

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

Bar 200:

Liquid Lounge

Zero Duval Street

www.oceankey.com/resort-pool-bar.aspx

Saturday, 21 September, 5:00 PM

Key West Sunset Ale (draft) \$6.00?

Speaking of bars that won't let you in...

The TWO HUNDREDTH BAR! Two-freaking-hundred. That astounds me. Look at it in list form sometime. It is a lonnnnnng damn list.

What was also surprising was that we had reached this point and we found that we still had a number of bars to choose from! And quite a variety it was, too: restaurant, beach, hotel, patio, theater, and military, with more opening every time you turn around.



My fellow hoppers were all expecting a certain selection -- mainly because I had already told it to them -- but when it all came down, I changed my mind. For some reason, I wanted the culmination of *The Second Century Tour* to be someplace where I wasn't supposed to be. That aspect would be easier solo, but this would be a four-way foray.

Liquid Lounge is an intriguing name, and could conjure up a variety of images and impressions. As it turns out, it is the pool bar of Ocean Key Resort, one of Key West's finest hotels. They also have Sunset Pier (#30) and Hot Tin Roof (#137). That latter serves as the resort's dining facility, but is also open to the public. The former thrives on the thirst and hunger of the general public (and a few special events).



The pool bar, though, was for guests only. I knew that, but having had friends who had worked here, as well as one who had stayed here, I knew of "the other way

in." It's pretty simple; just look around a little and you'll figure it out. I'm not gonna let the cat out of the bag in case I want to use it again.

We actually tried to do the Hop on Friday. Getting into the pool area was cake, but as we walked across the deck towards the bar, a young woman was clearly shutting the bar down. She saved us the trip by calling out that the bar was indeed closed. It closes just after the sun goes down. We gave her a *thank you* wave as we turned on our heels. Then, as an afterthought, I called back with a grin, "Are there any other bars in Key West?"

It was meant as a joke, of course, but she was in customer service mode and motioned back around the building, "Oh yes! There are so many, just head out and you'll see them."

Today, we walked in much earlier. The sun still blazed high up in the sky. A few people lounged in total comfort in and around the pool. Everything was in deep mellow.

This place is freaking sweeet. You look straight out across a sparkling hot tub, shimmering pool, and glinting Gulf waters. Damn fine digs on a day like today. In the hotter part of the day, there is even a Chilled Towel Boy who circulates among the crowd handing out small, nicely chilled, rolled-up towels to the relaxing poolside guests.





[Nooo, the Towel Boy is not Chilled; the Boy gives out Chilled Towels.]

We sauntered across the long, tiled deck and took seats at the corner of the bar. It's not a large bar. About eight high seats wrap around it: six along the front and two along the north side. The structure is a simple collection of 4x4's, 2x4's, and 1x4's, all painted bright white. Yellow webbing in the chairs, and lime green umbrellas and side tables add color. The back wall was mirrored, with thin slats across it and a big box in the middle that held the booze bottles.

The same young woman was bartending today. We made some light conversation with her when she

came over to get our order. I mentioned that we had been able to find some bars the day before and thanked her again. She smiled at the joke and brought us our stuff.

"What room would you like me to charge this too?" she asked. We all looked at one another. Nobody had anything to say. We had no intention of sneaking the drinks; we just wanted to sneak in, and then pay for the drinks.

I spoke up first, with roly-eyes, and a not-possibly-serious look, "Ooo, I dunno, how about 207?"

She gave me a look that said, *Am I going to have even more trouble with you?* then replied, "We have no Room 207."

Jan then spoke up, but softly, "We're locals. Is that OK?"

The barkeep gave us a look of fake exasperation, and confided, "We're not really local-friendly..."

The four of us then calmly team-told her the lowdown of *The Second Century Tour* and that we didn't think the list could possibly be considered complete without this very bar. That last part was my touch: an absolutely

over-the-top, totally-full-of-shit hard sell, punctuated with an impish smirk.

We also reassured her that we were just here for one, and, if anyone asked, we would say that she told us to GTFO once she found out we were not guests. She might have been about to do just that, but she seemed to dig the 200 Bars concept. She asked about a few bars, and all of them were already hopped. It was getting pretty hard to name one that wasn't. I'm sure she agreed that her bar *should* be included, damn it. Besides, it wasn't busy, so they were making more money off us than they would have made from our empty seats.

We hung out for a while, enjoying the privileged life. Soon, though, it was time to be on our way. We finished up our drinks and initiated our departure sequence. The barkeep came over to wish us well. We thanked her for her hospitality. "Is there really no 207?" I asked. "How can you not have a 207?"

I skedaddled before she could throw something at me.

Two hundred bars. TWO HUNDRED BARS. **TWO HUNDRED BARS!!**

Unbelievable.

Are we done? I didn't make the 100-in-100 bars-days constraint, but that was never as important in the *Second Century* as it was in the original tour anyway. The schedule of *The Peace, Love and IPA Tour* was absolutely key to the concept. It couldn't finish late, and it couldn't finish early; it had to be 100 days, especially given what the 100th day was.

The Second Century Tour was more about casting the net and catching as many bars as we could. Damn, I started out in June with a goal of just 30. How wimpy was that?? Then, when July was done and there were still more unhopped bars than I could count on my fingers, 200 had to be the target.

So, now, with plenty of help from my hoppin' good friends, that has been accomplished too.

