

Bar Hoppin' With Hops

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

Bar #255:

Greene Street Cigar & Cafe

540 Greene Street

Thursday, 10 October 2015, 8 PM

Sierra Nevada IPA (draft) \$5.50

So, we made our way back towards Duval, effecting a casual stroll across the boardwalk past Schooner Wharf (#97) and the Conch Farm (#19), then up the concretewalk past Greene Street Cigar Company (#107), and Chicagos (#239) to get here. The last two, of course, have a connection. Add this to the chain.



You remember how tiny GSCC is? Well, this venue is much roomier, not just for patrons, but, perhaps more importantly, for the cigars. They have their own glassed-in chamber now, big enough to park my van in. But that humidor room is off to the right as you walk in and you don't really notice it because your eyes are drawn to the new bar room. At least, mine were.



As my eyes surveyed the room, taking note of the bar itself, the back bar, the taps, the big TV over in the back-left corner, the big leather sofa that looked like it used to be in 90 Mile Lounge (#104), the table with familiar Greene Street Cigar logo spanning across the whole top, and... *her*.

Yes, *her*. You know who *her* is. *Her* is why you clicked on that pic-link to check out this Hopter. Yes, *her*, above, right. You can't help but be struck by her ... technique. Hand-rolling. No table, no tools, just her supple, caressing hands and her silky, smooth thigh. Lucky leaf.

I've always pictured cigar factory work as suffocating labor, but maybe it wasn't all that bad...

So-o-o-o, Jan and Jess had already made their way to the bar. Brian and I put our eyes back in our heads and joined them. The ladies got some white wine – it might have even been white sangria -- the guys got a cuppla beahs and we shot the shit with the barkeep for a bit. He was an amiable young chap. Upper 20's, I'd guess, dark hair, if you care, Claire. He gave us the lowdown on the victuals and the humidor.



Yes, food was part of the plan at this locale, but, only kinda. Given the cigar aspect, you were probably about to throw the flag on me: *Not so fast, there, Hopsy, Florida don't allow smokin' and eatin' in the same place no more.*



Well, right you be, dear reader. The Cafe part is right over there behind the couch. You can see it, see? But you can also see the glass wall between us and it.

If you want the food -- light deli samiches, salads and such -- you gotta go back out the front door, walk around the corner to the Simonton Street entrance and access the deli that way. I'm pretty sure you can't bring the food back in here either. Nobody was smoking or eating anyway. Every-body was, like us, just here to drink, wink wink. There were only four other patrons in here, so not much of a sample size. Quality, not quantity. =)

So, we're hanging out, chillin' in the mellow bar, discussing whether we should order a Nuther One here or seek more thrills elsewhere.

But, then, things channnnnged.

Some sudden motion at the front door caught our attention. A man came in, moving with some degree of haste and purpose towards the far end of the bar. His arm lagged behind him as he entered because he was pulling along – hand-in-hand -- a very unsteady young dude.

The man had cropped blonde hair, was fit, medium height, and looked to be in his forties, and my first thought was that it was his 17-year-old son that he had in tow.

The kid was your classic twink: skinny, no facial hair, shaggy blond, with no indication that he had ever seen the inside of a gym in his life. Probably 21-22. And he was waaaaaasted.

Then, I thought, maybe the kid has a daddy fetish and they missed their target by about six blocks. But no, it was not that simple.

The man led Twinky Boy up to the other end of the bar and steadied him against it. The man -- let's nickname him Daddy, just for shits-n-grins -- spoke to the bartender, but it was loud enough that we could all hear most of it. Voices carry in an uncrowded bar. (Remember that *Till Tuesday* song



"Voices Carry"? Man, that was a good tune.). Twinky Boy didn't look drunk, he just looked lost in space.

So, Daddy explained that he and his bud were walking by outside and this kid (Twinky Boy, aka TB) was out on the sidewalk talking to himself in an agitated way. Feeling Good Samaritanish, Daddy asked him if he was OK and needed any help. TB

gushed out a torrent of words, the gist of which were: I can't find my friends, I can't call them because I can't find my phone, and I can't take a cab because I don't remember where I'm staying ... and I can't find my wallet.

