

## 100 Bars in 100 Days

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

### BAR 72:

Point 5

[www.915duval.com/point5-lounge](http://www.915duval.com/point5-lounge)

917 Duval Street

Thursday 9/27, 11:00 pm

Magic Hat #9 (bottle) \$5.38

It was a three-block walk here from the Cork & Stogie. Certainly not a big deal, especially on such a fine night.

The PLIPA Tour had begun in sultry summer weather, and, now almost three-quarters of the way through, it's still sultry summer weather. On the calendar, it's autumn, but it's still sultry summer weather. OK, maybe it's sultry autumn weather, but it sure feels like sultry summer weather to me. That's all fine though; I love sultry summer weather. That's one of the main reasons that I moved here.

September is such a hot month here. Perhaps it's partly psychological; my internal calendar starts to think in terms of the northern change of seasons, and it just isn't happening. The sun still blazes, ocean temperatures still tease the 90-degree mark, and A/C still flows day and night, in both car and home.

But so what? It's a gorgeous night out, and I'm checking out still more virgin turf. Two virgins in one night. Not bad for a senescent dude.

So, anyhow, Point 5 is the upstairs bar at the 9 1 5 Restaurant, which coincidentally, is at 915 Duval. How lucky is that? I guess it's like 915.5 or something, like those odd addresses you sometimes see with the ½ in them. Jack Flats is one of those: 509½ Duval Street. What's with that? The ½ is usually an upstairs, or a back entrance or some spooky shack in the back yard where the "strange one" of the family has been kept for a couple of decades. Flats is right on the main street. Is there a plain ol' 509? I'll have to check on that for ya.



9 1 5 is another old-private-home-turned-restaurant. There are a lot of those in KW. It's part of the quaint charm of the island city, you see. This one has prominent porches both upper and lower. I always assumed that upstairs was the same as down, until I saw *Sides*. (No, not the sides of the building.)

*Sides* is a small publication – brochure size – that I saw when I was at the Porch one night. The flyer's self-description reads, *Your guide to the more unique aspects of shopping, dining, services, galleries, and chilling in Key West*. Worth a quick scan, I figured; I like unique aspects, and I like chilling.

There were a lot of listings for shopping, and few for the other disciplines, but only four (4) for Chilling: The Porch, Vinos Wine Bar, Point 5 Lounge, and the Orchid Bar. The first two have already been toured (numbers 1 and 66 in your program), but the others hadn't.

The Porch was described as a "hip local hangout spot, craft beers & fine wine". Sounded pretty accurate. Point 5 was, "authentic thin crust pizza till midnight, DJ on Saturdays." I had to *hmmm* about a bar whose best boast is thin crust pizza. And have you ever had thin crust pizza that wasn't authentic? I've never stopped and wondered if the pizza in my hand was authentic or not. How could it not be? It didn't say "authentic Greek pizza" or "authentic Italian pizza" or "authentic Canadian pizza." What makes a thin crust authentic? It's thinness? It's crustiness? So that phrase had me on my guard.

But I did like the company that Point 5 was listed in; any kindred spirit of The Porch works for me. So I made it a point (haha) to add them to the Tour.

Number 72. 72, the most common par of a standard 18-hole golf course (and my common score for about 13-14 of those holes). Six dozen. Half a gross. Not fully gross, just half.

The entrance to Point 5 is around the side of the building. You go up a blue staircase, then turn inside and go up an uneven not-blue flight. The wood creaked a little as I climbed towards the bar, but, then again, it mighta been my knees.

I wasn't sure what to expect. 9 1 5 is a fairly pricey place, and you tend to associate a better-dressed crowd with higher menu prices. I did dine here once, on a concierge-kickback coupon, as you'll recall from the notes you

took on Hopter 63 (Duffy's). The steak was excellent, but the meal was a bit strange. There were no foolish garnishes, nor veggies that I would not eat anyway. That was different, but absolutely fine by me. The weird part was the side of fries.

With a high-priced slab o' bovine, you normally expect the thicker, more robust, steak fries. Hence the term. But 9 1 5 serves the thinner style made famous by McDonald's. They were about seven shades of yum, though: hot and just crispy enough. They must be fried in lighter stuff, like vegetable oil, or fruit oil, or oil of olé. And they're served in a cone of paper that sits in this funky silver coil.

So after chowing down this big delicious \$30+ sirloin, I finish off the last of the FF's and find myself leaving this place with the aftertaste of McD's frenchies. Somehow, it jussst didn't fit. I guess I should have saved one more bite of steak for last.

Anywayyy, I got to the top of the creaky stairs, and immediately realized that attire was not going to be an issue. Though some nice clothes were to be seen, especially at the tables, there was plenty of the more casual clothing – even tank tops and cowboy hats – around the bar. The barkeep, named Andy, was in a plain, well-worn t-shirt. The place was refreshingly lower class. Not *low* class, but *lower* class than I was anticipating.

The floor was a bit crooked and the walls were plain, medium-brown wood. The bar was three sides of a square, but really only two sides were for patrons.

Before I even reached the bar, I caught a good vibe when I saw Patty in the kitchen making pizza. Good dude, Patty, a bigtime Red Sox fan, though not a Boston fan in any other sport. I first knew him from his stint at Mr. Z's, where many a late-night cheesesteak tumbled down my gullet towards my future heart attack.

There were no openings at the bar, so I ordered my #9 and carried it out to the balcony. Had I been less sober, the uneven floor of a balcony, along



with that short railing, would have given me pause. I could just picture missing a step and careening right over that little fence.



There was a pretty good dinner crowd still here, despite the hour. Maybe half of the tables, both upstairs and down, were occupied. Everyone seemed to be in eating-is-done-drinking-is-not mode.

The four nicely dressed, late-20's women at the table next to me probably had one too many bottles of red. They were throwing flowers down at the passers-by on the sidewalk. But

don't picture a graceful arm sweep and some rose petals drifting aloft on a soft updraft. No, they were cussing like sailors, plucking the orchids out of the centerpiece and chucking them like baseballs. *Heyyy, you're fukkin' cute! Here, have a goddamn flower!* They didn't seem to be shying away from attention.

Bottle empty, they packed up and took their gumption elsewhere. Things got mellower right away. The waiter cleared the table and calmly brought fresh flowers.

And just when I thought I had the name figured out, I looked at my receipt. It said **917** Duval Street. WTF?