

100 Bars in 100 Days

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

BAR 64:

Shores Bar, Southernmost On The Beach
508 South Street
Saturday 9/22, 4:30 pm

Hoptical Illusion IPA (draft) \$4.50

Once again, Hops is on the sly. The Shores Bar is the pool bar at one of KW's newest resort hotels. The Southernmost (SoMo) Hotel Collection began 75 years ago with the home-base SoMo Hotel, at the corner of Duval and South. Oddly, when I got to town, it was not the most southern of all hotels; Atlantic Shores and the Southernmost House, being on the south side of South Street, were more south. BUT, neither of them had the term "hotel" in their moniker, so SoMoHo got by on a technicality.



They bought out the very popular, anything-goes Atlantic Shores a few years ago and built SoMo On The Beach and the SoMo Beach Café in its place.

The Shores was a trip. I do miss that place. They were just about the only place where I would go to "do nothing." I'd procure a deck lounge, butter up, get scorched in the sun on their big wooden deck, get occasional coldies from the covered, open-air bar, dig the booming tunes, grab a refreshing dip in the large pool, or walk out on the famous pier and down the stairs into the ocean. Great place to spend an afternoon.

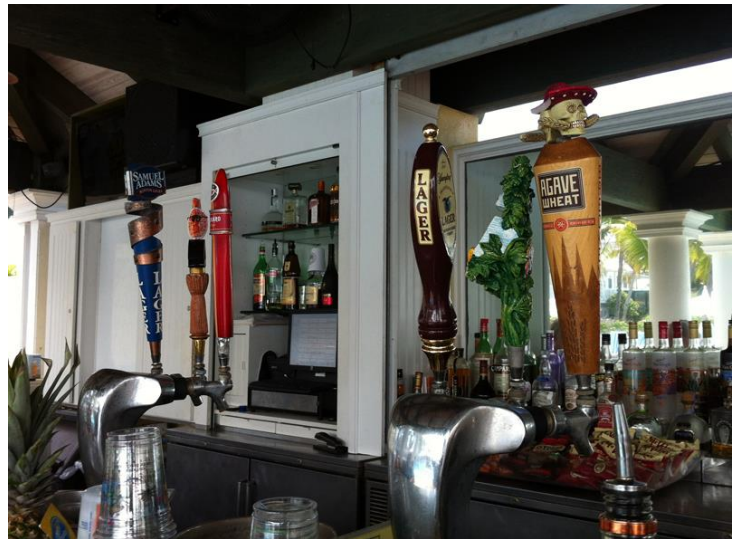


Atlantic Shores was also great for an evening dip while they did their Sunday evening Tea Dance. I never could figure out exactly where that term came from. And the pier was an excellent

venue for watching the holiday fireworks from White Street Pier. On one Independence Day, I floated in the ocean and watched the pyrotechnics from water level. Very cool indeed. No place in KW could keep alive what that place had. Gone but not forgotten.

So, I suppose it was with some intention of tribute that the luxurious SoMo On The Beach named their pool bar The Shores. This new bar is not as free-spirited, but, given the quadrupled rack rates, how could it be?

The hospitality industry was doing well on this September weekend, so the hotel honchoes had assigned a guard at the gate to the pool and bar. I doubt they used the word "guard" – more likely "Gate Attendant" or "Assistant Privacy Assurance Associate" (APAA) or some such industry mumbo jumbo. Whatever they called him, his duty was to keep me out.



OK, maybe not specifically *me*. I doubt they told him, "If that Hops guy gets in here, you're toast." Still, the pool is for registered guests only. I have no problem with that; it's private property and yada yada. But it wasn't the dang pool that *I* was after. My goal was the bar that o'erlooked it, and the beverage that lay within.



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In reality, I'm sure I could have told the APAA that I was just going in to speak with the barkeep, but I just didn't feel like lying to the dude. Some days, I just don't feel much like talking, period, and this was one of them. I can shovel

it with the best of them and maybe even convince you that your feet are on fire – I was an English major, so you know that my B.A. was in B.S. – but I was more in Stealth Mode this afternoon. Sometimes that is just more fun.

