

## Bar Hoppin' With Hops

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

Bar 213:

### Muse

301 Whitehead Street  
Tuesday, 13 May, 8:30 PM

*Peak Organic Pale Ale (bottle) \$3.50*

This sounded like it would be a good time with a good crowd. Key West was in the midst of Craft Beer Week, and Muse, the upstairs bar at Kelly's Caribbean (#10) was putting on an event: half-price crafties, a five-dollar burger fresh off the grill, plus a comedy show. Good take indeed, yes?



OK, so why was nobody there?? Well, not *nobody*. Muse has an outdoor porch with several tables, and 8-10 people were hanging out out there. The upstairs bar room is tiny -- cool place, but tiny -- and though you'd have to say it was full, there were really only about five patrons in there. But the lounge -- a decent-sized room that could host a fairly large gathering -- was empty. Empty of customers, that is. There was a solo guitarist plunking and crooning away for a half-dozen unattended, blue-lit, glass-top tables.



Hmmm. I shrugged that off and went to get my bottle o' beer. Peak Organic Pale Ale had a good, healthy sound to it. Organic, right? Made from human organs. What could be better than that? And you couldn't even taste the blood.

The grill chef eagerly got me my burger, proclaiming that my timing was perfect, and the slab of beef was just at prime readiness. He laid a slice



of American cheese on it and gave it the appropriate 40-50 seconds of melt time.

Big Daddy MacBarley has one of those George Foreman grills. It does an awesome job cooking the meat, but a cheeseburger is just not the same unless the slice is just about dripping off the sides. You just can't do that with a GFG. You'll mess up that lid

something awful. So I try putting the cheese on the bun and the bun in the toaster oven, getting some kind of melt going. Not quite the same, though.

But this Muse burger was just right. And it was a beast. Had to be an eight-ouncer. Six, minimum. And the five buckaroos included cole slaw, po-sal, deviled egg (nope, didn't do that), and a goodly slab of chocolate cake. That qualifies as a feast to me! Fi bux!

So I took my full plate and my full beer and sought a good spot to begin the quest for full belly. I considered the railing overlooking the outdoor dining area below, with its beautiful tropical greenery, and strings of white lights casting a friendly glow. Nice. The rail was wide enough for the beer, but not the plate. Bah.

All the tables were taken. They weren't all *full*, but there was at least one person at each one. There were plenty of empty seats, but I was not in share-a-table mood. That's cafeteria stuff.

So, I retreated to the lounge and took a high-top nearest to the entrance. After I was seated, it occurred to me that I had chosen the seat *furthest* away from the entertainer. Kind of a slap in the face, hm?





Ahh, screw it. I set about chowing and swilling.

I had only chowed a couple of beefy bites and swilled a couple of organic swaggles when the guitar player stopped playing. He said into the mike, to no one in particular but, in effect, to me, "I'm s'posed ta be playin' from mumble-mumble, blah blah, mumble, so I'm gonna go get me a burger." He put down his guitar and walked out of the lounge. I was left to chow and swill all by my lonesome.

Which I did, loner that I am.

I had planned to hang around for the comedy thing, but comedy needs people and I just didn't see an influx of folks up for some yuck-yucks.

Quite satisfied with my bargain victuals (it turns out that five-buck burger is a "regular special", whatever that means, so check it out), and content that I had hopped the good Hop, I left Muse to the musers and the amused.

#### ADDENDUM:

Though the space still exists and is in use, some would tell you that it never actually bore the name Muse. I came here again and asked about it, and I was met with blank stares and never-heard-of-it-pal replies. One person gave one of those "Ohhhhh, I think I remember something like that," and went on to vaguely described someone –maybe a woman? – who tried to have a regular series of poetry parties up there, and she had dubbed the series "Muse."

But, still, it's definitely a separate experience from the ground-level Kelly's and deserved its own Hop.