

## 100 Bars in 100 Days

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

### BAR 34:

Island Dogs Bar  
[www.islanddogsbar.com](http://www.islanddogsbar.com)  
505 front Street  
Monday 8/17, 8:00 pm

Harpoon IPA (draft)



Day 29. Got a bit of a cushion. I like cushions.

I suppose I'm a seasonal regular at Island Dogs, and that season is football season. The Lazy Gecko may claim the title Southernmost Red Sox Nation, but Island Dogs (IDs) holds the mantle of Southernmost New England Patriots Bar.

We fans of the New England pro sports teams – Sox, Pats, Celts, and B's – have had a great freaking decade. For most of my adult life, championships were hard to come by. If not for Larry Bird, there would have been none – count 'em, none.

My adult life, 1977 to 1999:

Red Sox: 0 (1 gut-stabbing World Series loss)

Patriots: 0 (2 Super Bowl losses, one a titanic blowout)

Celtics: 3 (1981, 1984, 1986)

Bruins: 0 (Lost in Stanley Cup finals 4 times, twice swept)

TOTAL = 3 in 23 years

Granted, we did have 10 Finals appearances, but going 3-7 in those is hardly cause for elation.

God damn, things got good after Y2K, though!

Since the turn of the century:

Red Sox: 2 (2004, 2007)

Patriots: 3 (2001, 2004, 2005)(plus 2 losses: 2008 & 2011)

Celtics: 1 (2008) (plus a finals loss in 2010)

Bruins: 1 (2011)

TOTAL = 7 in 11 years

Red Sox had gone 86 years between titles, Celtics 22 years, and Bruins 29 years. Patriots had *never* won a championship before 2001.

In 2001, The Earl got to go to the Superbowl and see the Patriots beat the Rams. Our only two prior SB's had been debacles. In the 1986 thrashing at the hands of the Super Bowl Shuffle Bears (46-10, ugh), many of my friends and I had gone channel surfing by halftime, with quite a few of us landing on a PBS show called *The Feathered Swarm*, a documentary of the huge mating flocks of small East African birds called *quelea*. It was far more compelling than the football game was, at least for a Pats fan. The 1994 spanking by Brett Favre's Packers wasn't as demeaning, but it still sucked.

So, The Earl went to The Big Easy with the same expectations as the rest us: that he would be watching the Pats lose. I wish I still had his post-game email because it was classic. He wrote about the absolute expectation of late-game failure – a fumble, interception, ludicrous penalty – with each snap during the final drive. Each play brought the disaster closer, and the closer to the game's end, the more torturous it would be. Yet it was certain to happen.

He wrote of Venetieri's kick being up and looking like it went through the uprights. *Surely*, that was an illusion, a bad angle. The referees signaled a good kick. Patriots fans, however, as a group, held their cheers for a split second. Where was the flag? Who was offside, holding, chop blocking, or illegally on the field. Was it *possible*? Was **my team** really going to win?? The instant passed and the roar was deafening.

But that was the prevailing attitude for most of my life: bracing for imminent failure. Great way to go into a game, huh?

So, ***of course*** we've been obnoxious as hell for the last decade!

We *know* that that swagger has been irking all the fans of all the other teams, and there are plenty of them around this island. And they have been waiting for – as we have been dreading -- The Decline. The aging Celtics, the back-to-reality Bruins, the hanging-on-with-Tom Patriots, and the imploding Red Sox have elicited a lot of giggles and chortles 'round these parts lately.

Oh well. It was fun while it lasted.

If you want to appreciate how much of a melting pot Key West is, just wait till football season rolls around. Being in south Florida, you'd expect to find a majority of Dolphin fans, and there are some, but they haven't had a lot to

cheer about, so they keep under the radar. They are vastly outnumbered anyway.

Steelers fans probably number the highest, but you'll see plenty of Eagles, Vikings, Packers, Giants, and Ravens gear all over town too. There's a smattering of just about every team, but those dominate.



