

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

Bar #152:

Harpoon Harry's Restaurant & Bar

832 Caroline Street

<http://harpoonharryskeywest.com>

Friday, 19 July, 7:00 PM

Harpoon IPA (bottle) \$4.00



Quite a few of these Hops have Caroline Street addresses, but not all have a Caroline Street *presence*. 951 Prime (#151) can't be seen or accessed from the street. Nor can Dante's. JDL does have good visibility, though the place seems dwarfed now by the concrete megastore. Pepe's and BO's, of course, are both distinctive and long-standing icons of this part of town.

None of them stand out quite like Harpoon Harry's though. Having a prominent, two-story, corner location is never bad for business anyway, but when you paint the whole thing tropical pink, you're just showin' off. The wide-open public parking lot across the street allows for a clear view from a long distance, almost like it's on stage for all to see. Anyone who claims he couldn't find this place needs a slap on da haid.



Some people may quibble about my inclusion of Harry's as a bar rather than a restaurant that serves booze. *Some people* can kiss my butt (but only *some*). It says "bar" quite clearly on the sign over the door. Annnnd, what *some people*

would call the "lunch counter" is too dammmn tall for such a classification. You want to see a lunch counter, go to Denny's -- about three feet high, something you sit *down* at. This bar is in the four-foot height range, with tall, padded, curved-back, classic *bar* stools, that may even require climbing *up* onto (yes, Janice?). And all the booze bottles sit happily on the shelf in front of you, albeit over a couple of coffee makers, a fountain



soda machine, and collection of coffee mugs and soda plastics (well, dey isn't made of *glass*, is dey?)

When B&J&I arrived, maybe six other customers were here: two deuces at booths, and an older couple at the bar. We walked down to the back end of the bar and claimed the last three stools. And what would you suppose that my beer of choice would be at a place called Harpoon Harry's? Hmmm?

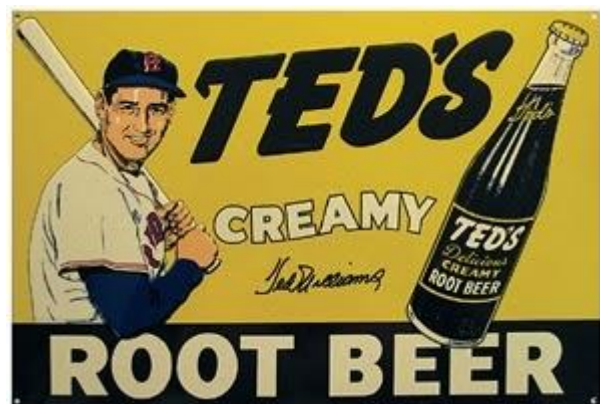
You got it, first guess: Harpoon IPA. And it was only four bucks! Such a deal, Neal. That's about 33% less than my Yuengling was at 951 Prime, which means I paid 50% more for the Yuengling.

It's basic math, but just feels like trickery. If you slice \$2 off a \$6 price tag (\$5.91, so close enough), you're reducing it by one third, or 33% off. But if you add \$2 to a \$4 price, you are increasing it by a half, or 50%. So, while my Poon was 33% less than my Gling, my Gling was 50% more than my Poon. The marketing department must love that shit.

HH is a bright place. The walls are decorated with an eclectic collection of fun stuff. Or a fun collection of eclectic stuff. Colorful paintings, witty signs, classic old ads, and even a pink plastic pair o' buttocks.

Our favorite sign was one for Ted's Creamy Root Beer. Small, metal, with a hand-painted-in-the-sixties look, it was exactly the kind of sign that Mike and Frank get erect over on *American Pickers*. We liked it because it was Teddy Ballgame, old number nine, the last baseball player to hit over .400, the greatest of all Red Sox, depicted on the left half of the sign. But they were sold out of the creamy bev and were not expecting any anytime soon.

B&J have eaten here before, and gave the food a big thumbs-up. Breakfast was especially thumbed. And it was not lost on me that the steak dinner here was \$12.95, with sides included. I could have three steaks and two beers here for the price of one Prime prime rib.



Now, I like good food, but there comes a time when "good enough" is good enough. Harry's steak might not have me pursing my lips, squeezing my fingertips together and exhaling the word *exxxquissssite*, but I'm not sure I want to do that anyway. If you've got the cash, though, I guess you go where the rich folk go. I know we felt just fine here at HH.

The elderly couple was getting their stuff together and making ready to move on out. The tall, white-haired and lightly bearded man struck up one of those just-in-passing conversations with us. Turns out he was a musician -- a guitarist and singer, in fact. He told us his name with the inflection of someone who half-expected a positive recognitive response. We must have been in the other half, though, because his name rang no bells.



We told him of the Tour and he nodded appreciatively. I could see long-forgotten stories and tall tales brewing in his eyes. It would have taken very little for him to plunk back down, order up another brew -- perhaps even a round (no better way to guarantee an audience than to buy it a drink) -- and start spinning yarns of bygone local watering holes.



His wife, however, had other ideas. She tugged at his arm, the way, I'm sure, she has done a thousand times, and smilingly excused the two of them away.

The HH staff was a kick too. A couple of women younger than me (but not a lot younger) in classic soda fountain style attire. There is definitely a 50's air to this place. We chatted with them about the Tour and various places. They knew everybody at every place, and were up on all the poop on which bar was thriving, struggling, or getting away with shit. It was a dang cool hang.

But after a while, it became time to go hang somewhere else. We thanked our staff for a good vibe and a good beer, and moved on into the hot July sunshine.