

100 Bars in 100 Days

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

BAR 68:

The Chart Room Bar (Pier House)

www.pierhouse.com/Dining/chart_room.asp

0 Duval Street

Tuesday 9/25, 9:30 pm

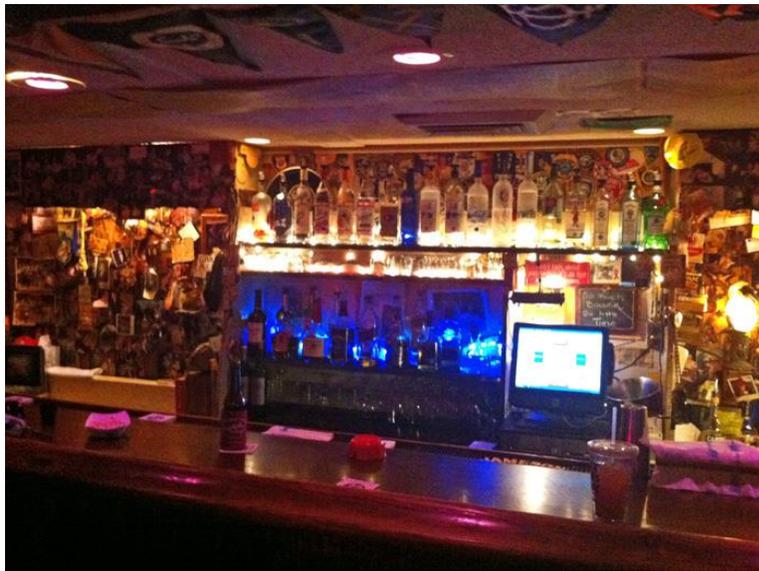
Yuengling (draft) \$3.75

The Pier House is one of K-Dub's sweetest hotels. Great rooms and great grounds overlooking the Gulf of Mexico on the sunset side of the island. Room rates routinely exceed my weekly salary. And such a cool address: Zero Duval. Almost like it can't possibly even exist. Niice.



So, it would be reasonable to assume that their on-premises bar would be proper and polite. You'd be in the right neighborhood with the HarbourView Café (note the Brit-style *Harbour* fused into a web-style ComboWord), the Wine Galley Piano Bar, and the Beach Bar & Grille (not Grill, but Grille).

But for the everyman bar in the middle of the property, The Chart Room, you'd be waaaay off. Their website describes it thus:



Known as "a weird little bar trapped inside a luxury resort", the Chart Room is one of a kind. No blender drinks, no umbrellas, no pretenses; this is a slice of the authentic old Key West. Not fancy but a great place to meet the locals and swap some stories. Free popcorn, peanuts, and hot dogs.

'Tis a good description indeed. When I arrived, the bar was full – all five seats were taken – so I staked

out a spot near the back corner, by the big wooden peanut barrel, where I'd be able to take it all in.

The barkeep was ridiculously friendly, brandishing exaggerated good nature and a broad smile with his "What'll ya have, my friend?" I returned his smile and replied with zeal, "A Yeungling, please, my good man!"

"Right away!" he responded as the bar patrons shared the mirth. It was clear that he wasn't doing it to shit on me; I had stepped up to the bar in the wake of a funny story that had gotten everyone laughing, and I walked right into the fun bubble. It was an auspicious start to Bar #68 – certainly the most jovial greeting of the PLIPA Tour so far.

It was a small crowd, but it's a very small bar. Ten people and it feels full. My Yeungling was dammmn colld. I could barely hold the glass. It would be easy to get in an accelerated saucing pace in here: cold beer and good, salty popcorn to serve as a catalyst.

The peanuts must have been good, too, I assumed, since the floor was almost hidden under a carpet of crushed shells. Then again, maybe they hadn't swept the floor in months.

