

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

Bar #140:

**Rose Tattoo**

618 Duval Street  
Thursday, 4 July, 10:30 PM

*Sierra Nevada (bottle) \$5.00*



Since we had to pass right through the Rose Tattoo Bar to get back out to Duval from the Church Bar, I declared that The Hop Was On. There was a ripple of resistance from B&J -- and from inside myself -- as the thought of sitting in another big and empty section of the former Cowboy Bill's complex (instead of going someplace **fun**) sank in.

But a Hop is a Hop and we really didn't relish the idea of coming back here at another time, so with a might-as-well-get-it-over-with sigh and shrug, we settled onto three bar stools.

Rose Tattoo has a pretty long bar, with about 15-18 stools. We had our pick. A couple of them actually *were* taken, but we had already walked well past those before I called Hop, so we claimed three around mid-bar.

This room was hopped in last year's *Peace, Love & IPA Tour*, as Hop #8, when it was the almost-always-empty front chamber of CB's and nomadic Salsa Loca. The place was large and lame then, and, sadly, not much had changed.



The most noteworthy improvement, without doubt -- in fact, the sole indication that anything at all was done other than a handing over of a set of keys -- was the mural. This is one fine piece of wall art. Big and bright, the detailed and colorful rose, framed by bold and ornate font, is a real eye-grabber as soon as you walk in from Duval Street. Naturally, the artist signed it, but I

get a kick out of the fact that his/her phone number is part of the signature. But, hey, why not?

Oh, now that I think about it, there was one other noticeable improvement. As you come in that front door and look left to that mural, there are couches now. Big, sprawl-out couches. They create kind of a living room, with three



of the four giving a view of passers-by on the sidewalk. Smart move, really; there was plenty of room there (and everywhere) and that's a pretty good way to fill it. Who doesn't like a nice cushy couch to fatass in?

That Duval Street entrance is a big part of this place's lack of appeal, though. This was not designed as a bar; it's 1000 square feet of rectangular retail space, and those

flat, wide, almost-ground-to-ceiling, plate glass windows that display merchandise so well totally kill anything resembling atmosphere in a bar. There is a tile floor, and a high ceiling with the pipes and ducts all in plain view. Nahhh, it's just not clicking. I don't know what exactly they need, but they need a lot of it.

I can't be the only one who thinks this way. Ask the other people who look in, or walk through ... and just keep on walking -- which is almost everyone.



Once again, we did our duty, drank up, tipped our pleasant barkeep, and moved on. I had a very different place in mind for the next hop.