trophy. "The players held it together. We all did," Albert said. "There's a bond between the coaches, the medical team, and the executives. It's deep. And once you've been through it together, it doesn't fade. There's power in numbers."