We, the Southernmost New England Patriots Fans, have nested in Island Dogs. Thanks largely to managers who have hailed from Pats Country originally, the bar has welcomed us with open arms, bigger TV's, T-shirts, good food, pail-o-beer specials, a draft beer supply, like-being-there stadium music, and the occasional round of victory shots.

In return, we cheer zealously for our team, eat like fish, drink like pigs, and just generally revel in the Pats successes and wail to the heavens when things go badly.

The Super Bowl last year, though, was a strange experience, and not just because it was an eerie re-enactment of 2008, and had an untouched running back trying to stop short of the goal line and deliberately *not* score when his team was *behind*. That was fuktup enough, but what was going on outside was what made it really memorable.

We had a gullywasher that day. The kind of storm you'd expect in August, not February. It was around full moon with a late-afternoon high tide, so the several inches of rain had nowhere to go. Front Street becomes Front River in such cases, and this was about as bad as I've seen it. I thought I was clever walking to the bar down Ann Street, but when I got to the back of Two Friends and saw the lake, I just gave up and splashed through. I was shin deep and steppin' high, with that stupid notion that if you're quick enough, you can pull your foot back out of the hole before the splashed water closed back in. Ha. Dumbass. I watched the game with soaked socks and sneaks.

As the evening went on, the rains kept coming. Water was well over the sidewalk and, when brave/foolish drivers navigated their cars through, the

tide was splashing up over IDs steps and into the bar. I thought for sure that one of those sedan-types was going to drown.



Island Dogs is not a "sports bar" as such. It's set up for being a drinking and eating and digging tunes place. The stage is cool, with its orange-lit squares and its funky sculptures and such in each square. They all suggest reggae and cool vibes and party, mon. And the music is usually pretty cool.



I've seen George Victory here a few times; he always plucks out a good vibe.

I like the layout and design here. Long, narrow room, with high peaked wooden ceiling with beams. Tattoos & Scars must've copied IDs. And they have the coolest Fireball sign ever. Outlined in red neon, this sign just days, *drinnnk me, you pussy!* Fireball is my victory shot when we do them here. I never acquired

a taste for whiskies or bourbon, and a shot should be straight from the booze bottle, not some fruit-juiced-and-shaken concoction.

Anyway, his particular day – Tour Stop #34 – was the 2012 Patriots pre-season opener, and a few of us were convening at IDs to watch. Yeah, it would be a boring, meaningless scrimmage in uniform, but the Freaky For Football guys would be all over it. I'm not quite at that level. I like rooting for my team, but I don't live and die with them.

You could tell it was pre-season, though, because I was outa synch. I always ride the bike down there for games -- no need to be drunk driving home -- and in hot weather, I rarely wear a shirt when I ride – no need to get it sweaty either. Trouble is, this time, I forgot



to bring a shirt. I had my custom-made (by me) SoMo Patriots Fans tie-dye logo shirt at the ready, but left it on the bed. Island Dogs sign reads *Come As You Are*, but I thought shirtless was a little too casual.

That happened to me once before, when I was meeting Jacko at Flats. I was pissed at myself, thinking that I needed to ride home to get a shirt. *If only there was place around to get a cheap T-shirt*, I thought. What a laugh. I was on Duval Street, where cheapo shirt shops outnumber even bars. Within five minutes I had a very passable KW shirt and it only cost me three bucks.

This time, I went into one of those shops where *Everythinng Fiiiiiiva Dolla*. Those stores don't even have names. Just cheap yellow hand-held signs and one bored-ass minimum wager droning out *Fiiiiiive dolla, everythinng fiiive dolla*. So I bought a tie-dye KW tourist shirt. It cost fiiive dolla. I wonder how much post cards cost.



The game went as expected, and the crowd of fans was small in number but large in mirth, especially Brian B, who had just discovered a bar that has a 6½-hour Happy Hour 7 days a week! Ha. Got your interest now, hm? Which one? You'll just have to keep reading and find out. 8P

