

## 100 Bars in 100 Days

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

### BAR 81:

Rum Barrel

[www.rumbarrel.com](http://www.rumbarrel.com)

528 Front Street

Friday 10/5, 6:30 pm



Okto Festival Ale (draft) \$6.00

Ahh, the Barrel. Seems like only yesterday that this was the "new bar in town", but that was at least six years ago. Nice place, without being one of those "nice places" where some of us are, well, not urged to attend. Casual, comfortable, lotsa dark wood. Yahhh, dark wood.

Quick comment about the photo. "No Parking" sign on the pole, and a "no parking" sign taped to meter. Some people...

Anyway, I've eaten here before and my burger got a thumbs-up. Crab cakes were good too.

This PLIPAT stop was not a solo venture; another SSDC outing was afoot. Several dozen members of the esteemed Sunset Social Drinkers Club were pooling our bibulous skills to raise money for Reef Relief. Boozin' for a cause. Gotta love it. We drink and the reef is better off. The butterfly effect. Hats off to Ben (The Everywhere Man), Debbie and Tina (photo, left) for being the driving force behind this noble organization.



Our party zone was the roof. Yep, that's right: the top of the Barrel. There's a full bar up there, and a stage where we had a pretty good band performing. It's not exactly penthouse altitude – you can't see the water or anything special like that – but you get to look down on people, and that's always good for the ego.

Widmer Brewery's Okto Festival Ale was the featured beverage tonight. It was a tasty brew, but I was a little taken aback at the \$6.00 price tag. We



had a 2-for-1 ticket as part of the SSDC deal, but still. And, as it turned out, I was given two more tickets from people who either did not fancy the selection, or did not drink at all. Yeah, I know. Some people are just odd like that (especially at a Drinkers Club function). All the more for the rest of us, I reckon.

B & J and I hung out for a good while with Ronny, whom they knew from Turtle Kraals (and who had served me so capably at The Shores Bar, #64), and we got the lowdown on a lot of the backroom shtuff around the KW bar scene.

Rum Barrel's food is good, and I assumed that it would be their kitchen feeding this crowd of hungry boozers. But we soon found out that the pulled pork and such that was on the free buffet was from the new gonna-open-any-day Charlie Mac's, up on Southard Street. That made sense; Pat Croce owns or part-owns both there and here, so this was the perfect trial run for that kitchen and we were a friendly test audience.

Then Mel, our barkeep, spilled the beans to us that C-Mac had quietly opened this very night. We all agreed that a first-night visit was in order, but we had to respect the SSDC cause first and stay the course here ... and see if our raffle tickets would win anything.

That wasn't likely. B & J were still carrying the notion that I was Mister



Lucky Raffle Dude just because I had that one planets-are-aligned jackpot night many months before at Shots & Giggles (#22). In reality, I just pay my Stupidity Tax via Lotta and Powerball, like so many good Americans, and take my bi-weekly beatings.

Only once in my life have I won anything worth more than \$100, and that was about three decades ago, in 1984. Back in my teaching days, I won our school's annual raffle, scoring a tidy \$2000, plus a hundred bucks for also being the seller of the winning ticket. The kids were freaking dumbasses about it, asking if I was going to buy a new car or even a house. I just shook my head at them and chuckled, "No, kid, I'm gonna pay off half my Visa bill."



I found a website several years ago that offers to "read your Chinese Luck Line." Give it a few numbers -- date of birth, time of birth, location of birth, I forget what they all were -- and it mapped out a graph of the times in your life that you will "have luck."

They blah-blahed about their definition of Luck, and life cycles, and the wood-fire-earth-water-metal mumbo, so I skimmed and yeah-yeahed my way through all that bushwa -- a valuable skill I mastered in college -- and jumped to the graph.

Fucking flatline, baby. Pancake city. Just a luckless guy, it appears, except for one bump, in late 1984. Hmmmm, my team wins

States, I win two grand, both in November of '84. Might be something to that Chinese Luck Line thing. Not that I can do anything to change it. It's just good to know, I guess, that I'm outa luck for the duration.

Anyway, Rum Barrel had changed a bit since my last visit. The pirate theme had been phased out a bit, and a diver theme was taking over. Brian quipped, "They're becoming a dive bar."

The walls have chartish/mappish graphics, and oars and boat gadgets hang throughout. The skeleton of a dinghy hangs over the bartenders' heads. It's a good look.

I reckon the change was due to the Pirate Soul Museum relocating outa town, which kinda killed the link. The pirate thing is big in the Keys, but it

probably shouldn't be; they were murderers, rapists, and plunderers, but at least they didn't use steroids. It was all natural murdering, raping, and plundering. Still, hardly the stuff of heroes. So, morphing into a dive theme gets Hops' approval.

I won exactly nothing in the raffle, much to my cronies' disappointment, so we rallied on up the road to check out the real New Bar In Town.