

100 Bars in 100 Days

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

BAR 50:

The Stoned Crab
Iris Bay Resort
3101 North Roosevelt Boulevard
Thursday 9/6, 6:00 pm

Key West Sunset Ale (bottle) \$2.25

With the dreaded North Roosevelt Project in full bloom, I didn't bother crossing the road to park on premises. In fact, I parked over by Pizza Hut and then walked to Hop 49 at the Marriott, and then, from there, across Kennedy to Ibis Bay. Easier to hoof it for a few hundred yards than to negotiate the barricades and one-ways.



Two years (plus) of this shit. Ugh. It's still not going to be as bad as being in those big city traffic jams, though; our worst delays will be having to wait through an extra light change or so -- maybe two or three at peak times.



So, anyway, with the Topsy Pelican done, I came eagerly across the street to check out The Stoned Crab. I liked the idea of staying with the buzzed marine animal theme.

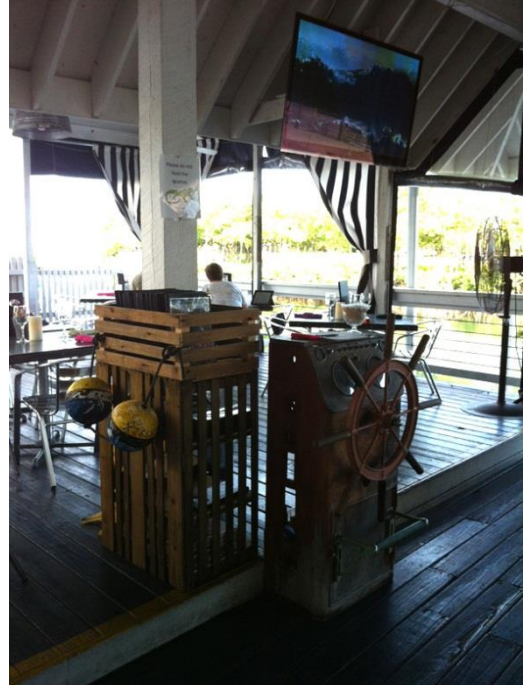
This property used to be one of the crappiest hotels on the island: The Blue Lagoon. New ownership took it over a year or two ago and did a crazy amount of work to revamp it. They've even hosted some rather unusual events there, including Mixed Martial Arts bouts and a performance by some dude who leaps from a 1000-foot ladder into a dog's water dish, or something like that. I may have the details wrong.

I had heard a few people say, *Hey, it's really nice over there now*. It wasn't a few people all at one time saying that. Not some freaking chorus, though

that would be compelling. But it certainly was enough to inject a little more eagerness into my visit.

Well, I thought it was OK, but I'd go with *pretty nice* over *really nice*. *Really nice* gives the expectation of luxury, and it was not that. And I was glad. *Pretty nice* means that it's a cool place, with a chilled-out attitude – as you'd expect from the name – without being for the Best People Only.

And it sure beats the holy snot out of the Blue Lagoon. The bar sits just above the dock that runs the length of the property along the canal. It's all open so the breeze is good, there's shade and fans and a few big TV's.



It has a dark and old wooden floor, with all the support beams and 2x4's in the ceiling painted clean white, and with silver pipe-ish furniture and stripey walls. *Pretty nice*. Not *really nice*, mind you. There are a few tables in the bar area proper, and the main dining space is right there behind the ship's wheel or a host stand. Up left is the pool area, with another bar poolside.



The pool area, by the way is *really nice*. Or, to put it another way, *pretty damn nice*. Those two are equivalent.

So, I wandered in and chose one of the few open bar stools, around the corner on the short side of the bar. I was out of sight of the main flow of bar staff, but I knew eventually I'd be spotted. (And that's better than being striped; ask any leopard.)

A tall dude with hair tied behind his head in a knot, found me first and asked what I craved. Having no line of sight to the taps, I asked what kind of beer



they had. He reached for a beer list. But it wasn't where he expected it to be. So he reached again. Not there either. With a noticeable *hmmm* on his face, he went hunting. I hadn't settled into my seat yet, so I followed him as he came out from behind the bar. He asked another barkeep, then a server. Neither had any idea. The server asked, *Do we even have one?* By now, I'm wondering why he didn't just rattle them off to me. Maybe there are *so many choices* that it would not be possible to do so.

