

## 100 Bars in 100 Days

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

### BAR 82:

Charlie Mac's Smokehouse  
<http://www.charliemacs404.com>  
404 Southard Street  
Friday 10/5, 9:00 pm

Sierra Nevada (draft) \$5.00

The Meteor Smokehouse used to be here. Fine ribs they had, too. Then they closed. Then they opened again. Then they closed again. Then Bobalu's moved in. I was psyched about that. Their pizza and sandwiches always worked for me whenever I stopped in at their Big Coppitt location. Chicken Parm Sub, mmmmmmmmm.



Bobalu's wasn't here a real long time -- just a few days past their second anniversary (and a fiiiine party that was!) -- but long enough to carve a niche in my drinkin' soul. It had a cool Keys beachshack vibe. Colored all blues, with beery decorations. It was open air and west-facing, so when I would stop here for the 4-6 Happy Hour on a Saturday or Sunday after a Fort Zack swim, I had to hope there would be some seats in the shrinking shade. They had big round fans, but no AC. Once the sun got low enough, the tall trees blocked it out, but there were a couple of hours when you might get fifteen people crowded in the back third and nobody at all in the front.



They had good HH, cold beer, good za, and good music. But Mr. Croce had other plans, hence Charlie Mac's and the return of the BBQ.

CM bears little resemblance to their predecessors. The basic blueprint is the same -- bar, dining room, kitchen haven't moved -- but the bar area especially got a complete makeover. It is much

more spacious, with tables lining the walls and the bar extended farther toward the front. It is still open-air, but there are sturdy pillars between



each big window space and lock-em-down-tight steel curtains above each. Large AC units gush cold air into the room.

The bar itself is grander, with an impressive array of taps at four stations on the center island,

which is topped by eight or so flat screen TV's. But the best thing of all is the long side brick wall with the cool mural of a big, grinning, shades-wearing pig. One of my first thoughts was that it looks and feels like an urban bar, a far cry from that seaside shanty vibe.



The place had a good crowd going. Word spreads quickly in a small town. No need to announce your opening; just open the door, let people in, and the news will get around fast.

Some familiar faces were behind the bar. Nicki was on staff now, and Jill carried over from Bobalu's. She just stayed there and they built the new bar around her.

Things looked organized and brisk, but we heard some inside murmurings that the kitchen was in chaos. Most opening nights are like that in the kitchen, but I guess this was extreme: wrong orders, multiple orders, lost orders, language barriers, attitude barriers, and widespread absence of clues.

We never would have known, though, partly because we were only drinking.



CM's has a couple of pretty amusing touches too. On the back wall, there is a long, wide height chart -- just horizontal lines every inch or so from 4'6" to about 6'6" on a board about five feet wide, like you'd see on a police lineup. What makes it funny, though, is that, before you stand up there to be photographed, you pick a mug sign from a stack of options. It just so happened that The Gecko's

Lizzie and Emily were in the mood and picked some eyebrow-raising signs: Lizzie (Virgin), Emily (Jail Bait).

The biggest laugh I got, though, was in the men's room. CM's put a framed photograph over each of the three urinals, all close-ups of black women with varied facial expressions. Lanes 1 & 3 can feel good about themselves, but I'll be waiting in line before I use Lane 2.



All in all, a good time. I'll be back.

I do miss Bobalu's, but such is the bar world of KW.

Jayzuz, still 18 bars to go. July was a lonng time ago!