

100 Bars in 100 Days

Hops MacBarley's 2012 Key West Bar
Boondoggle
"The Peace, Love, and I.P.A. Tour"

BAR 11:

2-Cent Restaurant and Pub
<http://www.2centskw.com>
416 Appelrouth Lane
Friday 7/27, 6:00 pm

Jai Alai IPA (draft)

2-Cent stepped into the site on Appelrouth that was vacated by Ilona's. Brian and Jan tell me that Ilona's food was good, and I can attest that Crazy Jack hosted a fine arsenal of craft brews there, but that place just didn't have the clickety-clack to bring ya back. Or, at least, to bring enough people back often enough. That is, after all, the Big Challenge of these Off-Duval places. Gotta hook 'em good.



2-Cent made a good impression on me right away. I liked the name, I liked the sign. Stepping inside, I liked the colorful décor; one word came to mind: *snazzy*. It's not often that that word comes to mind, so ya gotta take note when it does.

It was my birthday – 6/26, thanks, mark your calendar – that first time here. It didn't hurt to be overflowing with mirth when I arrived. *Happy Birthday!* I called out to Brian and Jan, who were already seated at the bar when Jacko and I came in. Layla, the tall and lovely barkeep, came over to see what we wanted, and I assailed her with a lively *Happy Birthday!* as well. I could tell she was already estimating how soon she would have to shut me off.

But my behavior never got worse; my mirth leveled and my thirst reveled in the Jai Alai IPA. And after a few sips, I noticed some small glass bowls placed at intervals along the bar. At first I thought they were some artsy thing, like an artificial wrinkled brown palm leaf thingo – just part of the snazz.

But, not so, Bo Zo! It was fresh hot crispy bacon! Are you kidding me? FREE BACON!! I felt



like that dog in the TV commercial: IT'S **BACONNNN!!!!**

Once I started, there was no shutting me down. The four strips in front of me disappeared in very short order. Jacko slid his over to me. Gobble gobble gobble GONE. Jan slid me hers. G-G-G-Gone! Layla came back in from the kitchen with hot refills. It was a cholesterol orgy. Little bowls of heart attack. Craft beer and bacon. I was in heaven.

This PLIPA Tour stop, a month and a day later, though, figured to be a lot mellower. I was not rendez-vousing with anyone, and I was at low-to-medium mirth level. I really wasn't even planning on making the stop. A Fort Zack swim was on the docket, but black clouds were filling the sky like in the movie *Independence Day*, and the radar showed an imminent invasion of the Big Red Blob. FZ got back-burnered, and suddenly 2-Cent presented itself as the perfect port-in-the-storm.



Layla was womanning the bar again. (I think she's one of the owners?) There were about six people at the bar, and about the same at the tables. It was pretty quiet. No putzes bellowing *Happy Birthday!* or any such malarkey.

I happily accepted my Jai Alai and bacon, and then I looked around to see what the others were drinking. All five people to my left had tall wine glasses with bubbly fluid and small chunks of fruit in the bottom. I asked Layla what they were, and she said *Sparkling Sangria, very popular!* They certainly had the majority here.

A nice white-haired gent sat down to my right. I didn't hear what he ordered to drink, but it was beer. His came in a snifter-kinda thing. I think I felt a twang of envy. (Mighta been gas.) A couple of minutes later, he received a very funky looking bowl of steamed clams in some rich yellow broth with some geometric greens around the edges. Yo-ho, if the food was as good as the presentation, he was loving life.

I wondered what else the restaurant served. BLT's, maybe? :]

The gent's name was Paul (probably still is), and he relocated to KW from San Diego a few years ago. We had a pleasant chat for a while. He had hurried in here to beat the rain too. Here it was 20 minutes later, and there had been no rain. I checked the radar and the Big Red Blob had fizzled away to nothing. Must've been some virus planted in the Mother Ship or something.

So, with my excuse no longer valid, I departed to get that swim in. I shall be back, though, so keep that bacon sizzlin'!