But no. When he finally located a list – at the host stand – I was surprised at the modest selection. It took four people to get me this info? But they had KWSA and that was good enough for me! And it's turns out the Hour had been decreed Happy, so it only cost me \$2.25. Bargain day on NRB!

I wandered around a little, trying be casually discreet while I took some pictures. I feel like a freaking tourist, but at least I don't ask the barkeep to grin at me while pouring a beer or some dumbass shit like that.

I had a new barkeep by now. Knot In Hair was a server, I guess, but he should still know the beers; diners drink too, and it's so much more suave to be able to roll them off the tongue with confidence. It impresses the guest, and an impressed guest is the best, Jess; they tip more.

My new barkeep was a young lady with red and pink highlights throughout her hair. Pretty funky, without being *really* funky. I told her about the *Peace, Love and IPA* Tour, and she definitely dug concept. Right away, she asked if I had been to Shimp Daddy's yet. I laughed and said yes, thinking that it was an odd bar to pounce on like that, but before I could expound on it, she announced, *I work there on Monday nights! What a trip that is!*

I was hoping I'd find Amy on the job. Word is that she works here. She's a real kick in the head. Maybe Next Time.

On the way out, I passed a large parrot cage. I mean, *really large*, not just *pretty large*. This thing was about the size of my van. Maybe bigger. And it's probably not much leakier in a rainstorm. (Moby is gettin' old. 200,000 is just a sneeze away. Gotta get him to the moon - 239,000 - just cuz.)

There were two big, blue-and-yellow macaws in there. They both seemed shy, especially for display birds. The one closest to me side-stepped on his perch until he was almost facing the corner, like I couldn't see him there. The other faced away from me no matter where I stood. Not a lot of fun, those macaws, though, to be fair, I wouldn't be very cheerful if that was my existence either.

What amused me, though, was the pigeon. There was an ordinary pigeon sitting on one of the perches, kinda looking at me like he had a question. I had to wonder W(hy)TF a pigeon would be kept in such a cage, especially when there were dozens of them just walking and fluttering about all over the parking lot. Was this some special exotic pigeon? Could it talk? Croon? Juggle?



It reminded me of a remote place in Kansas where Richie and I went on one of my very first roadtrips back in the 80's. Prairie Dog Town it was called, and there were billboards touting its wonders for a good 200 miles as we westward along I-40 to Colorado. We scoffed at the many claims - *See 1000 Prairie Dogs! ...*

700 Snakes! ... A Two-Headed Calf! ... A Six-Legged Steer! ... but, just before the exit, the final billboard hooked us: *See a 2000-Pound Prairie Dog!* OK, we bit on it and went there.

It sucked. None of the claims were lies, technically; there was a stuffed and mounted double-calf head; a birth-defected steer, caged, with two useless legs dangling from his collarbone; a large open bin of snakes, almost all of which were dead; and an 8-foot tall, 1-ton, concrete statue of, yes, a prairie dog.

The “1000 prairie dogs” claim was impossible to verify because they were *everywhere*. You could hardly walk without having one scurrying past your feet. The property was fenced off, but the chain link fence was pretty useless against prairie dogs, which are basically beige squirrels without the bushy tails. They slinked right through the link and came and went as they pleased.



What reminded me of *that* at Ibis Bay, though, was that there were a few dozen prairie dogs in medium sized cages (boys and girls separated, nothing salacious there), kept as sellable pets, while the rest of the 1000 ran about freely.

So here was this pigeon, with his puzzled look, sitting in with the macaws while his brethren and sistren did their usual pigeon stuff all around outside the cage, free and easy. As I started to walk away, I figured it out. Near the top of the peaked roof, the cage construction included an opening that was too small for a macaw – who probably can’t fly well enough to get up to it anyway – but certainly large enough for an inquisitive but not overly bright pigeon. Dumbass bird flew in to snatch some macaw food and now can’t remember how to get back out. Stupid pigeon.

So, hey hey hey, this was the **Halfway Point!!** In the last seven weeks, I have had a beer (or more) in **50** different KW bars. Yet still, everywhere I look, there are bars that I have not been to yet. Strip bars, gay bars, hotel bars, restaurant bars, bar bars, and more. Another seven week stint lies ahead, and the choices will gradually start to slim down. I might actually have to start planning when I get into October.