

100 Bars in 100 Days

Hops MacBarley's 2012

Key West Bar Boondoggle

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

BAR 94:

The Whistle Bar

224 Duval Street

www.bullkeywest.com

Monday 10/22, 10:00 pm

Yuengling (can) \$4.00

When Duval is abuzz, the Whistle can be a fun place to hang out. Well, Duval was getting good and crowded, so I climbed on up that steep staircase to check out the view from above.



This could be a daunting climb for large chunks of the population: the



elderly, the infirm, the clumsy, and the very drunk. The latter group may do the upward trek without much difficulty, but coming down could lead to quite a tumble. I've never seen anyone take that fall, but it has to have happened. I'm reasonably athletic and fit, and even I keep a deep and steadying breath, with an *OK, now, Hops, focussssss* reminder.

I don't think I'm even worried about injury; the embarrassment of thumping and thudding and banging and *AAAAAHHHHH*-ing in front of all those howling people would be far worse. Bleeding while they point and laugh. Sitting there battered and busted up while they take photos and videos of the rough stump of my shattered

femur sticking through my quad and ripped skin, all of which will be on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube within minutes, going viral under the header *Douchebag Loser Who Fell Down The Whistle's Stairs Ha Ha Ha*. Ya, 'twould suck.

But, we'll worry about that on the way out. It's never as bad to fall up something than it is to fall down. You trip on your way up and maybe bump your knee, or slip back a step or two. But a downward fall just keeps going down. Stupid gravity.

Things were a bit mellower up here on the second floor. Thinner air, maybe. There were still some goings-on, though. It's a cool vibe up here. I've done my share of dart tossing over there in that corner, and played a game or two of pool in the back-right area there, and drank at the center bar a few times, but those were all long ago. My dartin' and poolin' buds have moved on, so both my darts and my skills are getting rusty.

My drinking skills are jussssst fine, thank ya, so I stepped right up and ordered me a cold can of Yingle Bells. Four bucks. 94 bars into the *Peace, Love & IPA Tour* and I've been brainwashed into getting a can of domestic beer -- yes, a can of domestic -- for four dollars and thinking, *Hey, good deal!* Yikes.

I could have easily had me a game of pool. There was a solitary player practicing a few shots, and I'm sure an opponent would have been welcomed. Buuuut, she was a middle-aged, sliightly overweight woman, with her boobs hanging out of her old-style try-to-be-sexy dress. Not a very enticing sight. A tad daunting, to be honest. No pool for the Hopster tonight, thank you.

So I took my Yuengling out for some fresh air. The front balcony was pretty packed. I slid awkwardly onto a vacant stool between two groups of large people. The women to my left were as big as Volkswagens. The guys to my



right were more like Smart Cars. I wondered about this structure's load limit.

We all were doing exactly what you'd expect us to do: ridiculing the people below us. That's the whole point of being up above, isn't it? To literally look down on other people. How can you not feel superior? And everybody else seemed to already be in that frame of mind. The large ladies were pointing out people and yelling down at them. They were like the French soldiers atop the English castle in *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*. At one point, the woman next to me smacked me on the shoulder and pointed at one guy down below, "jeeezuz, look at that fat pig, gawwwd!" Images of pots and black kettles crossed my mind.

The large gals started getting a tad rowdy, I was getting jostled a bit, and my faith in the strength of this flimsy-looking balcony began to wane, so I used my empty beer as a good excuse to flee back inside.

New brew safely acquired, I took to the side balcony. A very sexy blonde had taken a seat out there. She had a male companion, but I was only gonna be looking anyway, so I staked my claim two stools away and let my eyes enjoy.

A moment (just one, not two) later, two young couples in full costume came out and grabbed some rail to my right. I immediately greeted the young man closest to me. "Nice nose, dude!" I doubt I had ever greeted anyone that way before. I liked it. Maybe I'll use it more often. Next job interview, for instance.



He thanked me heartily and gave the long, pointy shnozz an appreciative rub. They were from New Jersey, but they seemed like nice enough people. He was the comic of the group, befitting his elaborate court jester attire.

His girl friend had me transfixed, though. It wasn't due to her beauty, since she wore a mask that covered all but her mouth and chin. She was

slim, and her chin was thin and her lips narrow. Her mask was Phantom Of The Opera-ish, but covered more. It looked morbidly melted onto her head, and bore a very sadddd countenance. It was really effective, and it was hard to look at her without feeling a wave of sadness.

Trouble was, we were all -- including her -- laughing it up and having a dandy time. She was cracking jokes, but it just seemed so incongruous to hear good humor coming from that face. Her lips were smiling, but the rest of the face overpowered them. It was weirrrrd.



When I noted that they kind of stood out among the lesser-costumed crowd, they lamented that this was to be their only Fantasy Fest night, as they were to be homeward-bound in the morning. Early morning at that.

"Not the best plan I've ever heard," I noted.

"Tell me about it..." he sighed. They looked ready to take off, and not on an airplane. They had been to the night's only event, The Pink Party at the Westin,

and it had stirred some serious momentum. What had been agreed upon to be "a mellow time, have a couple then call it night" had changed into something like "bring it on and damn the torpedoes!!" I could practically see the little angels and little devils on their shoulders. The angels were cringing.

Down below, KWPD had some activity. It should have been trivial, but, as usual, alcohol was an escalating factor. Some dude on a bicycle had cut off a car as he turned from Duval onto Caroline, and had belligerently flipped off the driver who had had the temerity to honk his horn at the offender. There just so happened to be an officer right there who saw the whole thing, so he flicked on his lights and intercepted the reckless cyclist.

We couldn't hear the policeman's side of the dialogue that ensued, but, by his body language, he looked to be content with a *Be more careful, for your*

own sake type of admonition. The cyclist, however, took umbrage at the fact that he was being taken to task for doing the wrong that he had clearly done, and bellowed out those words that all cops love to hear, "*Jesus Christ, don't you have anything better to do!?!*"

So, he had to take a seat on the curb and chill his temper for quite a while while KWPD ran a check on him, just in case he was both stupid *and* dangerous. Backup arrived and a beautiful blue light show flickered across the pedestrians as they all walked by wondering who the humiliated drunk on the curb was.

At least he hadn't fallen down the stairs.

