

Bar Hoppin' With Hops

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

Bar 238:

Last Call Beach Bar, KWIA

3491 South Roosevelt Boulevard
Thursday, January 22, 7:08 AM

Cruzan Pineapple Rum, OJ, CJ - \$8.95

Usually, I'm too early for this, the third of the triumvirate at Key West International Airport. My shhhedule just ain't in synch with KWIA drinkeries: my 5:30 PM arrival had been too late for the Conch Flyer (#191); my late-night arrivals home are too late for First Call (#189, the only bar I've ever seen within smelling distance of the baggage carousel); and my typical departures to Wherever are of the first-flight-out nature, in the 6:30 time frame.



This time, though, I had a 7:45 AM departure. I booked it with The Art Of The Hop in mind. There was an earlier flight to Miami (and then to Boston), but through the miracle of layovers, I could leave EYW an hour later and arrive in Beantown at the same time. Annnnnd, I'd be around when LCBB opened for bizniz. Yahh.

So, here I was, done with that security bushwa, with nothing to do till the boarding process began. There was activity in the bar area,

but it was on the coffee, sodas, pastries and pre-made sandwiches end. Eight tall and polished bar stools stood in ready alignment along the empty bar section. I milled about and hung around, waiting for some attention down here, but the lone server was pretty busy with that other

worthless crap, so I went unnoticed. And time could become an issue at any moment.



At 7:09, I approached the register. There was a break in the pastry business. I eyed the sign that said the bar hours began at 7:00, and asked -- more like insisted -- *Is the bar open yet?*

Instead of a *tsk-tsk you lush*, the young blonde woman named Erika checked her clock, brightened, and cheerily announced, "Yes, it is!" She immediately headed down into booze country and I eagerly followed. In my wake came two large and hungover looking men. Eschewing beer in favor of the more breakfast-like citrus, I ordered up a Cruzan Pineapple Rum with OJ and CJ, for just \$8.95. Hm. The big boys ordered Bacardi-and-Coke doubles, claiming the Hair Of The

Dog privilege, dropped a \$20 bill each on the bar and walked off. High rollers and big drinkers. A very auspicious start to Erika's day.

I, however, wanted change for *my twenny*, so I followed her back up to the register while she rang it all in. I was ambushed there by a classic Impulse Buy. Hanging from a nail on the post were a few ice scrapers, each bearing the name of the airport. Practicality told me that I might very well need that item in frosty New England. My Christmas visit had seen temps reach the low fifties, but there was no way I'd get that lucky twice. I made the \$4.95 investment. (As it turned out, a 30-hour blizzard dumped three feet of snow on the city, and was followed by 9-degree air temps, with 25 MPH winds. Lots of fun digging my little rental car out of a five-foot tall snowdrift. My scraper wasn't much help with any of that. So good to see winter again. Ugh.

Last Call is an easy name to figure out, but the Beach Bar part is a bit of a head-scratcher. There actually are very few beach bars in Key West, and it's pretty rare to see a beach bar at an *airport* anyway.



Beyond the bar, though, is a glass wall. A door in that wall leads out to a walled-in, outdoor-looking area. A thick floor of sand, tables with umbrellas, and a bunch of other shit make a fair effort at one last "beach" experience. No water, but WTF. Can't have everything -- where would you put it? [*Tip o' th' hat to Stephen Wright for that joke.*]

I suspect it is used mostly as the smoking area, so if you like your beaches dry, smoky, with a closed roof and air conditioning, here ya go. I do applaud the effort, though. They carried the concept about as far as it could reasonably go. It's not like anyone would be here long or often, so maybe nobody would even notice how waterless it is. Maybe.

My drink went down quickly -- not a very large glass for nine bucks -- and I was actually contemplating a second one when the PA summoned me northward.

