

Bar Hoppin' With Hops

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

Bar #297:

Alexander's Guest House

Fleming Street

Saturday, 9 June 2018, 2:30 pm

Bacardi & Coke (in tumbler) \$8

Quite a few of Key West's many guesthouses maintain a "Guests Only" policy, most likely to keep me out. Well, me and my ilk, I suppose. Do you have an ilk? I think we all do.

Anyway, I can't blame 'em. Any guest who is paying a week's pay for a weekend stay at one of these places has the right to expect to be insulated from the public (whom I represent). Those visitors will see enough of the public everywhere else in KW – Duval Street, restaurants, bars, galleries, boats, beaches, stores, museums, etc. – and would want their high-priced lodging to be their sanctuary. It's bad enough that they have to share the pool and such with several other strangers. For that money, you should get your own ce-ment pond.



And I'm pretty sure that Mr. Alex wants only guests in his house. The gay-oriented guesthouses, especially, want to be selective about who comes in: that privacy thing, you know.

But Alexander's raised their drawbridge today, pulled up their portcullis, and let the peasants into



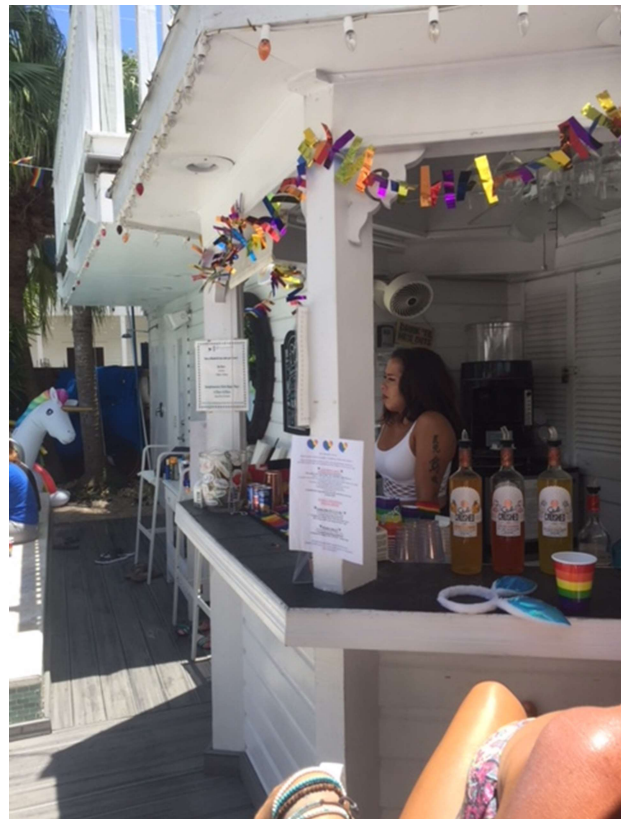
the keep to mingle with the bourgeoisie. Today was the Saturday of Pride Week here in the SoMo City, and Alex's was hosting a Pride party. Beth, the former Pride Queen, was behind it, and it went by the suggestive title of the "Are You Wet Yet?" Party. There is certainly some lesbian innuendo in there, but the polite interpretation is a reference to the swimming pool.

I saw this one on the calendar and knew it was a rare chance at an elusive Hop. And, no, I was not wet yet, certainly not in the innuendo sense, and it was a very hot and very sunny day, so a pool party made a lot of sense. Plus, really, Beth is one crazy-ass babe, so everything she is involved with is lively, colorful and fun. Her motto when she campaigned for queen was "Why be average when you can be amazing??"

A man and a woman greeted me with smiles at the front desk. The man even made an offer for some kind of ticket that would entitle me to a free drink. It only cost \$8. Maybe it was the inherent Scottish frugality in me, but I saw a flaw in the economics of the deal. I politely declined and passed on in to the party. On the way, there was a kitchen area teeming with healthy snacks. I noted them, but was drawn by the music and laughter outside.

The pool area was rocking. A DJ had some club music thrumming, and some kind of poolside dance contest was going on. A fairly out-of-shape, 30-ish guy in board shorts was matching moves with a very large, very fleshy woman. Her moves were a bit more, umm, extreme than his were, and she was getting quite a response from the crowd.

I gave Beth a big "Hi!" and a big hug, then surveyed the scene, eagerly looking for the coveted bar. For an instant, I thought the skirted folding table with an ice bucket and a stack of cups was going to be it, but my panic was immediately allayed when I eyed the narrow, gazebo-like structure in the corner. [Would "gazebish" have been a valid word there?] It was very much a bar and very much a permanent structure. Hey, the table would've





counted (see Hop #208 for precedent), but it's always better when the bar is not portable.

I had my 30-ounce stainless steel Polar Camel tumbler with me, and the barkeep was happy to top it off with fresh ice and then pour my Bacardi & Coke

directly in there. I was glad I still had several ounces of Coke in there because she inverted that rum bottle and let it just gluggle away into that big silver cup. It cost \$8. Ha. Ticket indeed. Ching-ching, Hop #297 in the books.

With mission accomplished, I could relax and enjoy the party. It's a fairly small pool area, and about two dozen people were there. The crowd was mostly women, as I kind of expected, and a lot of them were seated along the rim of the pool. Almost all of the men that were there were seeking cover in the shade under the narrow porch along the back wall of the house.



They had some games and such around the pool, and there was a six-foot-wide pair of lips that people could pose inside for pics, preferably kissing.

I suddenly came over all peckish and strolled inside to help myself to some of that healthy food. Yum, celery. I've read that you burn up more calories by chewing celery than you get from the actual eating of it. Might be a crock. I

like the sound of it, and I don't want it to be bullshit, so I'm not gonna Google that one. Probably depends on how mightily you chew.

But I found a bowl of Pepperidge Farm Goldfish! Seafood! Pshaw on the veggies!

I always eat Goldfish one a time. They are small enough to go fisties on, but I like to do 'em indy. Sometimes I even get 'em vertical between my teeth and bite down just hard enough to make the shell fall open.

All people of my ilk do that.

Two-hundred and ninety-seven bars. Dayummm, that's a lot. That's 297 more than the town I grew up in. Closing in on the big 3-0-0. Bring it on!