And with the VFW Post 3911 infiltration mission fresh in mind, I steeled myself to the challenge.

Turns out that it was no challenge at all. Just as I finished locking up my bike – which was only a few yards from the gate, and in plain sight of the APAA, making the *Yes I am a guest here, why do you ask?* ploy pretty unreasonable – some legitimate guest came over to him with a question, and, as good associates are trained to do, he didn't just *tell* her where to go, he *showed* her where to go, and wandered away from his assigned post in doing so. Haha. Too easy.

[And anticlimactic. Way to rip off the reader, Hops, you douche.]

STFU, Rick. Go do your own tour. 8P

Anyway, the pool here is really cool. The water level is right up to the deck level, giving the impression of an unbroken surface. When you crouch down and look across it, and a few people are casually lounging neck-deep by the edges of the still water, it looks like some heads have been left lying on the glossy floor. No, really, it does. Kinda. (Especially when it's a few minutes after 4:20, wink wink.)

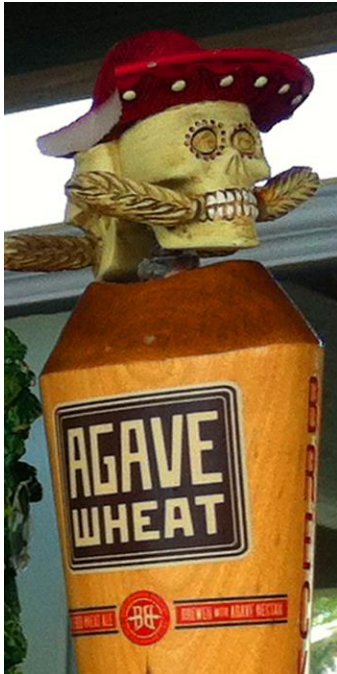
So, anyways, I sauntered around the pool and to the bar, and took a seat. They have nice tall bar stools here, with flexi-mesh seats and backs. I'm a big fan of that; so much better to be able to lean back and semi-lounge while I have my beer, especially poolside. If I'm in a sports bar, I'm more likely to be leaning forward with forearms on the bar, but in casual environs like this, leaning back and going *Ahhhhh* is a good take.

Ronnie was the barkeep. I'd seen him behind a bar elsewhere, when I was there with B&J, but I doubt he would have remembered me. Still, I'm pretty sure that he did recognize me as a non-guest. But the last person I worry about in such infiltrations is the barkeep, anyway; they want money, and I'm there to spend some, and to tip some. The bar makes money, the keep makes money, Hops gets Hoptical, and the world is a better place.



They have a pretty good selection of drafts, and I ordered the Hoptical Illusion IPA. I'm a total sucker for IPAs, as you may have noticed. And when the syllable "hop" is in the name, it's a slam dunk. The Improper

Hopper, made by Boston's Rock Bottom Brewery, is a classic case. I see that on the menu and all free will dissolves; I just have to say those words to the keeper.



And so it was at The Shores. Hoptical Illusion, please, and make it snappy, fella. No, I didn't say the second part. Probably would not have gone over well.

Agave Wheat was on the tap bridge too. I love that tap. It looked like someone took a bite out of this guy's hat, though.

'Twas a lazy afternoon. Most lounge chairs were occupied with people half-asleep in the balmy breeze. A few heads slid around on the floor. A couple of other guests sat quietly at the bar. There was a TV to look at, but it was over there and I didn't feel like looking over there, so I just turned my chair sideways and watched the pool and the trees and the people.

A couple of stools had been brought closer to the pool, and stood empty, facing it. For some *very* strange reason, they reminded me of the Easter Island statues. Tall, motionless, blank, looming above the sea and staring out to the horizon, just like those *moai*. Yeah, I know, it's a stretch. Eh. What time was it again?

My one-and-done got done almost before I knew it. The Shores had a nice vibe, but I only felt like watching people do nothing for just so long. More bars were out there just waiting be hopped.

Mmmm...hopp PPP.....