

## 100 Bars in 100 Days

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

### BAR 67:

McConnell's Irish Pub & Grill  
[www.facebook.com/mcconnellspub](http://www.facebook.com/mcconnellspub)  
900-905 Duval Street  
Monday 9/24, 10:30 pm

Bass Ale (draft) \$5.50

This was a late decision. I did an after-work run, ate some supper, and was getting into fatassin' mode when my Sensaduty started barking. It barked and barked till I said, "OK, OK, I shall go to a freaking bar."

Sensa was right, though. The grueling pace of the PLIPA Tour demanded that I man up and not give in to the temptation to lag. It was Day 67, with the mid-week doldrums lurking ahead. Weekends tended to slingshot me into the work week, but I still had to carry the ball some through MTW and T if I wanted to maintain the integrity of my quest.

Or maybe I was just thirsty.

McConnell's was high up on the Yet To Visit List, so I revved up C-Note and rolled back down to the rarefied air of Upper Duval. I had a hunch that I'd feel more at home here than I had at Vinos two nights before. I had an even stronger hunch that I'd be drinking a better beer. And at a better price.

For most of my years in KW, this place was Bogart's, affiliated with the Casa Blanca Hotel next door. Made sense: Humphrey Bogart, 1942 black-and-white movie, *Here's looking at you, kid*. It was a cool place, and more than once I flopped on the couches in the front corners of the room while sipping a sud or two. I didn't come here all that often, though, since I spent most of my time in the lower blocks of Duval, and it was a long walk just to come to a place that was, more often than not, pretty quiet and uneventful.



The bar had shifted ownership a while back, though – no idea if it still had any connection to the hotel (which did not change its name) -- and made a definite move towards Ireland.



`Twas a good move. The place is as pub as they come: dark wood all around, a big Guinness mirror behind the bar, a real-darts dartboard, a back-o'-th'-bar pool table, high-top tables scattered among lean-on counters throughout the room, and some cushioned bench seats in the big-TV corner.

When I arrived, a few tables were occupied, and just one stool was open at the bar. As always, I bellied up. This ain't no Table Tour, toots.

The barkeep asked me what I'd like. Well, that list is long and diverse, greedy and perverse, but I replied, "A Bass Ale, if ya please." He nodded his assent, calling it "a fine choice."

I'm sure it was coincidence, and the growing lateness of the weeknight hour, but as soon as I settled in, people began to leave. (Yes, I did take a shower after my run, thanks for thinking that.) That was fine with me; I was not in a chatty frame of mind anyway. *MNF* was good enough company for me.

Seattle was playing, I had adopted them as one of my favored teams. I began rooting for them when Matt Hasselbeck went there to be their QB. I had been Matt's high school English teacher a few lives ago, so my rooting was sincere, not just some fantasy league loyalty.

Matt had since been traded after several good years with the Seahawks, but I kept kinda rooting for them anyway. I love the Pacific Northwest – Washington and Oregon, for you geographically challenged readers – having been out there on a few tremendous roadtrips and such. Seattle was a fun, fun, fun time, with good, good, good beers, so what more reason to you need to take an NFL team under your wing?

And, taking a cue from the collegiate Oregon Ducks to their south, Seattle was decking out in eye-catching colors. Electric green accents, elbow pads, gloves, socks and shoes gave their unusually dark blue-gray uniforms some true pizzazz. Green and blue had always been their colors, but they decided to light 'em up some for 2012.



I really paid very little attention to the game, even though I was watching it. I had brought the Notbook and was leafing through some old jottings. The pub atmosphere was bringing back that rambling feeling. I couldn't begin to count how many days, afternoons, evenings, and nights I've spent quietly pouring my mental meandering through my ball point pen and onto those pages.

There is some classic stuff in there. Some of it was purdy hard to decipher; my own handwriting was a blur even to me from some furious session of scribbling while trying to keep up with my whirrring brain. Many times, I would finish a rowdy, rambling, written rant, and just set the pen down, almost out of breath, and chase it all down with a cold, delicious swill of a fine flavorful brew. Greaaaaat.

But it's hard to do that without steaming inside about my greatest loss to theft. In 2005, my shoulder bag was stolen at a race. The slimy scurvy thief made quite a haul: two good cameras, \$200 in cash, a couple of credit cards, and, what hurt most of all, a three-year-old, 150-page, leather-bound journal that was almost filled. Ughhhhh, did that hurt. There was sooo much of me in that book. I would give just about anything I own to get it back, but I'm sure the scumbag just tossed it in the first dumpster he passed as he fled.

So it goes. Gotta take your hosings and move on. The new book has gotten some decent use, but it took almost two years to get my taste for writing back. Couldn't do it without getting pissed off. Now it just makes me a tad sad, Chad.

Mannnn, that Bass Ale was good and cold! Had I come here earlier in the evening, I would have definitely been doing seconds, thirds, or more. But, with a work day looming, my Sensaduty quieted, and a promise to return and do some notbooking, I paid my \$5.50 – a half-buck less than Python's Holy Ail – and moseyed on back to The Shanty.



#67: McConnell's Irish Pub. Having a cold Bass Ale draft and watching the Seahawks in their electric green Nike stuff. Good crowd here for a Monday night.

