

100 Bars in 100 Days

Hops MacBarley's 2012

Key West Bar Boondoggle

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

BAR 96:

Mangoes

700 Duval Street

<http://www.mangoskeywest.com>

Tuesday 10/23, 9:00 pm

Yuengling (bottle) \$5.50

As the *Peace, Love & IPA Tour* unfolded, it became obvious that I couldn't possibly catch every bar on its best night. Outside of the 17-or-so weeks of MNF, Monday night rarely represents a bar well. Barring (haha) specials and enticements, Tuesday is seldom any better.

Well, this Tuesday was exceptional. It was Tutu Tuesday, a "new tradition" that started just a year ago and has captured K-Dub's fancy big time. This year, a new wrinkle was added: running. Well, not really *running*, just *kinda* running. We all gathered, wearing our colorful spectrum of tutus, at



The Porch (Bar #1 on the *Peace, Love & IPA Tour*, more than three months ago) for some pre-run refreshments, then took to the street. I'm not sure how many of us there were, maybe close to 100?

Supposedly, this was going to be a mile. And it had "water stops." The pack was led by one of those golf carts that you rent and by a KWPD motorcycle. We were instructed to stay behind them, and they roared off at about 2 MPH.

After three blocks of that brutal pace, we reached our first water stop: Willy



T's (#51). It seemed that Willy's was either misinformed or naive, and, in either case, woefully unprepared for what was about to hit them. I was at the front of the front wave, fully expecting to find a table covered with cups of chilled booze just waiting for human gullets. What I saw was a round orange Gatorade cooler and a small stack of plastic cups. Hmmm, rum punch, maybe?



Another guy and I grabbed cups at about the same time and poured. We clicked cups in a basic Cheers motion, and drank. I lowered my cup and stared at it. *Water!?!?*

My drinking buddy was less reserved, "This is fucking **water!** " he bellowed. "Where the **fuck** is the booze? I didn't pay \$25 to drink fucking **water!!**"

Maybe they were just late bringing it out, or maybe it was a panicked response to a last-minute revelation, but a woman came rushing out from the kitchen with a plastic jug of red fluid and hastily began pouring into cups. By now, the field of tutu-ed semi-runners was flooding in. Eschewing shyness, I boxed out, fisted two cups, and slid away. That woman was gonna need a lot more of those jugs to slake the thirst of this group. I mean, we had trotted almost a quarter-mile! The drink was, in fact, a rum punch, and it was tasty. My two went down in short order, but there was no way I was going to fight my way back to that little table. Besides, we had two more water stops before getting to Mangoes.



After a little while, we dutifully followed our pace cart for a block-and-a-half to our next stop: The Green Parrot (#4). They had a better plan: pouring small (like 10-ounce) cups of Budweiser draft. "Better" in terms of being ready, but not in terms of flavor. Bud and I just don't get along. I did a couple of quick cups, but then

went next door to Charlie Mac's to meet up with B&J and have a real beer.

The tutu tango dallied for a long time at GP, and it was pretty dark by the time we jabbed on up Whitehead Street towards Hemingway's house. We turned up Petronia and then cut left onto Duval to catch our third and final water stop: The 801 Bar (#70). We never went in; Gugi Gomez and a couple other drag queens were manning (I know, ha) a table on the sidewalk and were doling out red Jell-O shots. They were doling them out with great zeal, too, practically force-feeding them to us. It was hilarious.

This went on for a little while, before someone yelled out that the cart was leaving. A good number of the crowd was in no hurry -- quite a few were still



shuffling in from the Parrot stop -- but the stupid runner in me got his dander up and before I knew it, I was galloping down Duval for the last block and right up to Mangoes. I think I might have actually "won" the "mile", but nobody gave a shit, including me.

Looking back on it, my haste to get here was damn dumb. Even though this was the designated Tutu Party venue, I'd be *buying* my drinks here, when I could have hung out over a few more *free* gulps of booze-infoozed gelatin at the '01.

