

100 Bars in 100 Days

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

BAR 75:

Orchid Bar

www.orchidkeyinn.com/orchid-bar.html

1004 Duval Street

Wednesday 10/3, 9:00 pm

Stella Artois (can) \$4.00

This was the last of the famed *Chilling 4*, that quartet of cool hangs recommended in the brochure called *Sides*. I told ya about that in the Point 5 blurb.

I kinda knew about this place, but not really. Jacko used to work at the front desk at the Orchid Key Inn and told us about it. But his description was never very enthusiastic – very small, tucked away, blah, blah -- so I never felt compelled to check it out. Hence, I was surprised to find it listed in such a prestigious publication as *Sides*.

Jacko was right; it is small (8-9 bar seats) and it is tucked away (back beyond the parking lot, not visible from the road, small sign), but none of that seemed like a negative once I actually saw the place.



First of all, the Orchid Key is brand new from the ground up. A couple of years ago, the old motel-style property was razed and this newer, far more upscale facility was raised in its place. Sweet digs, for sure. Very pricey, and rated as one of the best hotels in south Florida.

So, they had to have a bar, yes? And it had to be upscale as well. It's primarily for the

OKI's guests, but the public can come on in too. They want to get some non-guest business so they can get some non-guest money, but they don't want to get so much that the guests will get squeezed out.

Mike was the barkeep this night, and he wasn't worried about anyone getting squeezed out. I was his only customer. He wasn't the most sociable guy in the world, but I could understand that. When you're working a small bar on a slow night, you can very easily get trapped. If you're too amiable and welcoming, you just might end up with a loquacious turdhead who will think that you exist for the purpose of listening to his life story, his jokes, and his political, social, personal, and religious opinions. It's awful.



You have no place to hide, no other guests to turn your attentions to. Even feigning a clean-up is no good because (a) you don't want to do that work anyway, and (b) he'll just keep blabbing away while you clean.

So, wary of his wariness, I kept my side of the conversation fairly succinct, but pleasant. Mike kind of loosened up, but I'm sure he still preferred being



solo. He surely would have surrendered the buck or two I was going to tip him to get me on my way.

When my can of Stella Artois was placed in front of me, I commented that it was a first for me, seeing that brew in can. He pointed out, too, that it is a 14.9-ounce can. Well, I'll be dipped. Almost three bonus ounces – nearly 25% more – and

it was just four bucks. My pleasure was genuine and obvious, and Mike got a kick out of that.

We got into a casual convo about the bar, how business was, what drinks were most popular there, yada hoo ha. I commented on the pineapples in the big glass jar and Mike right proudly told me about the pineapple infused

vodka: "The vodka tastes like pineapple, but the pineapple tastes like vodka."

Right about then, the door opened and a couple came in. They seated themselves near me (unavoidable). As she was sitting down, she took one look at the TV, which was showing yet another crappy Red Sox performance, and grunted, "UGH, you can shut that off any time." I had to respond with a "Amen to that."

And from there, we just rolled. Her husband was a dud (Yankee fan, it figures) – I'm not sure he ever said two words -- but Sheryl was pumped to talk Boston, Boston, Boston.

She grew up in Charlestown, on the north side of the city, near the famous Bunker Hill (which is really Breeds Hill, but you knew that). Her whole family are rabid Sox fans. They've had season tickets pretty much since the concept of season tickets was born. Her granddad was a batboy for the Sox, and he has a baseball autographed by Ted Williams, Bobby Doerr, and Johnny Pesky. Her email address is "RedSox04" and she has some other handle (twitter, gmail, other?) that is "Patriots54".

Cool kid. Kid, ya, she was mid-30's, I guess. Kid to me.

My Stella was gone (sob) and I had another stop to make, so I bid them all farewell, reassured her that things had to get better in The Nation, and slipped off into the night.

