

## 100 Bars in 100 Days

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

### BAR 84:

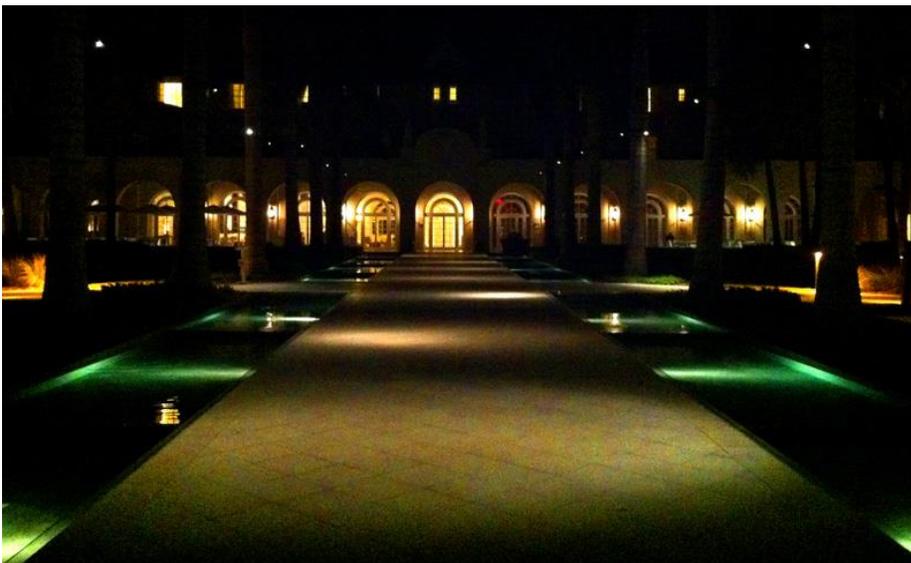
Sun-Sun Beach Bar & Grill  
Casa Marina  
1500 Reynolds Street  
Tuesday 10/9, 10:00 pm

Key West Sunset Ale (draft) \$6.50

This was a bar that I had been looking forward to. It would have made much more sense to tour it on a hot Saturday afternoon, when rich and beautiful people abound, the water glistens, the shade provides a delicious respite

from the scorch, and beer seems extra, extra cold. Ehhh, next time, I guess. The *Peace, Love & IPA Tour* was planned by the Whim & Wingit Travel Agency, and some of its turns and timings have left even me scratching my head.

Casa Marina is such a sweeet property, and I was eager to do a little wandering here. To me, nothing in the Keys elicits as much of a wow as standing with my back to the ocean and looking up that



long walk between the pools to that huge mansion. Henry Flagler, you were The Man, and you sure as Hell wanted everyone to know it.

Ten o'clock on



an early October Tuesday night has to be one of this place's slowest times of the year. Hurricane season is at peak, so the hotels are at slack occupancy, and those who do come to town are much more likely to choose the weekend. But that was OK; I wanted to take a bunch of pix, and I hate having people in my pix. People suck. Not you all, you're wicked awesome. *Other* people.

It also meant that the Sun-Sun would be s...l...o...w.

I dunno about that name. It doesn't sound dignified enough. Sounds like a breath mint or something. And it has no connection (that I know of) to the Casa Marina tradition. Was Henry's wife or kid named Sun-Sun?

Whenever I see or hear a name or an ad or an outfit that strikes me as ridiculous, I wonder, if that got chosen as the best, just how bad were the ones that did not get selected.

Like that ludicrous hat that what's-her-name wore to the Royal Wedding. Where the hell did they come up with that? It looked like some alien antenna. I don't know who chose it or why, but even the stuffy Brit aristocracy had to be snickering right in her face. So, how horrible were the hats that did not make the cut? Dayumm.

But Sun-Sun it is. Roll with it.

The Casa Marina lobby is one damn fine room. It's not overdone with crap like mirrors and frilly nonsense, like some Versailles stateroom (though it was in Henry's day, according to period photographs I've seen). It has a lot of dark wood, plenty of pillars, and a nicely polished floor that I just want to slide across wearing clean socks. The furniture doesn't look all that sink-in-and-go-ahhhhh comfortable, but that could be intentional. Nobody likes a crowded lobby; it's a bad vibe: too noisy, with a discomforting feeling that, if all these people are here, something must be amiss elsewhere.

Sun-Sun is out back, beyond the pools, so it's a fine stroll to get there. I did my best fine stroll stride -- my Gatsby amble -- as I

passed under the arches and down between the rows of towering palms. Ya gotta love bottom-lit trees. Such a cool effect. I wonder if the trees like it? Do they get all *Heyyyy, check out my sexy trunk*



*and limbs, baby, or are they more like Will ya get the damn flashlight outa my eyes so I can frickin' sleep?!*

The bar itself looked dang cool set among the glowing aqua pools, with the deep dark of

the ocean as a backdrop. There is really nothing fancy about the bar itself, though, especially at night. A safe haven of cool shade by day, it seems a bit barren in its restroomish lighting.

I took the corner stool closest to the entrance. There were two guys and two ladies a few stools down to my left. I assumed the wives and hubs paired off

for conversation's sake. The 30-something woman who was tending brought me my beverage in a tall slender pilsner glass. I was expecting a plastic cup, being poolside and all, so I was impressed. Then I picked it up. Aha! Plastic it was, after all, but a good fake.



\$6.50 a splash, though. A new Tour Record. If it was a cranked-up

ABV like a Dogfish Head 90, or an exotic brew like the Midas Touch, that would be in the right ball park, but for draft -- or *draught*, at that price -- Sunset Ale, it was a tad on the high side. Once again, a bar employs Hops-repellent pricing.



Another couple came in and sat on the opposite side of the bar, directly across from my bar neighbors. They swapped casual greetings; it looked like they may have met here earlier and had interacted a few times, as hotel guests will do.

One of the guys on my side mentioned baseball and wondered aloud when the next playoff game was. His wife seemed ready with an answer, but caught herself and said, "What's today, Wednesday?"

The woman across the bar blurted out loudly and bitterly, "No. It's **Tuesday!**" She might as well have added, *you stupid shit*, because that was exactly her tone. What a bitch. She shifted a bit, in a *harrumph* kinda way, and her light jacket fell open to reveal, yup, a New York Yankees shirt. Need I say more?

I didn't crave a refill at that price, so I considered my job finished, did the requisite tipping, and quietly departed.

I left the bar, but not the premises. The next half-hour or so was spent sauntering around the grounds, snapping photos, lying in various lounge chairs, or sitting and admiring the architecture, decoration, and horticulture of the grounds. Hardly anyone was around, and the few employees that passed me by were certainly

not interested in messing up their easy-peazy night by talking with me.

It was quiet and peaceful out there -- good for the soul -- which likely would not have been the case on a hot and busy Saturday afternoon, so maybe my travel agents were wise after all.

