

Bar Hoppin' With Hops

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

Bar #286:

Rick's Dance Club

204 Duval Street

Friday, 12 January 2018, 11:00 pm

Special Dispensation

I guess you have to say that this Hop was an accident. I was at Tuna (#33), digging Caffeine Carl & The Buzz, and I shot B (of B&J fame) a where-r-u text. He sent back, in his usual succinct style, "Ricks".



I'm accustomed to such terse responses because B still has a flip phone. Yeah, one of those devices where you often have to punch a key three times to get the desired letter. Remember those? Ya. They still exist. Or at least *one* does.

The largest section of the upper level at Rick's Entertainment Complex is the Dance Club. It is, really, Key West's *only* dance club. People just don't



come to this island to dance, I reckon. But those that do, come here. There are a few places that leave a little space for a few people to dance a little, but this place is about gettin' your dance on.

It's a large floor under a wide roof, but it is essentially an open-air venue. There is a back wall and a long wall right-angled together, but you

come in from the large wooden deck and just flow right down onto the dance floor. You have to cross said floor to get to the bar, which extends for most of the far wall. There are video screens glaring, colored lights flashing, and

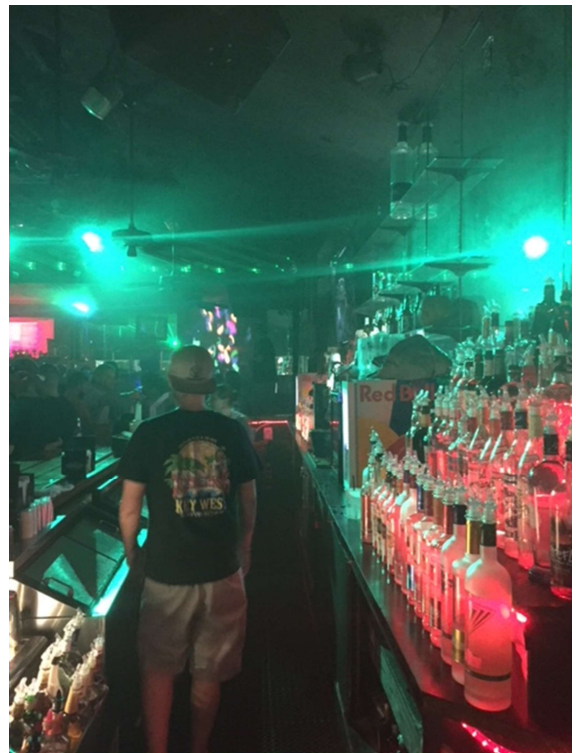
green laser beams slashing. The music is, of course, loud and thrumming. What else would it be?

So, if you know B&J, you should be thinking, *WTF* are they doing at a loud and thrumming dance club? Fred and Ginger tripping the light fantastic across the glimmering floor? Um, no. They were not doing the Twinkletoe and Twinkletee thing. They were here to see Josh.

Josh was bar keeping, which was why the three of us came to this selfsame complex two weeks ago for Hop #284 (Rick's Mardi Gras Bar), as you surely recall. [Recurring theme: sign of a quality writer.] You see, the Patriots had just earned their way into the Super Bowl *againnnn*, and B&J were trying to get the where, the when, the how, and the how much of our SB-52 gathering.

The walk from bar to bar in K-Dub is often short. Sometimes, it's just a stumble next door, or a tumble down the stairs. Well, this one wasn't that short, but it only took maybe two minutes. Once at Rick's, though, I had to subject myself to the wandng and frisking.

I'd rather just be able to stroll into a bar, but my fellow humans keep coming up with new ways to hurt, maim, and kill people that they don't even know, so if a quick wandng and little pat-down can keep those particular humans at bay, well, wand away, good sir.



What did surprise me some, though, was that I was allowed to bring in the beer that I was carrying. That doesn't fly at some of the bars 'round here. I guess you can't blame them for that. They are in business to *sell* that stuff, you know. You're not gonna purchase a \$2.50 can of Bud Light at Shorty's and walk next door into Irish Kevin's (#153) with it. Nuh-uh. You can buy one of theirs for \$5.50 instead.

I thought the door dudes at Rick's would deliver the drink-it-or-dump-it directive once they saw my plastic Smokin' Tuna cup, but they never paid it no mind. Now, maybe, just maybe, they thought it was a Rick's cup, since Rick's doles out their drafts in the same style cup. Maybe. I'll never know,

and, to be honest, will probably never care. All that mattered was that I got to bring in my three-quarters-full beer. I often take one to-go – one of the truly great things about this part of KW – but this two-minute walk was not enough to dispatch it. After dropping \$5-plus-tip on it just a couple of minutes before, I was not in the mood to chug or to chuck that thang.



BUT, that did create a Situation, with a capital S (as you must have noticed). Tour Rules, which are more or less absolute, kinda, decree that an alcoholic drink must be purchased by me in order to consummate the Hop.

