

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

Bar #163:

Camille's Restaurant
1202 Simonton Street
www.camilleskeywest.com
Saturday, 27 July, 8:00

Purple Haze (draft) \$5.50?

There is one building between Abbondanza and here. I was miffed that we couldn't get a beer there. But *here* we could! And just beyond Camille's, across the street, is the Bottle Cap. That's three out of four structures where beer can be purchased. What's up, *Isle Style??* Get that beer/wine license!



That extra walk did us some good, though, I'm sure. Must have burned close to a calorie.

Camille's was virgin turf for the Hopster. I never really had the right understanding about this place. People had spoken highly of the breakfasts (voted Best Breakfast in USA by AOL!), but rarely was dinner spoken of. As we launched our Simonton Stomp, I mentioned something like that to my hopmates and they all heaped prompt praise on lunch and/or dinner. It made sense; Camille's has been here since the early 1990's. You don't last that long in Key West if you suck.



Travel Host Magazine described them thus: *Camille's is a 1950's retro Hollywood-Greenwich Village Key West original.* WTF does that mumbo jumbo mean?? How can you have a **retro** (back to what it once was) **original** (never been one like it before)??

Anyway, the sun had dropped behind the buildings by the time we finally arrived at the tropical pink building with the canopy awnings. We made our way in. The first thing I noticed was that there are two -- count 'em, *two* -- bars! Damn, how do we choose?? And there would be no double-hopping here; the bars were too close and too much alike to call them separate hops.

The decision was made for us. The one on the left was closed.

We stepped up to the bar that was open -- alas, not the same as stepping up to *the open bar* -- and made ready to slake our thirsts.

The bar stools were a trip. Round-backed and padded, they boasted black fabric adorned with dozens of lips all over the seat. Yes, lips. Smoochy smoochy on my butt-butt. Comfy seat, though. Why wouldn't it be?

The barkeep was another trip. Maybe 27, 28-ish, maybe even 30-plus -- sometimes you just can't tell -- he brandished an edgy Mohawk haircut and a black tuxedo t-shirt. He wasn't especially cheerful, but he wasn't sour either. Just not relishing the moment, I reckon. We told him of our quest and he shrugged it off with an insincere "that's cool." I shrugged *him* off and went around the room pointing my camera at stuff.



The decor in here is whacked -- and that is a compliment. Whacked is good. "Out of whack" is bad, yes? I rest my case.

The art is abstract and colorful and a bit sexy. Strange sculptures and objects abound, and there are bizarre Barbie -- Bizzarbie? -- dolls on all the window sills, doing things that you may never have seen Barbie do.

When I returned to my seat, which was all puckered up and waiting, Big Dog had engaged a woman in



conversation. She was standing at the back of the bar, standing in the in-out space, and leaning on the bar. Her name was Denise, but, apparently, she was the famous Camille herself, mingling with the common rabble (and Jan).

They were discussing food, mostly, I think: some meal that Le Chien Grand had once gobbled down, and would eagerly gobble again, but it wasn't on



the menu anymore. Whatever it was, he was being quite complimentary to Camille/Denise's food and she was diggin' the vibe.

I wasn't really paying much attention to them because (a) I've never eaten here, so I don't know what dish he was alluding to, and (b) a Scandinavian family

had just come through the front door, led by tall twin blonde 20-year-olds. Just a tad distracting.

I was agog at the sight, and by the time I could unog myself, the statuesque beauties had disappeared into the other half of the restaurant. I was going to tell Brian and Big Dog about it, but they were still talking food, and there was nothing more to see anyway. *Hey, guys, you shoulda seen what you just didn't see.* No point. They can read about it later.

I did a quick look for the twins on the way out a few minutes later, but they must have gone into Stealth Mode.

We exited into the deepening dusk, with a Hoppy thumbs-up for Camille's.

Our Simonton Stomp was finished. 163 bars hopped. One six fuggin' tree, Lee. That's a lot of bars, Lars.

The *Second Century Tour* was ahead of pace: 63 bars in just 57 days. The 100th day would be September 8th. No Fantasy Fest madness to fuel the stretch run this time around, just a casual stroll to the finish in the lazy, hazy, dog days of deep tropical summer. Probably just as well.