

100 Bars in 100 Days

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

BAR 35:

Tavern N Town (Marriott Beachside)

<http://www.beachsidekeywest.com/dining/dine-tavern-n-town.php>

3841 North Roosevelt Boulevard

Tuesday 8/21, 9:45 pm

Samuel Adams Boston
Lager (bottle)

Tavern N Town (TNT)
would be the easternmost
stop on the PLIPA Tour,
wresting that mantle away
from In Kahoots. Once
again, I picked a
notoriously slow time,
business-wise, to make my



appearance: four other people were at the bar, and there were three tables taken. TNT is, after all, a hotel restaurant and bar. Though very much open to the general public, it's a good bet that the mid-week summer clientele are mostly hotel guests.

I had been in here before. The first time was before they were even open. They were showcasing it for some of the employees of the hotels across the street to see if we wanted to "step up" to the new digs. We toured the grounds, a couple of rooms, and the unfinished restaurant, then we had short preliminary interviews with some tall older dude. Certain parameters of the proposed new job – wearing a jacketed uniform, being on my feet and in plain sight for every minute of my shift, and *getting paid less* – didn't tickle my fancy, so I levelly told the dude, *I have no interest in working here, sorry*. I actually didn't stay much longer across the street either, but that was my decision too, not some consequence of the comment.

My only other visit was for an impromptu after-work gathering of the Local Enterprises gang, celebrating Dierdre's birthday, I think. We stood near the mostly-full bar, had a few drinks, and chowed on some delicious appetizers. We were politely festive.

So I was knew what I was getting into. The Tour would have to include both extremes, after all. I feel comfortable in the underbelly, but I can fake it

here too. My stint behind the bar at The Westin Resort on Hilton Head Island had trained me well.



The TNT bar is not separated from the posh dining room, so the atmosphere is very subdued. There were probably about 19 other patrons here tonight, at tables throughout the room. Nineteen people might make a mild clamor in some places, but in here there was a library-like feel, as if sound were muted in the air somehow. Being solo, I was not going to be breaking that mood anyway: no guffaws or accidental

vulgar outbursts. That'd raise a few eyebrows. Not that I'm against raising eyebrows -- I like giving the world a mental goose now and then -- but I'm against being escorted out before my beer is finished.

The barkeep seemed like an ordinary guy, nothing upper-crustish at all about him. No attempt to seem classier than he normally is, none of the typical body poses that you might expect in elite servers. He was friendly, and he called me *sir*, but it was more like saying *Buddy* or *Mac* than *Your Highness*. And, hey, it's only me; even the *sir* was over the top.

Maybe my attire fooled him. TNT fits well up into the high strata of the Tour. Underbelly it is not, scruffies need not apply. Hence, I kinda dressed up for the visit. Kinda. I had just been out on Stock Island doing a long and sweaty run on this sultry summer night, so I was not what you'd call *fresh*. I did my usual post-run shower -- a gallon jug of water poured vigorously all over my head and body -- so I felt clean and re-energized, but I was still not *fresh*.

Thanks to warm weather runs and road trips, the Jug Shower has been a staple in my repertoire for decades. One gallon is plenty, two is total luxury. Having a van is helpful. With the side doors opened, the van creates a discreet booth, blocking three sides. The fourth side is often facing trees or empty terrain, or a city building. Since I do leave my running shorts on during the dousing, there is no real risk of indecent exposure. And it takes care of laundry at the same time. Bonus!

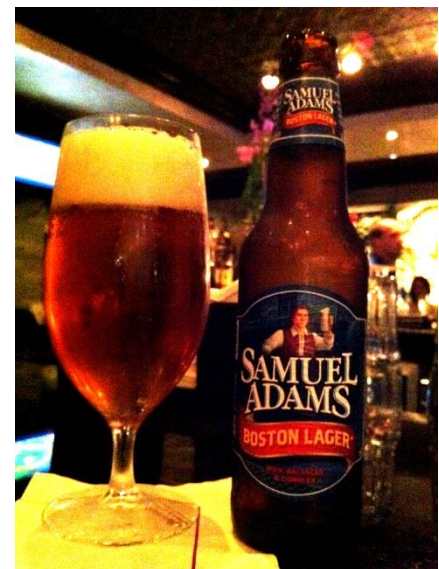


This evening's Jug Shower was backed by trees, but I've done them just about anywhere. I was in Toronto one time in July and the only place I could find to park was right on a major street in some sort of financial area: big buildings, people walking by in suits and carrying briefcases. I fed my meter and

went for a run, doing a little on-foot exploration of Canada's largest city (5th largest in North America, with 2.6 million residents, 49% of whom were born outside of Canada, but you knew that).

The city was unfamiliar and my trail of bread crumbs had been eaten by loons, so I got a tad lost. By the time I got back to home base, I had run for more than an hour and I was sippy and gross. I'd be leaving the van here and walking to my rendez-vous, so if I was going to get cleaned-up it was going to be here and now.

Acting with the confidence that I knew nobody here, and would never *ever* see any of them again, I opened the side doors, kicked off my shoes, stood right on the sidewalk and began pouring. I tried not to splash on any of the passers-by, who gave me a *wide* variety of looks, from hilarity to disgust, from shocked to sexy. I really went over the top this time, though, using a jug to wet down, then lathering up with soap and shampoo, and rinsing off with a second gallon. Man, did I feel clean! And I gave all those people – easily 100 walked by in my few minutes of showering – something to talk about at their boring meetings, or Happy Hour, or over dinner.



So, when I got to TNT, I was clean enough. I had put on a nice pair of Quiksilver shorts, a clean lime green shirt, and my tan canvas shoes, so I was dressed to the sevens. I looked like a vacationing hotel guest.

I ordered a *Samuel Adams*, not a *Sam Adams*, to fake some degree of class, and reinforced it by pouring into a *glahss*, not just a *glass*. I sipped my brew and looked around. Nice freaking place. The rectangular bar itself is black marble with a good reflective gloss to it. The center island is topped with



ferns, tall purple flowers and top shelf booze.

What looked best of all was the kitchen! Since the bar is on the edge of the dining room, you get a good view of the gleaming stainless steel appliances through the long open service window. It looks awesome. And what better to look awesome in a classy restaurant than the kitchen.

As I was finishing up my Samuel, a party of four came in. They were in their twenties, and while the ladies looked fine, the guys were dressed in shabby t-shirts and stained gym shorts, like they thought they were going to be dining at Burger King (drive-thru). They looked a tad sheepish as the hostess led them past everyone to a table at the far end of the room.

With my work here done. I stood up and grandly polished off the final ounces from my glahss. As I did, the six people at the nearest dining room table broke into sudden and spirited applause. Turns out that they were applauding someone's birthday candles being blown out, but I reveled in it anyway, giving a modest bow and wave before effecting a dignified departure.