It's called the Consummation Codicil. Or, at least, it is now. It wasn't called anything until a sentence ago. But I declared an exemption -- a special dispensation -- of this most revered codicil.

As it happens, we had all three of us been in Rick's Dance Club just a week before (again, discussing Patriots stuff with Josh), and I did indeed purchase a libation during that visit (a bottle of Yuengling, to be exact). So, why, you ask, did we not just count that one as the Official Hop of Rick's Dance Club? It's a fair question. And I don't have an answer. It just never crossed any of our minds.

In fact, it didn't cross my mind until after I snapped the pic of this carved wooden sign. At that point, I wondered if that pic had been included in the hopster for this bar. Then after a duh moment, I realized that there *was* no such hopster because there had *never been* an official Hop of this bar!

I shared the revelation with B&J and there was great rejoicing.

It was important to get RDC included, though, because it's not a common stop for us. We're not really the dance club kind. We're not exactly the Wine-O (#211) kind, or the Commodore (#183) kind, or the



Shimp Daddy's (#41) kind, or the Saloon 1 (#199) kind either, but all of those are also valued Hops on this prolonged boondoggle.

So, yeah, Rick's Dance Club is a dance club (hence the name, duh), and dance clubs are kind of an urban thing. They tend to attract the more urban type, who, as everyone knows, are inherently evil. Dance clubs also attract the younger type, the late-night type, and, the common mix of those two, the drunk type. More importantly than all of that, though, is that the dance club attracts the *female* type. And where the estrogen goes, the testosterone is sure to follow.

That testosterone is powerful stuff, too. When rival males compete for the female, sparks fly. You see it in nature shows all the time with wildebeests and ibex and moose and rams and hippopotami beating the hell out of each other for the right to mate. So, to the victor go the ladies.

And speaking of rutting moose, I was in Alaska's Denali National Park a couple of years ago and saw what can go very wrong with that kind of head-butting.

Two bulls, in contention for a cow, were engaged in the ritual rut, slamming their skulls and wrestling their racks. With heads turned and pressed jussssst so, their antlers locked. Solid.

Inextricable. The two healthy, in-their-prime bull moose both lost this one bigtime. Not only did neither of them get laid, but they also had to watch out of the corners of their eyes as the cows laughed their asses off at them, and then watch in rage while some third-rate pretender got to shag his fill.

To make matters worse, they also had to live out what was left of their pitiful lives staring at their most hated rival ever, living with the stink of his breath, locked in a square-off, literally, to the death. Imagine being chained



at the neck with the person you hate more than anyone, unable to look away from his detested face.

How long did they live after the lock-up? Nobody knows. Months? Weeks? Ha, doubt it. I bet they didn't last two days. Once the wolves got wind of that, these moose were toast. With no bigass rack to defend themselves, it woulda been bye-bye, Bullwinkle.

Ya think the wolves got a chuckle out of that when they saw it? Chow time, boys. We got us some free *moose mignon*.

And what if the wolves played a game by killing and eating one but leaving the other alive to watch it all. Damn, wolves, that is some cold shit.

Anyway, human males don't rut *that* way, but we do add alcohol to the equation, which leads to its own forms of stupidity.

Some guys simply want to fight when they get tanked. I was amazed to find out my friend Carl was like that. Mind-mannered and always in a good mood whenever I had seen him, he turned into Connor McGregor once he



got a few in him. It wasn't even about challenging the alpha for the right to mate. He just couldn't wait for someone to look at him the wrong way.

You see it on this block of Duval during Fantasy Fest or on New Year's Eve too. The mood is festive and bouncy till 1:00 AM or so, but you stroll up a few blocks and then stroll back around 2:00, and the vibe has changed. You can feel it

in the air: men want to fight. The cops know it better than anyone. I've talked with them about it. It's a palpable wave that oozes across the 200 block. I've even called out to dudes about to square off, "Cops comin'. Not worth goin' to jail over!" But they still lit into it. Dumb.

Buttttt, thankfully, B&J and I were here early enough, and the crowd was light enough, and the people were happy enough, that no such square-offs transpired. None, really, were anticipated. 'Twas not the season. That's more of a concern during Spring Break, or maybe FF or NYE.

In fact, the mood tonight was joyous, as it should be when people gather to dance. Jan was even bouncing and moving to the tunes. There was a Latin



beat to the music – quite different than the angry-edged hip-hop that I had anticipated – and it was definitely good for the old bounce-with-your-knees-without-moving-your-feet groove.

There were also a lot of guys in USA stuff. It was the same posse of a dozen or so that I had seen boozing outside their guest house on Fleming Street when I was parking. They seemed very well lubricated, but quite peacable.

We learned what we wanted to learn – that we would indeed have the Crow's Nest (#) for our Super Bowl gathering. And there was great rejoicing.