

100 Bars in 100 Days

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

BAR 57:

Coyote Ugly

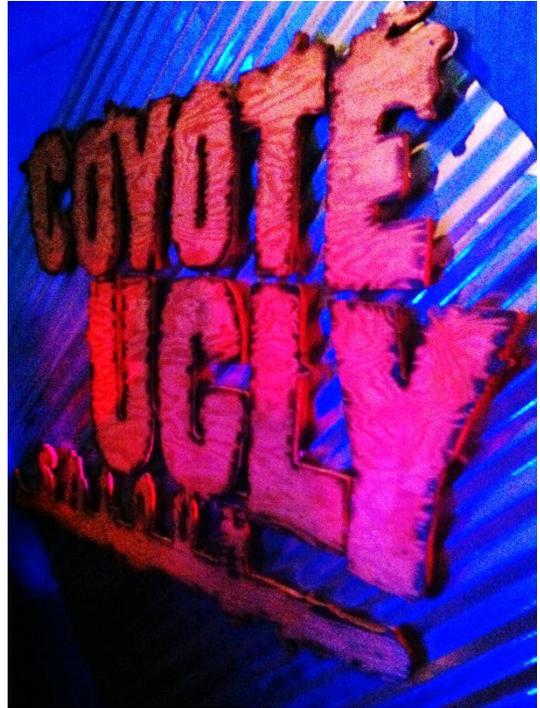
www.coyoteuglysaloon.com

218 Duval Street

Thursday 9/13, 10:30 pm

Sam Adams Summer Ale (draft) \$5.00

When the Tour began, I wondered aloud to Jan and Brian how many bars would come into existence in, lo, these 100 days, and how many would go the way of the dodo. Coyote Ugly, having opened its doors just two nights prior, was the newest kid in town.



It didn't just spring up without warning. Word of its coming had spread a while before. It wasn't at the luckiest of addresses, though. In my decade-plus as a K-dubber, 218 Duval – the ground level of Teasers' – has been several bars. Rumrunners seemed to last longer than most.



Big 'Uns never seemed to have a chance, partly because they hired doormen who seemed to think that their job was to keep people *out*. They always had two beefy dudes in dark shirts taking up the whole doorway, with shithead tough-guy scowly looks on their faces, as if to say, *YOU ain't gettin' in this place, pal*. I'm sure, as bouncers, they were expected to keep out the roaring drunks spilling over from Irish Kevin's, but you don't block out all of Duval.

Pete's Piano Bar looked to be doing pretty well, I thought. Weekends had good and happy crowds, digging the dueling piano

show. Weekdays not so much. I never went in, so perhaps I was part of the problem.

Maybe it was just too hard or too expensive to pay double entertainment every night of the week, especially if they were bringing them in from outa county. Really, without the dazzling keyboard display, there was no reason to go in there. But Pete's did give a refreshingly different sound to the 200 block.



Shortly after Pete's sudden shut-down, the name Coyote Ugly was bandied about, often with a *pretty cool, huh?* tone. I had never heard of it, so I was surprised when I looked at their website to find that they brag about being *The World's Most Famous Bar*. Key West would be their 13th location in the USA, with another eight abroad: two in Germany, one in Romania, and five – count 'em, *five* – in **Russia**. Well, bless my yarbles, who knew??



OK, so now I was intrigued. It didn't seem like the kind of place I'd call home, but looked like a lively and sexy addition to the party block.

Key West always flocks to a bar's Grand Opening. Everybody wants to say they were there. I had thoughts of it on the night Ugly opened, but I figured going a night or two later would be a more prudent plan. I did a stroll-by, just to see, and the crowd was six deep on the sidewalk. In fact, because of the big balloon arch at the door, and the bikes parked at the rack right there, people were out in the street, messing up traffic, just trying to get a peek through the big window.

So now I show up, at peak time on a Thursday night, and stroll right into a three-quarters full bar. Well, maybe four-sevenths. As usual, the view from the street is deceiving. The bar lines the left side of the whole room and you can belly up just a few feet from the door. But if patrons hang there without moving all the way into the bar, things get clogged up. Sometimes, no matter what this bar was at the time, you'd think it was really busy, squeeze

your way through the cluster and find an empty room beyond it. This layout just seems to lend itself to that.

The front half was way more crowded on this night too, but people had made the effort to populate the back half of the front room. The back room, except for two people chatting with the bored barkeep, was predictably empty; no show to see back there.

I reckon I was expecting flashy, fancy, ultra-cool, state of the art interior design, so I was thrown by the trashy style. But it's not Coyote Pretty, is it?



They made no attempt to make Coyote pretty or fancy. Quite the opposite. Waitresses (no need for that gender-centric "server" nonsense, right?) wear cut-offs and tanks, there is sexy art on the table/tabletops, and a dark, strip club mood pervades.

The best parts of the décor were the big hammerhead shark hanging over the bar – all painted up like a dragster – and the funky backlit USA flag that is built into the wall opposite the stage. The colors are deliberately off, but that just adds to the funkiness. I'm betting that the Moscow location doesn't have that.



So what did Coyote Ugly have to offer? What was The World's Most Famous Bar bringing to KW? Women on the bar. Naked? No. Topless? No. In fact, the three performers all wore cut-off jeans and tank tops, just like the servers do. Not bad, but...

They did do their own singing, though, and they were pretty good. So that was a plus, I reckon, but wuzzen zackly my kinda music.

And they did a couple of semi-kinky, semi-lezzy, lay-on-the-bar-and-do-some-pelvic-grinding-or-cleavage-licking, which was

reasonably erotic, but the crowd just wasn't responding to it. None of the hooting and hollering that you'd expect. Everyone seemed to be sitting back and judging it all.

I dunno. It was puzzling. Was this really *it*? I could see women naked right next door at Red Garter, or right upstairs at Teasers. I could see women dancing on the bar at Lazy Gecko. I could see women wearing less almost anywhere. They looked like the average good-looking female pedestrian in Key West in September.

So, was it their singing that was the attraction? Like I said, they sang OK, but, well, is that *really it*???

I was unimpressed. Maybe it plays better in Russia.

Maybe once the obligations of the Tour are behind me, I'll be back to see if the Coyote has adapted any better to its Conch Republic environs. Maybe not. This island has so many other options -- like most of the 56 that preceded it on the Tour, and most of the 43 that remain -- that you never

have to settle for something that doesn't really click for you.

Two things that Key West definitely does not lack: places to drink, and people to drink in them. I am definitely digging the exploration.

Welcome to KW, Coyote Ugly. And, by the way, thanks for the garish, ugly sign out front. How the hell did that slip by HARC?

