

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

Bar 198:

**BurgerFi**

221 Duval Street

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

Wednesday, 18 September, 8:00 PM

*Yuengling (draft) \$4.77*

Despite the zeal of the hunt, as we hopped closer and closer to that coveted 200th bar, we did not zoom directly here from the Pier House. It was only a two-block walk, but, well, we got distracted.



As I talked about in Hopter #59 (Dante's), you run the gauntlet on your way to most Key West bars. As we left The Wine Galley at One Duval and headed southeast, we had to put on the blinders and keep our resolve. We successfully passed within eye/earshot of Sunset Pier (#30), Island Dogs (#34), Hog's Breath (#7), Duval Village (#189), Bagatelle (#60), Juan Loves Lucy (#115), World of Beer (#101), Joe's Taproom (#56), Rumor Lounge (#23), Rick's Bar (#123), and Sloppy Joe's Saloon (#78). But when we took *one* more step, at the all-too-familiar 203 Duval, Big Dog stopped and gave the big thumb inward. "Hey, there's almost a full hour left in the Gecko's Happy Hour. Let's get some 2-for-1's here then go to BurgerFi."



There were no arguments. Might as well have a beer or two or three or four as we go from one bar to another. And cut the price in half? No flaws in that logic.

Just after 8:00, we emerged from Lazy Gecko (#2). We still had to ignore the lure of Dirty Harry's (#86), Tree Bar (#111), Irish Kevin's (#152), Smokin' Tuna (#33), and Coyote Ugly (#57). That is a **lot** of bars in a quarter of a block.

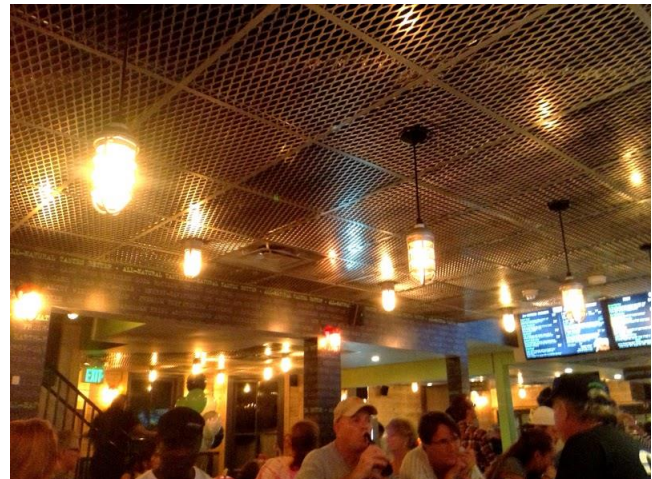
But we were rocks. We never wavered. The allure of the new Hop far outweighed all those others, especially the Ugly one.



BurgerFi was brand spanking new in town; they were only in their second night of operation, in fact. The building that they occupied had been completely renovated within, though it maintained the architectural integrity of the original early 20th century two-story house.

Inside, though, the decor is 21st century all the way. The tables near the bar were shiny silver with very funky silver seats. I won't even try to describe them; look at the photo (previous page).

Even better was the ceiling! Yeahhh, another noteworthy ceiling! It was a grid of silver caging, like you might see in old time athletic lockers. Or like the caging that the velociraptors ripped out so easily in *Jurassic Park*. From that caging hung industrial style lighting that looked like it belonged in some boiler room, and a modern, shiny, stainless steel fan that was spinning ferociously over our heads as we settled in at the front end of the bar.



There was some space there, but only one seat, so we three proper gentlemen deferred to our lady and let Jan have the chair. The place was crowded. Key West does *love* to check out the new places.

It took a little bit of time, but a bartender noticed us and came over to ask what we wanted. The tap bridge was missing a few of the tap heads, indicating that their soft opening last night had sucked some of their options dry. I ended up settling for a Yingle. I would learn that it cost \$4.77. Where did they come up with *that*? Even with tax added, it's still a stupidly odd number (\$5.13). WTF?





After I got my beer, I was busy with the camera and just generally checking the place out, so I didn't notice what the others ordered. Somehow, though, it came to \$20 for three beers. What?? That included the modest tip, but still, \$17 for a Gling, a Silver Bullet, and a craft? Pretty clear that BFi doesn't want people hunkering down at the bar to swill some beers; they want us to come in and *eat*. (Which, of course, we did *not* do.)

Then, when we needed to break some bills so we could pay up, they didn't have any cash in the register. The keeper rang it in, hit total, and the drawer popped open. Empty. How can you be almost to 8:30 on a busy night and not notice

that you forgot to cash up the drawer?

Actually, I know how. Debit cards. Cash-carriers are fewer and fewer these days. It's getting so that the only people who carry cash are the poor people. Like me. In many cases, a card is much more convenient, even for the staff. They swipe it, tear off the slip of paper and hand it to you. No thumbing through wads of bills or rummaging for a freaking dime. Print it, sign it, good night.

The menu did look good, with the all-natural burgers and such, but the prices were a tad daunting. I reckon that I've never adjusted. The \$6.95 burger is long gone into the past, but it still sets me aback to see a double-digit number listed next to a CB. If that includes FFs, not so bad. No FFs, I'm shakin' my head. I'm sure it's good and all, and I know good quality doesn't come cheap (especially down here at the end of the road), but I still have trouble wrapping my head around it.



I took the camera upstairs to see what was what, and found an empty room, and an empty balcony overlooking Duval. A row of colored chairs were lined up along the front rail. It looked like a dang cool hang for some people-watching sometime. When I come back to try their burger, I'll be having it up here.

It wasn't until we were all gathering ourselves to depart, that it came up that nobody had ever waited on Jan. She was the only one seated, yet no bartender or manager (and we had conversed at length with both), had ever asked, "And what can I get for you, m'lady?"

Weighing that evidence, I could only conclude one thing: they don't serve women in BurgerFi. That policy is going to cause them some problems.