I had never worn a tutu prior this event. No, really, it's true. It's a remarkably simple piece of apparel. It cost something like \$12 at some cheapass store on the 400 block. Mine was a bright blue. It was the last blue tutu on the rack. I asked the sales girl as I went to pay, "This says medium, ya think it'll fit me?" She nodded sagely, "It's you all the way." So, I still have it. Save all the trouble of tutu shopping next year. I'm confident it won't get a lot of wear in the meantime.

Mangoes, I think, was virgin turf! That doesn't seem possible, but I can't remember ever eating here, I can't ever remember drinking here, and I can't remember ever entering the property. That really surprised me since

I've often admired the long, well-stocked, wood-shelved bar and the wide patio with its umbrellaed tables and understated-so-not-pompous archway entrance.

But I do recall *thinking* about eating there and looking at the dinner menu and seeing the cheeseburger listed for like \$10.95. Now this was close to a



decade ago, back at a time when you could still get a six dollar Cburg at quite a few places in Key West, so that seemed outrageous.

It was soon explained to me that the dinner version included a salad and more veggies blah-blah, and maybe a cloth napkin, so I had probably been a bit too quick too judge. Whatever. That first impression hoo-ha really is true, and the Out Of Hops' Price Range concept had been burned into me brain.

Dinner, though, ehhhhhhh, I never go out to dinner anyway, so that should be stamped IRRELEVANT. But, to miss out on the drinking aspect of a cool-looking bar, that's a slap-me-in-the-header. One of the many good things that has come out of the *PLIPAT* is that it's now easier to shrug off an extra buck or so for a drink at a good place. I know I walked by here countless times, looked at how nice the whole bar arrangement was but thought, *Looks expensive*. Duh, dumbass, that's cuz you drink *expensive beer*. Unclench a little and pay the extra freaking 75 cents.



So, anyway, here we are almost on page five, and I'm finally entering the featured bar. The tables had been taken away and the place was decked out in high Fantasy Fest style. The barkeep looked eager for the onslaught and wasted no time getting my Gling.

Five-fifty. Ouch. That'll put the clench back right quick. WTF would a Dogfish cost?? So maybe that first impression had some validity after all, Paul.

The crowd was slow to arrive, which gave me a chance to scope out the place before it got too packed. And, man, this place is big! It goes way back that way behind the bar area, and there's the upstairs room. It was all done up with steamers and stuff hanging from the ceiling. There was a lot of time put into all this! The ceiling is not all that high, so the stuff wasn't much above head level. They had hung a lot of 2's throughout the double room up there, so as you looked at it you saw 2, 2... 2, 2... yeah, two-two's. Kinda cleva.

It's nice up there if you looked through the cheesy decorations. The bar is long and low and kind of sweeps across the back of the room, and the booths on the far end made me think of some cathedral, or medieval monastery or something -- just woody recesses in the wall, that you can't see into unless you're facing them dead on, and only lit by a faint orange light up on the deepest wall. Very cool place to hang, but not exactly in the main flow of this party.

By now, the place was jammed, both downstairs and up. You didn't have to run that grueling race in order to come to the party. The Tutu Party was



actually a separate event from the Tutu Run. And, come 10:00, the official party began in earnest. That was a while ago. I think we arrived around 10, or just before, because I remember people already on line grousing about the fact that I got to go right ahead of them. Ha!

This was one drunk crowd, and I fit right in. In retrospect, the three rapid-fire Jell-O shots may have been a tactical error. But you fight through such developments, rise above them, and try to stay vertical and balanced and friendly.

I remember going up and down the two flights of steps several times, getting in a couple of crazy conversations with a couple of young women who seemed to be perched halfway up the front stairs for hours. I also recall posing for photos with some other crazed inebriates, like Dierdre and Mo.

Matty was barkeeping upstairs, so I kept going up there for my \$5.50 hosings. I didn't get (or expect) a price break, but at least he apologized about the price, which was something, anyway.

So, a typical Mangoes experience this was not. It was for me, though. Every time I've been here, it has been exactly this way.

Did you notice that Mangoes is spelled differently in their URL? Neither did I.

ONLY FOUR MORE BARS TO GO!!!!!!!!!!!!

