

100 Bars in 100 Days

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

BAR 59:

Dante's Key West
www.danteskeywest.com
951 Caroline Street
Saturday 9/15, 4:00 pm

Yuengling (draft) \$5.00

Dante's is a great concept in a place like Key West: food, booze, pool, party. What more do you need? It's not a long walk from the Duval, but long enough to keep it from booming.



If you start downtown and head this-a-way, you have to pass a daunting gauntlet of: Island Dogs, Two Friends, Rum Barrel, the White Tarpon, the Boathouse, the Conch Farm, Schooner Wharf, Turtle Kraals, and the Half Shell. That is a lot of distraction. It's a bar tour in itself. If you start with 20 people, you'll lose about 19 along the way who "just want to check this other place out."



So, Dante's can be more of a destination watering hole than an impulse slosh. It can be almost eerily peaceful when bizniz is slow, to the point where you keep your voice down, and people treat the pool like some museum showpiece that must not be touched.

Or it can have a good blend of patrons populating half the wooden picnic-style tables and benches and half the tall bar seats, with some easy lounging and plunging around the swordfish fountain in the middle of the cement pond, and some cool music flowing in the background.

OR, it can rockingly crowded when they host a summertime pool party, as was the

case today. This was Saturday of the Poker Run weekend, one of KW's busiest days. Old Sol was in full bloom and the temperatures were toasty. The tunes were loud and Miami-ish. Not a Buffet crowd here this day.

Both the big hut bar over there and small hut bar closer to the pool were packed. The pool was not a swimming pool; it was wading and boozing pool. Just about everyone was standing waist deep, and holding a drink. There had to be around 80 people in there. There was some plunging going on, but you just don't plunge with a drink in your hand.



After a suitable amount of standing-and-gawking time, I retired to the big bar for some sitting-in-the-shade-and-gawking. A trio of collegiate looking young women were seated to my right. They made a comment to the barkeep, a mid-20's average-looking guy with short blonde hair, about the biker crowd. Average Al got a little full of himself and tried to impress the ladies. He turned and gave the pool area a quick appraisal, and said, "Nahh, this is typical. We're too far from Duval. None of them ever come up here."

Both the girls and I gave the pool deck a second look, taking note of the plethora of tattoos, piercings, silver chains, black boots, black vests, black t-shirts, doo-rags, rebel flag insignias, Harley-Davidson patches – plus all the same stuff on the *men* – and wondered what the fuck Al was seeing. Maybe the waders weren't quite as obvious, but the deck was bikerland.

I was thinking, "you are so full of shit," but wasn't about to say so; no sense getting in a tiff and spoiling my good time.

But before I could finish that thought, one of the girls blurted out, "Yah, right! What are you *talking* about?"

For about a second, Al was going to defend his stance, but opted for the too-busy-to-talk-now approach, and retreated to the opposite bar to attend to the imagined beckoning of some black-shirted woman.

I gawked for a while longer, until the tall, slim Scadinavian-looking blonde in the hot red sunglasses decided to depart.

Dante's is a good spot. I don't get here very often, though. I guess I just get distracted along the way...

