

100 Bars in 100 Days

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

BAR 58:

Boathouse Bar & Grill
700 Front Street
Friday 9/14, 6:15 pm

Sam Adams Boston Ale (draft) \$2.50

The Boathouse is one of the newer watering holes around the hahbah. It very capably fills the open-air ground level space beneath The Commodore. As befits the name, flags drape liberally from the rafters, with life preservers, nets, lanterns and other nautical goodies hanging all over the walls.

The best decoration all, of course, is the interior neck of the harbor that sits just a few feet from the front door. Boats, water, sky, people wandering around – you tend to feel less stressed hanging in a place like this. Might be the beer too.



About two-thirds of the Boathouse space is taken up by dining room tables. I, of course, eschewed that zone and put my focus on the better third: the bar. If there was to be any dining done, it would be done on a tall stool.

Hardly any stools were unoccupied. I took the third one in from the front, looking away from those diner type peeps.

There was a foursome of retired folks to my left, wrapping around the corner of the bar. The three nearest to me seemed to be nice people, but the fourth, who was facing my way, was a freaking *blowhard*. What a loudmouth.

I could tell that this was a reunion of sorts among longtime friends who had not been together as a group in many years. The calm gent and his wife were visiting the Keys for the first time in a long time, and Larry Loud was a resident. Kindly Karl next to me would start a conversation that should have involved all four of them, and before he could even finish his first point – say, oh, a bad winter storm up north -- Larry Loud pounced on it, drowning out his words with a one-up about Hurricane Georges and how much worse it was. He was like a white-haired Topper from *Dilbert*.



The other three politely waited till he finished and then tried to redirect the conversation. It didn't matter, though, Larry Loud would not be contained. He knew more than they did about everything, and it was all so much better. It was like every thread of conversation had to be *his*. He had to have the best stuff to say about every single thing. He was on stage, and it was his home turf.



I mean, he didn't do it in a totally nasty way; he didn't grind his heels when he stepped on ya. He was in good spirits and enthusiastic about telling them about Keys life, but, gawwwd, I just wanted to tell him to zip his piehole for a minute and see if the others had anything interesting to say.

I guess I was just in too much of a mellow mood, and he was beating it like a drum. But it was Happy Hour and my \$2.50 Sannalamma was keeping my spirits out of the mud. I distracted myself by looking around and checking out all the flags, wondering what each one meant when it was displayed as a signal. I wondered which one meant, *Help, we're fucking sinking here!*

I had only been there about fifteen minutes and my glass was still half full – yeah, I know, kinda pokey -- when Autumn, the taller of the two blonde barkeeps, came over and asked if I was ready for a refill.

“Mmmm, not quite yet,” I replied, tilting the glass uselessly, as if I’d be better able to tell if I was ready.

She gave me a little disapproving look. “Happy Hour is ennddinng, are you sure you don’t want one before it ends?”

Well, Autumn sure does know what buttons to push. I ordered up the second, sucked down the first, and started to snap to.

“You want some wings too, while they’re still on Happy Hour price?” Autumn asked as she set down my fresh frosty glass.

“No, I don’t think so, but thanks,” I smiled.

She turned her attention the Karl and Larry quartet, who had already eaten. They declined, saying that they were going to be moving on. I wanted to applaud.

As Autumn began to clear away their stuff, she looked my way. “You sure about those wings?”

“No.”

“Want some?”

“Ya, I reckon I do. Bring `em on!” Such pitiful resolve. But what can you do against such a practiced spiel. Years of collegiate study went into those words. I was no match. Though I did insist on getting my sauce on the side. Harumph.

The wings were freaking awesome too. So I ended up with 10 or so wicked good wings, and two tall cold Sammies for \$12.60. Sweet deal.

Autumn did the opposite of what some barkeeps do. As the close of HH approaches, they wander off, go do some ridiculous chore, or somehow busy themselves at the far end of the bar. By the time they come back, well, sorry, Happy Hour is over now. I’ll get you one for full price, though. Ya, that way the tab gets fatter and the tip, they hope, does too. Usually backfires with me.

I'm not naming any names, but one of The Sports Page 'keeps was infamous for that, and one of the Gecko's tenders has that habit as well.

So, it seemed extra nice that Autumn pushed the lower price. And the other blonde barkeep was wicked nice too, though I do not recall her name. Both of them seemed enthusiastic about the *Peace, Love, and IPA Tour* and said they'd check out the updates.

But, my my my, I have fallen behind in my writing. One bar per day doesn't seem like a very demanding pace at all, but with a full-time job at a busy shop, my prime stats season winding into high gear, running taking longer and longer as I get in better shape (pretty easy to work a shuffly 20 minutes into your day, but a tidy 60 with about another 30 stop freaking sweating afterwards, plus the shower, well, not so easy), even making it to the bars was becoming – *am I really gonna say this?* – a burden.

But it's a burden I'm willing to bear. Just for you. Yes, you.

"Wicked nice" is one of my favorite oxymorons. Wicked is the Boston in me. More favorites are "awfully good", "pretty ugly", and "a little big."

Big huge and little tiny are just stupid things to say, but that's for another discussion.