



Bar Hoppin' With Hops
The Keep On Hoppin' Tour
Hops MacBarley's 2014
Key West Bar Boondoggle

Bar 203:
Pincher's Street Level
712 Duval Street
www.pincherskeywest.com
Saturday, 8 February, 8:00 PM

Bell's Two-Hearted Ale (draft) \$6

The was ***no*** chance of this being as good a deal as their upstairs bar (#146) had been. That was free beer and free apps for three hours on a Sunday afternoon soft opening. This was a Saturday night, in season. No worries, though; freebies are damn nice, but when you go drinking in Key West, you have to be ready to part with a

bunch of your precious money. This hopping shit gets a tad pricey sometimes.

But Pincher's has a fine attitude towards that: 2-for-1 all day long. How can you not like that?? It makes you *stupid*, though, if you only have *one*. It's not half-price beer, it's second-one-free.

Stephanie was working tonight, just as she had been for that opening affair. B&J have known her for a good while, so there was great mirth as we arrived.

We had the first three bar seats (I don't call them stools if they have backs, and these have curved-slatted backs: nice), the ones closest to the entrance. The bar goes straight back from there. It's one of those long and narrow layouts that always remind me of a railroad car. In fact, I got kind of a train station feel from the place in general. I dunno why. What makes a place feel like a train station? Trains? None o' those here. Conductors waving lanterns and bellowing *AIIIIII aboooooaaarrrrd*, maybe? I didn't see any of those either, but perhaps they were on break. Yeah, that must be it.

But there's nothing wrong with train stations. I *love* train stations ... though



I can't recall the last time I was ever in one. I walk, bike, drive, and occasionally fly to wherever I need to go. I never take a freaking *train*. And even though Key West was first connected to the mainland by Henry Flagler's famous train, you'd have to go almost 150 miles just to find a train these days. If I have drive 150 miles to go somewhere, I'm either

gonna just drive the whole way, or I'll drive to an airport.

The bar has two ceilings. Well, the *bar* has one ceiling, which hangs over the bar seats, and the *bar room* has a higher, peaked ceiling. As you sit at the bar, you feel like you're outdoors because that shingled roof over you just *seems* as if it was designed to protect you from the elements. It looks like the edge of a house, or some sidewalk snack shack. It had brightly colored lights along the edge and neon beer signs up above it. You couldn't see those from the bar though.

The room is brightly lit, has a stone tile floor, a couple of tall four-tops, and two long tall counters spanning the space between white support posts. You know, like a train station would.

Anyway, there was live entertainment tonight. Roger Jokela, I think his name was. Rog was sitting up front, plucking away on his gee-tar and crooning out some Buffett-ish songs. I guess it was the pace he was playing at, but the tunes just came across as kinda depressing. Trop-rock is supposed



to be upbeat and bouncy. Maybe he needed some steel drum accompaniment or something like that. He *sounded* good, don't get me wrong, but the three of us all were feeling more downed than upped by his music.

So, we focused more on the teevee, which was easy to do because this was the first night of the Slopestyle Skiing competition from the Sochi Olympics. Never having seen this particular approach to sliding down a mountain, we were pretty wowed by it. I wanted to wave it off with a traditionalist's scorn about what a contrived event it was, and give me regular downhill racing anyday, but I couldn't take my eyes off it. The shit they were doing was unbelievable. And, of course, unbelievable shit leads to spectacular wipeouts. :)

During the commercial break, I was going to listen to Roger some more, but he took his break at the same time. So, instead, I strolled out to the front entrance and watched the goings-on across the street at Aqua. Man, Duval Street always entertains, one way or another.

I noticed that Roger had left his tip box wide open. He was nowhere to be seen, and his box, with several ones and even a few fives, was sitting there unguarded and unwatched. Trusting soul, that Roger.

We stayed for a second round, of course -- no point in having 1-4-1 when you can have 2-4-1; that's fiscally unsound -- and gawked at the TV screen some more. When our 2's ran dry, we bid Stephanie a fond good night.

We didn't have a train to catch, but we did have mo' hoppin' to do!

