

## 100 Bars in 100 Days

Hops MacBarley's 2012

Key West Bar Boondoggle

*"The Peace, Love, and I.P.A. Tour"*

BAR 90:

### **Santiago's Bodega**

207 Petronia Street

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

Saturday 10/20, 5:00 pm

*Dogfish Head 60-Minute IPA (draft)*

*\$4.00*

This was virgin ground. In fact, if not for Jan's tip, I would have never thought that they had a bar. It always struck me as one o' them fancy eatin' places where you wear nice clothes and dab your bottom lip with a cloth napkin

when you get a drop of some sauce that you can't even pronounce on it. I guess it kind of is -- I thought I saw cloth napkins on the tables -- but they most definitely have a bar as well, and the pretty hostess was delighted to steer my thither. She seemed damn happy to have Hops in the house.

The bar struck a chord in me immediately. Dark wood, babe, and lots and lots of it. Walls, ceiling, floor, tables, and bar, all darrrrrrrk wood. I was in the wommmmb. The barkeep, like all the servers, was dressed in black. Black shoes, creased black pants, black button-up collared shirt, black socks, and black underwear (the last two are assumptions). He was young and handsome, and as he handed me my chosen brew, he said with a smile,



"Four dollars." It wasn't a great Happy Hour deal, but I think he knew it would make me reasonably happy. It was that kind of hour. Low-price, high-quality, craft beer in a dark, cool, and cozy place. Happy Hopsy.

The artwork and decorations were cool, too. Edgy, trendy,



modern, and outright odd. A candelabra with four completely melted lavender candles. A stained glass cabinet behind the bar. Sangria tanks in a home-made wooden frame. Copper lanterns sitting on the bar. A painting of a black horse that was cool in here, but could be disturbing elsewhere. Gooood stuff, Duff.



The room was part-time empty, except for me. An kinda-large Italian-looking woman in a black-and-silver, kinda-shiny-kindalacy (there has to be a word for that, but unless you knew that esoteric term, that hyphenated description is better anyway) dress was alternating between sitting at one of the tables and being, well, somewhere else. She'd sit quietly for a bit, seeming content with her

glass of wine, then get up all agitated and walk briskly out of the bar. A moment or two later, she'd settle back in all calm again. This happened four or five times while I was having one beer. To me, it was just the entertainment. Pretty crap-ass entertainment if you were paying of it, but it was free and weird, so that was OK by me.

What's the difference between a moment and two moments? It's not like a minute, which is a precise measure. A moment is vague, so to say "a moment or two" (like I just did) is stupid. One is the same as two, or three, or seven. Well, maybe not *seven*. OK, fukkit, seven.

It reminds me of George Carlin's comments about crumbs: *you break a crumb in half, you don't have two half-a-crums, ya got two crumbs, mannn!*



I had the good fortune to be able to see George live twice: first, in 1972, in Boston's Symphony Hall, and then, in 1999, at University of Rochester (NY).



Twenty-seven years apart. I laughed my ass off both times. In his final years, George did a lot of ranting and howling at the moon, but, WTF, he had earned the right. And he knew he was running out of time so he was pounding out his message with urgency: basically, it was, *Stop being so fucking stupid, people, and learn to get along!*

Cheers, GC. I'll always raise a glass in your honor and memory.

I didn't check out the menu at the Bodega, but I'm betting the food is really good. It's probably, well, just not *my kind* of food: pizza, pasta, burgers, chicken, and sandwiches, with an occasional lasagna. That's my diet, especially when eating out.

I wouldn't expect much overlap between that list and Santiago's board of fare.

But the bar atmosphere won me over big time. Definitely the most pleasant surprise of the *Peace, Love & IPA Tour*. I should have had a clue about that as I entered, but I didn't notice the sign until I looked at the photos. Next to the front door hangs a rough and uneven plank of old wood, with dark orange hand-painted letters: *Sangria -N- Beer Inside*, with an arrow pointing straight up. A sign like that goes with a bar I'm gonna like.

So, my two Petronia Street stops had jump-started my festival mojo. I re-emerged into Goombay with a clap of the hands and a renewed, *OK, what's next?* attitude. My, oh, my, momentum was back already.

