

100 Bars in 100 Days

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

BAR 38:

La Trattoria

www.latrattoria.us

524 Duval Street

Monday 8/27, 7:30 pm

Blue Moon (bottle) \$5.50

This would be Classy Night for Hopsy. I got myself all spiffed up and headed for a couple of Duval's more exclusive venues. I wanted to get more than one tonight so I wouldn't have to dress up again.

Dressed Up is a relative thing in Key West. My shirt had buttons, my shorts had a zipper. Done. I even went with closed-toed canvas shoes instead of flip-flops. Every girl's crazy 'bout a sharp dressed man.

The shirt was one that I have had for about ten years and have worn about ten times. I got it at the Hard Rock Café. I was buying one for my nephew Harry as a Christmas gift, and I liked it so much that I got myself one too. It's dark blue, with white-and-light-blue graphics. While the front looks almost like a starry night sky with the neck of a Fender Stratocaster



discreetly on the side, the back is a large swirling dragon and guitar. It's my dress-up shirt. I have a couple of Willy's shirts that work too; they are mostly black with green leaves or orange leaves, but the HRC Fender Dragon is my Slick Rick attire.

As soon as I walked into La Trattoria, the atmosphere wrapped around me. The lighting, even with daylight flooding in through the large front windows, was dim, and the music was soft and, well, operatic. The lone stool on the near end of the bar was open, so I took it.

The bar itself was black marble. It had a nice shine to it. Black, padded, rounded back stools made for a comfortable seating,



and four small lamps cast a candle-like glow around the bar. Stangely, all four of the lampshades were tilted at a significant angle. The walls were typical Italian restaurant style, with arched doorways and openings. A big tapestry hung on the far wall of the dining room. Classy place, fer sherr.

The barkeep was a slim blonde woman in my age range. Her glasses looked great on her, like they were not just an accessory but a complementary facial feature. Well chosen!

I didn't catch her name, but I'm gonna call her Luna – seems like she mighta had a bit o' hippie in her back in the day. When I told her about the Tour, she immediately suggested Virgilio's (of course), but then her next recommendation surprised me: Tattoos & Scars.

I ordered a Blue Moon, which was a first for the Tour. I was prepared to tell her to hold the orange slice, but she must have tread the no-fruit-on-my-beer vibe and served it up sans citrus. What was strange, though, was that she had to summon a server or busdude or whatever to fetch it since she was out of BM's in her fridge. She told him to bring her two, apparently anticipating a yes-I-will-have-another from me.



The server came back with one, then went away, then came back with the second one, maybe 30 seconds later. What's up with that? I almost expected a third one to arrive half-a-minute after that.

A woman sat at the far end of the bar with her back to the windows. She seemed to be hiding. When she did look up, my first thought was that she was wearing eye-black, like baseball players do. Then I got another look. Did she have 2 black eyes?? I decided not to look at her again.

The only other person who was sitting on the front side, was an underdressed dude in a wrinkled Irish Kevin's "staff" t-shirt and a NY Junkies cap. The night before, like just about every thirsty person in KW, he was at the Gecko. Most bars were still closed up despite TS Isaac's uneventful pass-through, so *everyone* converged on LG. Irish Kevin's was open when I got downtown, but they gave last call and closed at 7:00 PM. All their

customers and employees came pouring into the Geck. He proudly admitted that he got totally hammered, only recently woke up, and was still really hungover. His appearance and behavior seemed incongruous in this bar, but apparently was buds with Luna, so he had an in.

At one point, Luna held out her arms, palms up, and looked us all over. *Is everybody happy?* she asked. It sounded like all six of us bar customers responded enthusiastically in the affirmative, though I can't say for sure about Bonnie Black-Eyes. The blond woman across from her was happy as hell, judging by her zealous response.



Content with our contentment, Luna announced that she was going for a smoke break. I asked if it was now Self-Serve Time, and got a frown in response. I looked around the bar for the Way Out. I couldn't see any breaks in the marble – no hinges, no cuts, no place where a slab would lift away to allow passage. It seemed like it should be right next to me, since it was the server station and there was no stool there. I was right; there was none. She reached under the bar, opened a small door there, and with an uncomfortable looking stoop-n-stretch, she squeezed her way through. Younger and more flexible barkeeps would get under with less trouble, but, hey, I could relate.

I waited till Luna came back before moving on. I gave her a smile, a thanks, and, most importantly, a buck-fifty tip, and went grandly through the door. More class lay ahead.