

100 Bars in 100 Days

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

BAR 15:

T's Bistro & Bar
1114 Duval Street
Wednesday 8/1, 7:00 pm

Stella Artois
Sierra Nevada Pale Ale

T's Bistro and Bar was so new as of my first visit, that the sign from the former tenant -- Sweet Tea's (I was never in there either) -- still hung proudly above the front door. I would

have been stopping in here at some point on the PLIPAT, but this night was a social gathering of the Sunset Social Drinking Club, a robust group of revelers who convene to



drink and to buy raffle tickets in support of an array of causes. The benefactor of tonight's swilling were the Horses of KWPD. Yeah, I know, a curious choice, but the turnout was excellent! Must be a lot of cop-horse fans in K-Dub.

The function was fun, as always, but in a way it would have been better to see this place with a normal crowd in their more typical mellow atmosphere. In another way, it wouldn't, though, because this time the food was *free*. What's my favorite food? Free food!

What's my favorite beer? Uhhh, well, not so fast. I'll pay for a Harpoon IPA rather than drink a free Bud. No offense intended to Bud drinkers out there -- I'm the ultimate "to each his own" guy -- but flavor is flavor. Some brews have more, some have less. An honest Bud or Coors Light will admit that their favorite gulp has less flavor than, say, a Magic Hat #9, but they will also decry that flavor as bad flavor. I can groove on that: a sub with jalapenos on it definitely has more flavor, but whether more is better or not is an individual choice.

So, yeah, the food. Roast Turkey in big thick slices, juicy and hot, with thick and rich gravy for it to bathe in. Baked Ziti in a crusty buttery cheese sauce. Good stuff. The plates sure coulda been bigger though! They were cardboard and only about 5" across. I guess that was pig-out control. Want more? Come on back! Maybe it was more waste control. We've all seen the ones who pile up the big plates with whatever



they see, depleting the supply for those who follow, and then leave half of it uneaten on some side table. No such worry here: clean plate, reload, repeat. So good.

Before the food, though, there had to be beer. I had been a bit tardy, so I had to navigate my way through the crowd to the front bar – the one in the dining room that you see from Duval – to get my Stella. It was bottled, though, so I didn't get the cool glass nor did the barkeep get to use the spatula-thingo to do that showy sud sweep



across the top. I assumed this room was the extent of T's, and I was surprised that some familiar faces were not evident, but then Deb (or was it Tina?) told me, *A lot of the people are out back.*

This place is a lot bigger than it looks! You pass through a long middle dining area that could almost be a wide hallway, then another square room – where the buffet was – before reaching the outdoor back bar. It's a feel-good place, for sure. There's a drippy fountain, some trendy art on the walls, and electric

fans providing a breeze. The bar itself is under a back-corner roof, so even if it rains, the place you retreat to will have booze.

Hosting SSDC was a good way to introduce T's to the thirsty masses, but it is definitely another Behave Thyself place. It is clearly a restaurant that has a bar in it (two, actually), rather than a bar that serves food. We weren't totally quiet, but we weren't as lively as we've been in other venues.

When I lived in Hilton Head, a few selves ago, I bartended at the Westin, and worked some very expensive and classy parties for some bigwigs, both domestic and foreign, sports and business. The best of all our servers was this smooth and suave Mexican named Fili. He had all the moves, but had trouble with English. He once told me, after his girlfriend had caught him fooling around, *Angela tells me I have to behave, so I am being hayve.*



That has nothing to do with T's Bistro; I just thought it was funny. :]

Easy atmosphere

Another behave thyself place – Restaurant with a bar, definitely. Not after my ilk.