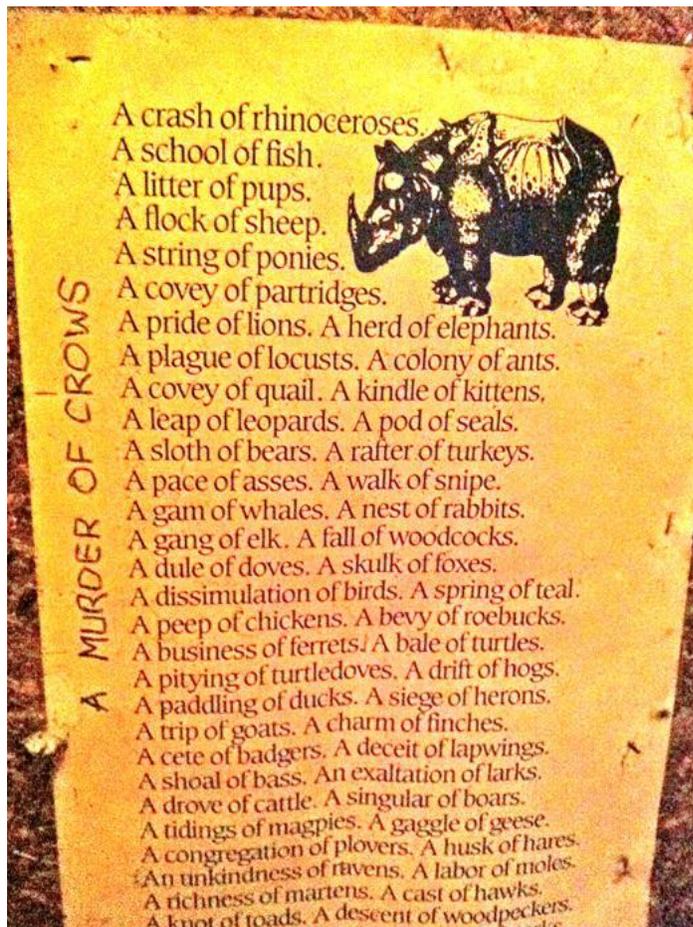


The small crowd was not just jovial but feisty. A couple of shouts of "Bobby Valentine is an asshole!" rang out, and I had to chime in with a "Here, here!" which raised even more laughter.

The decorations all around the room provided some entertainment as well. Nautical charts are stapled to the ceiling (*Chart Room, hello*), along with diverse posters, signs, and amusing items. Red lights tint the small TV area, and pennants, patches, cards and photos are tacked all around the bar.



My favorite of them all was tacked to the ceiling: the poster listing the names used to describe groups of various animals. W(ho)TF got to choose those terms? Whose duty was that? "A school of fish" we have all heard. Likewise with "a pride of lions." We've been fed those terms since we were little and probably never questioned the words. Or if we did, we were told, "That's just what they're called, Hopsy, now finish your haggus."



But, really, "a *business* of ferrets"? "An *unkindness* of ravens"? "A *dissimulation* of birds"? Is that even a word? I'm betting that the judges in a Scrabble tournament would nix that one and send your tiles back to your rack.

Was this list formulated during a stoned game of Mad Libs?? Were people rolling on the floor laughing whenever somebody pulled yet another absurd word out of his behind? A "*dule*", *dude*, a *freaking DULE of freaking doves!! Haaaaa!!*

More likely, some pompous droofsome of 19th century Yorkshiremen sat around a parlor, sipping Chateau de Chasselas, puffing on pipes, and issuing stuffy decrees, backed by

inscrutable rationales, that a group of leopards would be a *leap*, badgers would convene in a *cete*, and whales would gather in *gams*. And they had among them Her Majesty's Douche Of Diction who had the authority to approve such things.

That is my usual "presumptive research," where I presume something to be true and hold steadfastly to it until absolute refutation comes along. [Turns out, the latter scenario has a hint of truth in it: [Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leopard).] A "tidings" of magpies? Isn't that some kind of food?

So Bar #68 proved to be an educational experience as well. Which is nice.