At the top of this Hopter, I mentioned that the list was damn lonnnng.
Check it out:

The Porch

Lazy Gecko

Krawl Off Duval

Green Parrot

Finnegan's Wake

Red Fish Blue Fish

Hog's Breath

Cowboy Bill's Honky Tonk Saloon

Salute! On The Beach

Kelly's Caribbean

[10]

2-Cent Pub

Virgilio's

Gardens Hotel

In Kahoots

T's Bistro & Bar

Speakeasy Inn Rum Bar

Grand Vin

Conch Town

Conch Republic Seafood Company

Flying Monkeys

[20]

The Café

Shots and Giggles

Rumor Lounge

Mad Rooster

Tattoos and Scars

Two Friends

Shanna Key

The Top

Margaritaville

Sunset Pier

[30]

White Tarpon

Grunts

Smokin' Tuna Saloon

Island Dogs

Tavern 'N' Town

Caroline's
Jack's Seafood Shack
La Trattoria
Antonia's
Vito's Piazza
[40]
Shimp Daddy's
Stick 'n' Stein
Southernmost Hotel
Don's Place
JDL's Big Ten Bar
Outback
El Meson De Pepe
Jack Flats
Topsy Pelican (Marriott Courtyard)
Stoned Crab (Ibis Bay)
[50]
Willy T's
Splash Bar
Pepe's
Sunset Tiki Bar (Galleon)
The Grand Café
Joe's Tap Room
Coyote Ugly
Boat House Grill
Dante's
Bagatelle
[60]
Maddy's Hot Dogs
VFW Post 3911
Duffy's
Shore Bar (SoMo OTB)
Blue Mojito (Hyatt)
Vinos on Duval
McConnell's Irish Pub
Chart Room (Pier House)
Teaser's
801 Cabaret Bar
[70]
Cork & Stogie
Point 5 (915)

Smallest Bar

Braza Lena

Orchid Bar

Little Room Jazz Club

Skippers Bar (Westin)

Sloppy Joe's

Hard Rock Cafe

Captain Tony's Saloon

[80]

Rum Barrel

Charlie Mac's

Orioles Nest 303

Sun-Sun Beach Bar & Grill (Casa Marina)

Afterdeck Bar (Louie's Back Yard)

Durty Harry's

Half Shell Raw Bar

Turtle Kraals

Blue Heaven

Santiago's Bodega

[90]

Fat Tuesday

La-Te-Da

The Bull

The Whistle Bar

Garden of Eden

Mangoes

Schooner Wharf Bar

Aqua Nightclub

Southernmost Beach Café

The Garden Bar at New Orleans House

[100]

World of Beer

TGI Friday

Cabana Bar (Sheraton Suites)

90 Mile Lounge

Gumbo Limbo Bar (Doubletree)

The Groove Lounge

Greene Street Cigar Company

Solo American Bistro

Bobby's Monkey Bar

Cheekie Hut (Best Western)

[110]

Tree Bar
Agave 308 Tequila Bar
Roof Top Café
Pearl's Patio
Juan Loves Lucy
Alonzo's Oyster Bar
Tower Bar
Café Sole
Mangia Mangia
Michael's Restaurant

[120]

Bimini Barrelhead Bar
100 Montaditos
Rick's Bar
Red Garter Saloon
Seven Fish
Six Shooter Saloon
Fat City Monroe Parish
Benihana
La Trattoria Oceanside
Square One

[130]

NY Pasta Garden
Coasters
Cocktails & Foodledoo (Banyan)
Spice Lounge (Pegasus)
Onlywood
Lobo's Mixed Grill
Hot Tin Roof
Pier House Beach Bar
Church Bar
Rose Tattoo

[140]

KWest Liquors
Island House
Boathouse at Coconut Mallory
Flying Monkeys (Indoor) Saloon
Crow's Nest
Pincher's Crab Shack
Blackfin Bistro

Martin's Martini Bar & Lounge

Bottle Cap Bar

Café Marquesa

[150]

951 Prime

Harpoon Harry's

Irish Kevin's

Abbey Road

Live Bait Lounge

Marina Bar (Galleon)

Bar Car (Westin)

Sunset Deck (Westin)

Southernmost House

Strip Bar (Reach)

[160]

Ambrosia

Abbondanza

Camille's

Flaming Boy Filet Co.

Salsa Loca

Twilight Bar (Aqua)*

Mojito's Café & Bar (Lighthouse Court)

Tropical Drinks

Banana Café

Jimmy's Ocean Blue

[170]

Blue Bar (Beachside)

Old Town Mexican Café

Cheeseburger Key West

Conch Shack

Lush Bar

Tutti Frutti Juice Bar

LaConcha Pool Bar

Cowboy Bill's Sports Bar

Back Bay Bar

Havana Café

[180]

Lounge at Bagatelle

KW Yacht Club

Commodore

Berlin's Cocktail & Cigar Bar

White Tarpon Patio Bar
B.O.'s Fish Wagon
Hammock Café (The Inn at KW)
Café Blue (Parrot Bay)
First Call (KWIA)
Duval Village
[190]
Conch Flyer (KWIA)
Bare Assets
Levity Lounge
Tropic Cinema
Fairfield Inn Pool Bar
Don's Place Outdoor Bar
Wine Galley (Pier House)
BurgerFi
Saloon 1
Liquid Lounge (Ocean Key)
[200]

Names in red are bars that have closed: 21 in all (10.5% if you're scoring at home). In most cases, a new bar has sprung up in the footprint of the demised one. In a few other instances, the owners learned from the failed attempt and converted to retail space. In the specialized case of The Twilight Bar (*), it reopened under the same ownership, but with a new name, and jussst enough of a remodel that it will count as a new, and hence hoppable, bar.

Figuring on \$5 per bar (and I'm sure the average was higher than that), I plunked down \$1000 on the two tours combined. But, I would've just spent most that grand on beer at one of my regular bars anyway. It's not like it would be in the *bank*. Ha!

So, another well-earned break from the stresses and rigors of Bar Hopping Key West. New bars will continue to hatch, and I'm sure the crew will be willing to hop 'em when they do.