Whoa. WTF, TB?! The barkeep had this wary look on his face, as if he was about to say, "So you brought him to *me*???" But Daddy stayed his response with a raised hand and explained, "I'm hoping you could call a cab for the poor kid. I'll pay for the cab."

Wow, generous of you, Samaridad! Barkeep and he then had a conversation in lower tones that we couldn't hear. TB was now actively involved. His eyes were wide open and his voice was not slurred, so drunkenness was not his problem. Some chemicals had his brain held hostage, I reckon.

Now, you're probably thinking, what cabbie is going to take a wasted Twinkie who has no idea where he's going? Right. We were too. I'm sure Mr. Barkeep was as well, but, to be fair, he just wanted TB gone.

After several minutes, our keep wandered back towards our end of the bar. Once he was facing away from his surprise guests, he just started stifling laughter. We didn't have to ask what was funny. He was dying to tell us.

It seems that TB did not want to give the cab company his name, claiming that he had run the Halloween Half Marathon that morning (a good 15 hours ago), he was from California, he was very famous, and he didn't want the paparazzi to find out he was here.

I asked, why didn't he just give them a fake name, he has no ID to verify anything anyway. "Yeah," said Brian, "like, ohhh, Justin Bieber or some name like that." From that moment on, TB was The Biebs to us.

Biebs started getting a little animated right around then, gesturing, and speaking more loudly to Daddy. "No, I am staying in a *guest house*, not a *hotel!* I *know* where I'm staying, I just don't *remember* what it's *called.*" That sounded promising. "It's on *White Street*. It's on *Whiiiiite Street.*"

OK, that really does narrow it down. There are only a few guest houses on White: Authors, Palms Hotel, and, ohhhhhhh, Island House. Ha, just have the cabbie drop him off there. A cute blond twink like him would be very well received. He would find himself in a nice comfy bed in no time, courtesy of yet another Samaridad. He might be walking a little funny in the morning, but he can jog that off.

Then he said, as if by the light of revelation, "Yes! Oh! It was *3300 White Street!*" And looked proud of himself for remembering that.

We all groaned. That'll put you a mile or so out in the Atlantic Ocean, Biebs. Just tell the taxi jockey to drive right off the end of the pier and keep going. Sorry, guess again.

The kid actually seemed like a pretty cool young dude. I don't know about his fame claim, but he looked like he could have been a teen heartthrob at one time. Not now, certainly, but maybe all prettied up in make-up, he makes the girlies swoon. No idea.

But I had to feel sorry for his plight. I mean, what do you do? Far from home, no idea where your companions are, no idea how to find them, no way to call them (nobody remembers phone numbers these days), and you can't even buy a beer to ease the pain. Do you just walk up and down Duval and hope you cross their path? I'm thinking he had been doing that for a while. I'd bet he had a really fun afternoon, but he was SOL tonight.

I heard Samaridad say at some point that he was putting up \$40 for the cab ride. Hmm, \$25 fare, \$15 tip. Very generous of the guy.

I turned and looked out the front window and saw a taxi pull up to the curb. I called out, "Cab's here." Before the main characters in this riveting melodrama could move, the cabbie had honked his horn, shrugged, and begun to pull away. Biebs bolted out the door, Samaridad given chase. We saw them disappear around the corner ... never to be seen again.

Sigh. Show's over.

It was like having your Internet feed go out in the final minutes of a Netflix movie. We were, like, "Heyyy, we were watching that!"

Gotta wonder how that all played out. I can easily picture the taxi driver saying, "Whaaaa? No freakin' way, man," and driving off. But, then again, there's \$40 cash waving in his face. Maybe he took the kid for a ride. Maybe they found his place and his friends and all his stuff!

Yeah. Maybe. We shall never know. Make up your own ending. Heh heh heh.

But, to us, this was no longer Greene Street Cigar and Café. It was the Bieber Bar. Not fair, I know, but it is what it is. Brian never remembers the real name of a bar anyway, so Bieber Bar was an easy fix.

So, now that Act I of Flash Theater was done, we turned our attention back to our original focus, our drinks.

Barkeep told us that their Grand Opening was going to be next Saturday. There would be live music (Huh? Where you gonna fit that?), with plenty of free food, and drinks on the cheap. Sounded like a good time, and we

immediately put it on our schedule. Tonight was the official Hop, though. We all doubted that the Grand Opening was gonna top the pure drama of this visit.