

100 Bars in 100 Days

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

BAR 14:

In Kahoots
3850 N Roosevelt Boulevard
Tuesday 7/31, 9:15 pm

Key West Sunset Ale

Not surprised to be the only customer here: hotel bar, wrong time of the night, wrong time of the week, wrong time of the year, and wrong part of the island. This place is waaaaay out on the eastern end of K-Dub. It's the first bar you see when you come rolling across Cow Key Channel on US-1, though there are a couple of less conspicuous bars in the hotels and condos across the street.



Tod was on barkeep duty this night. When I arrived, he was back in the kitchen doing undoubtedly noble things. I settled in on my choice of stools – right at the taps, as usual – and waited patiently.

Sitting near the taps just makes sense to me. First of all, I can read them better, so I don't have to ask, *Whatcha gut?* And secondly, I get my beer faster when my keeper doesn't have to stray far to do the pouring. Freakin' win, freakin' win.

I had been in Ka-Hooters dozens of times before, but none of them were in the last five years. That was hard for me to believe. Five years?? My stint as a part-time front desk "supervisor" at Holiday Inn (now the Lexington Hotel) was that long ago? Jayzuzz! This was, officially, the restaurant and bar affiliated with the HI. Gotta have 'em, or you cannot be an HI.

I only worked two nights a week, and Monday and Wednesday nights were about the easiest gigs you could ask for in the hotel world, so I'd have time to wander away from my teenage underlings and get an employee discount meal at Kahooters. The burgers, I must say, were dang good – and that comes from a lifelong burger zealot. And there were countless pop-ins to grab yet another glass of Coke. But I think this might have been the first time I got a beer here.

After maybe a minute, Tod emerged from the kitchen and the look of surprise on his face was obvious: a customer! But he was taking his slow night in stride. The Olympics were on the big TV, he had had some “ok” business earlier in the evening, and he figured he’d see a few more people as 11:00 drew near and a few folks returning from Duval might want one more before calling it a night, but I was in that mid-evening slow zone. We chatted about slow nights behind the bar, and I informed him of *The Peace, Love, and IPA Tour*. He seemed glad that he was a part of it, but maybe he was just patronizing me.

Key West Sunset Ale was picked mainly because it was the least ordinary beer on the taps. The craft beer phenomenon doesn’t seem to have reached this remote end of the Conch Republic. Nothing wrong with cold KWSA, though, even if it is brewed in Jacksonville now.



I was glad to see that they still have a real dart board over in the corner. A lot of bars have gone to those electric boards with plastic grids and the plastic darts with the “harmless” tips. Fuck that! Get out your pins and fire ‘em. As they used to bellow in the South Boston pubs, *Trow yer dahts, yahs-hole!*

Haven’t played darts much since I moved to KW. I still carry my set in my shoulder bag – along with a cribbage board – just in case the opportunity pops up. But my current circle of friends just aren’t the darting type, I reckon, so those flying needles of death remain dormant.

One time, about two decades ago, at a bar in Hilton Head Island (SC), while I was killing time waiting for Lisa to show up, I had myself a little tournament. I was an hour so (3-4 beers) early, so my left hand challenged my right hand to a match. Sheer madness. I am very right-handed. My right hand does 99% of the typing; the left does the A, the shift key, and maybe a Q or a Z now and then. Rarely, it ventures as far as the E, but that’s its boundary. I write righty, throw righty, golf righty, drive righty, drink righty, eat righty, and, well, you know.

When I’m on my bike, I even give my left turn signals with my right hand!

No, wait, that’s not true. That’d be stupid.

But anyway, the tournament began and Righto had to scramble from way behind to eke out Game 1. Then Lefty hung on to win game 2! Game three was a barnburner until Righto put on a clinic and ran away with late rally, proving that I am, after all, right-handed. Then the teams shook hands (hahahahaha) and went back to the bar where they could do something useful with a bottle and some pretzels.

Maybe it was Olympic Spirit that was in the air tonight, but Left got his dander up again, and motioned towards the corner where the dartboard hung. Righto gave a very different 1-finger motion in return and went back to its primary job: hefting a beer glass.

I left a buck tip on the bar for Tod, who had gone off into the kitchen to do, I'm sure, very important things.



On the way out, I noticed the hotel sign, touting the Wednesday special. Not sure how much Pizza Salad I could eat...