

Bar Hoppin' With Hops

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

Bar 260:

Blue Macaw

804 Whitehead Street
Saturday, 12 March 2016, 6 PM

Monkey Fist IPA (draught) \$6.00

Another brand new place on the KW landscape. This one, though, is a tremendous reclamation of what had become a pretty dead corner. A few months ago, if you mentioned the corner of Whitehead and Petronia, I'd've pictured a tall house in disrepair, long abandoned carts, and an almost spooky wrought iron gate.



It's all been brought back to life now. The full name is Blue Macaw Island Eats and Bar. "Eats." I like that word. It's a verb getting all nounish on us. But not like a gerund. Hell, no, no "ing" here. Pretty radical stuff.



"Eats" works great for food, but you can't carry the same concept to the bar. What are ya gonna call the drinks? "Drinks?" Just not clicking.

So, yeah, I wasn't even inside yet and I liked it already. The big wrought iron gate looked bright and sturdy, the brick floor was clean, tables were nestled under the tall trees, under the roof on the left, and inside the rejuvenated house. It was inside, but outside too. It was sunny warmy, but breezy shady.

On the wall under the aforementioned roof were bright painted letters proclaiming "Bloody Mary Bar." The shelves underneath were lined with various bottles and vessels containing a crazy collection of just about anything you might want to put in a Bloody Mary. The barkeep provides the vodka, ice and glass, then you go to town. I wondered if they had Eye Of Newt. Or Ocelot Spleens. (Ha. Shakespeare and Monty Python juxtaposed.)



The real bar is straight ahead, though, under the bigger roof. This bar angles here and there and around to the back. You could sit facing any of the four directions here. They don't line up with points on the compass, I'm sure, so it's not like the Bahama Village version of Stonehenge, but it's still pretty cool.

For some reason -- thirst, maybe -- I chose the very first bar stool I came to. Once settled, I realized it was a poor choice; the barkeep was still way over there, so there was nothing expeditious about being here, and my view was a wall. It wasn't a terrible wall -- it had a few signs on it with a used-painted-plank motif, so it had color and things that could occupy one's attention -- but it was still just a wall.



My barkeep came by and I ordered my draft. She was a familiar keeper, a young woman named Shea who used to (maybe still does?) work at Lazy Gecko (#2). Perhaps she spells it Shay, or even Shae, hard to tell. Maybe, just

maybe, her parents were big fans of the Cuban Revolution and named her after that Guevara dude, Che. And her sister is named Fidel. Or Phidelle.

I had been pretty decisive about my order, so Che didn't bother to tell me about Happy Hour options. From 4-6 (I think), select bottles are \$3. I assume they have beer in them. Maybe HH was already over. Dunno.

A short wanderound revealed what an expansive place the Macaw actually is. What looks like a wall at the back end of the establishment is actually the first wall of a pretty good-sized one-story building, which, I



presumed, contains the kitchen and stockroom or whatever. A stairway leads up to a rooftop patio with some couches and tables that look a lot like the ones that used to be on the 90 Mile Lounge (#104) balcony.

And that rooftop overlooks a large backyard courtyard with a small, roofed stage. It would make a great party and dance area. Man, you could fit a ton of people in this place!



Wait, of course you can. A ton of people is only about a dozen people. Or maybe not even ten if they're really big people. So, BMIEB can hold a dozen tons of people. Fine.

I had this Hop on the schedule for today anyway, but I got a little nudge from Jan an hour before, reminding me via

text that it was Blue Macaw's opening day. She may be out of the Keys, but she's not out of the Loop.

