

Bar Hoppin' With Hops
The Second Century Tour
Hops MacBarley's 2013
Key West Bar Boondoggle

Bar #131:

N.Y. Pasta Garden

1075 Duval Street

www.newyorkpastagarden.com/

Thursday, 27 June, 8:30 PM

Key West Sunset Ale (bottle) \$5.00

Golfing prowess earned me this dinner. It wasn't necessarily *my* golfing prowess, though. I pretty much sucked the hind teat in this particular scramble tournament; Steve and Kimball carried the load while Javy and I contributed here and there. Still, we took second place in the third flight and won a slew of GC's, which we divvied up.



I happily took \$50 to this place, which, even more happily, came as two \$25 ducats. I already spent one of them in May, before this Tour Redux concept sprung into my cranium. That night, I had water, believe it or not, and a Filet Mignon, medium rare, wrapped in bacon. I didn't have much of a hankering for any of the veggies, and rice was not available, so the server suggested pasta as a side. Groovy, chief, that works.

The steak was excellent, the garlic knuckles were great, and the "side" of fettucini -- smothered in Alfredo -- was mountainous. There was no way I was killing off both the bovine and the pasta. Dayummmmm, I ate like Mr. Creosote in *Monty Python's The Meaning of Life*.

The feast cost me six bucks. Six as in six and bucks as in bucks. I love gift certificates! I tipped my waiter dude \$10, partly because he got me all that pasta, partly because his night was so damn slow otherwise, and partly just cuz. It was still a bargain.

So, with similar visions, I walked out of Square One and up to the host podium of New York Pasta Garden. It was unmanned, so I was spared that moment of *No, I'm just here to drink, thank you*. And it wouldn't have been

true! I *was* going to eat -- just not here. This was going to be a take-home feast.

The garden area is a real soul-soother. Big old trees just sighing out oxygen and negative ions. Negative ions are *good* things, so, although they are negative, they are not *a* negative. Farrrr from it.

Trees, as part of their everyday chemical routine, breathe in CO₂ and breathe out O₂. But you knew that. In the process, though, a whole lot of molecules get mashed together and atoms get kicked around. Amid all of that, these little negatively-charged ions get set free. When these ions are in the air around you, your stress hormones are suppressed, giving you a chance to go *ahhhhhhhh*.... and this certainly an *ahhhhhh* type of restaurant.

The bar is nothing very impressive. It's prime purpose, I'm sure, is to give people a place to get a cocktail while they wait for a table on a busy night. This was not a busy night. In fact, I think only two other people were here -- and they were both at the bar. So much for my theory.



That's really incredible. Prime dinner time on a Thursday night, and not a soul here for dinner. I would bet, though, that they'll be half-full at 10:00. This place does attract a late crowd. In fact, I used that first GC at about 10:30 that night, a Monday, and there were several people here then. As nice as it is by day, the atmosphere here at night is just too good. The tiny white lights spiraled around the tree branches give it such a cool glow.

I took my seat at the bar and ordered my brew. When Good Mr. Barman returned with it, I was brandishing my document.

"Aha!" he exclaimed, "looks like somebody gets a free meal!"

"Righto, good sir," I replied, raising my cup, "and if my math is right..."

"A free beer too! Life is good."

This isn't the sturdiest bar I've ever sat at. It's not the flimsiest either, but it has sort of a box-on-its-side feel to it. There is some tile on top and it looks nice enough, but it just has a little wobble to it, as if it would crumple if I were to heft myself up and sit on it.

So I made it a point not to do that.

Behind the bar hung some movie star photos: Marlon Brando, Robert DeNiro, Al Pacino, Joe Pesci, Faye Dunaway -- all the Disney favorites -- in their cutest and most lovable gangster roles, and all in glorious black and white. Not the most cheerful of subjects (glorified murderers) but maybe just a step better than Asians mauling each other with swords, as they had been across the plaza at Square One.



I went with the Chicken Alfredo this time; dunno why, just did. Price-wise, it almost kept the whole shebang under the \$25, but I ended up owing \$0.38 or something like that. I left my cheery barkeep a fiver and pedaled homeward to chow down.

