

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

Bar #155:

**Live Bait Lounge**

241 Margaret Street

[www.keywestbaitandtackle.com](http://www.keywestbaitandtackle.com)

Thursday, 25 July, 6:30 PM

*East Point Big Eye IPA (bottle)*  
\$2.75



Hey, a bar in a bait shop! Gotta like the concept! The good ladies

at Harpoon Harry's (#152) enthusiastically contributed this one to the list. I think I had known about it, vaguely, because I once saw a photo in the newspaper of a bearded guy hand-burning this huge wooden sign ... with a magnifying glass! I remember being very impressed with the size and the design, and reading the words **LIVE BAIT** but I'm not sure I ever got to **LOUNGE**. I mean, who has time to read *three words* these days?

Anyway, I recall resolving to go check out this cool sign, but, like so many good resolutions, it was forgotten 60 seconds after it was made.

Live Bait Lounge doesn't have any street frontage or ocean view. They are tucked behind a row of buildings, just past the public restrooms, in the corner of the parking lot that serves Land's End Village -- that esoteric little corner of the world where Half Shell Raw Bar (#87) and Turtle Kraals (#88) flank a mariner statue and a few trendy shops. The predominant proximal trait here, though, is, definitely, Parking Lot.

I got here slightly ahead of my hopping honchos, B&J, so I got the first look around. Yup, it's a Bait & Tackle shop, all right. At some point in the not too distant past, the clever owner stood up a piece of corrugated steel about four feet high, propped a nice piece of wood atop it, set out a few colorfully painted bar stools, and *zim zam zingy* he had made himself a bar. Nothing big or fancy, just a small corner by the front door where a few friends or familiars could belly up for a brew and some fishin' talk.

And that's exactly what was going on when I arrived. Some veteran -- polite word for *older* -- fishing dudes had the barstools full, so best I could



do was order across them, when the pleasant veteran woman behind the bar gave me her *whaddillyahave?*

The beer selection listed on the wall looked surprisingly good, with crafties in good supply and at good prices. Just \$2.50 for domestics and \$3.25 for imports. Of course, *imports* means anything that is not a mainstream microbrew beer. Fine with me, but we certainly need a new word to incorporate all of that. Their menu uses the word *premium*, so we'll go with that.

They serve breakfast and lunch till 7 PM, and those prices are crazy low! Sausage, hot dog, cheeseburger -- all under *three bucks!* Now, I don't know how big and

bold these culinary items are, but a c-burg with a cold bottle of premium beer for \$6.24 doesn't suck. Had to be *at least* as yum as that montadito.

**AND** they were having a clearance, Clarence. A few of the more obscure premium beers were running low and they were expediting the process by ditch-ing them for a mere \$2.75. Farking A, Ray. If I were any kind of fishing enthusiast, I could make this a part of my regular routine.

I'm not, though, and low prices are not to enough to make me forget that I am sitting at a Bait & Tackle shop.

Or, to be more accurate, *outside* a Bait & Tackle shop. With the handful of barstools all claimed inside, I adjourned to one of the small high top tables set up in the front. Mine had a good-sized umbrella, which would have kicked ass at noon, but was unfortunately pretty useless at this hour -- unless some very sudden cloudless cloudburst happened somehow.





Man, this was a hot spot. Not a Hot Spot, just a spot that was hot. Summer sun pouring in unabated, and a table on the edge on an asphalt parking lot that had been inhaling solar heat B&J showedclike bong smoke all day long. I was about an I's worth done, with still a P and an A left in the bottle, when B&J arrived. I walked back inside with them and watched as they did just as I had done: take a brief look-around, and give a nod of acknowledgment that this was indeed a bait-and-tackle shop.

Brian thought about getting a Coors Light, but it wasn't on the list. By now, I only had an A left, and it was ready to go down, so he chose to wait till we got the next Hop.

I bottomed-up, and off we walked across the hot asphalt, to go have a drink in the shade.

