



Brewhaha #16: The Thirsty Whale, Bar Harbor ME

There's not as much to say about The Thirsty Whale. It's not that it wasn't a nice place – it was – it's just that I didn't stay very long.

Beer selection was good. They didn't brew their own, but they served a nice array of regional brews. I made mine a Geary's Pale Ale. It was cold and refreshing after my stroll downtown from the Wonder View. It was another unseasonably hot summer night in Maine, which makes sense, following a beastly hot day. The AC in the Whale was good, though, unlike a few other places I'd been to. I don't imagine that a lot goes on here in deep winter, but I'm sure they value their heaters more than their coolers.

It's ingrained in us native New Englanders: AC is always an option, heat is always a must. My house was never air-conditioned, neither were the places I went to school, and many of the places I worked. I didn't have AC in any of my vehicles until I was in my thirties. But all of the above had good toasty heaters!

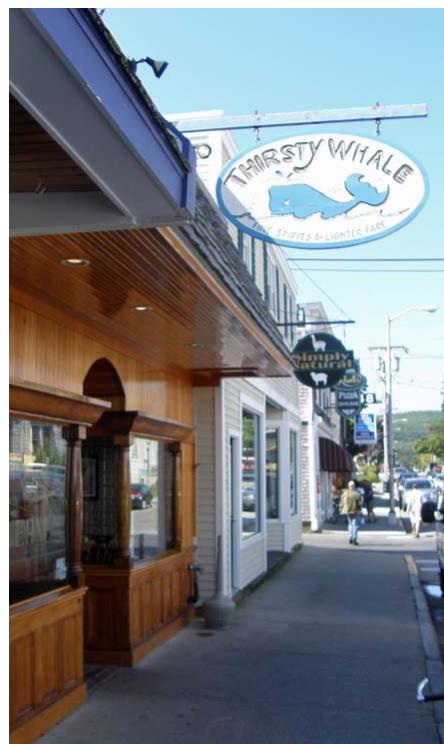
So, I could easily forgive older places like the Lompoc Cafe for their tropical warmth. Their typical summer nights are made pleasant by the cooling breezes off the Atlantic Ocean, so the AC is never called on to do a whole lot. When evening temps hover in the 80's, with no wind, as opposed to a breezy 67, AC looks like a much better idea. But those nights are rare (this one was, in fact, a record), and cool nights are not, so you load up on the majority and just shrug off the flukes.

It's just the opposite for us Key Westers, of course. Many of us have no heater and don't mind that; we'd only "need" it a couple nights of the whole winter. Just like we simply rolled with those rare sweltering nights up north, we just throw on an extra blanket, dust the cobwebs off the long pants and sweatshirts, and get on with life. But if you try to take away our air conditioners, we'll secede from the Union. Again.

But the Thirsty Whale was a pretty new place and it was a well cooled room. The bar was long and on the fancy side, with large stools.

I can't say much about the bar staff. A young woman with brown hair served me promptly, but went just as promptly back to her two female friends a few stools down the bar. I had not a problem in the world with that. When you're tending on a slow night and a few buds stop in to keep you company, of course you're going to hang with them as much as you can. As long as your job is covered, you chat wherever you want to chat.

My attention was diverted to the TV screen in the way-back, which was displaying the weather forecast and was showing an all-too-familiar symbol. Yup, the hurricane symbol. I left my seat and walked down the bar to get a better look. Sure enough, Hurricane Earl was gaining strength and speed and, like myself, was looking to vacation in the northeast. You gotta be shittin' me. I come to Maine to escape the high



heat and swirly storms, and here I am sweating my cojones off and looking over my shoulder at a Cat-4 coming after my ass. Be serious.

I got back to my stool to stew about it for a moment and jot a grumble or two in the Not Book. I felt a little like laughing or venting or something, but as the only guy in a bar with three 20-something chickies who needed nothing whatsoever to do with me, I deemed it best to move on to the next gig.

I gathered up my stuff, left six bucks on the bar – life is not cheap when you're drinkin' the good stuff – and, with a polite nod, effected my exit.

I was pretty sure I heard a "thank yoooo" as the door drifted shut.

You're welcome, Thirsty Whale. I'd like to have met you at a more lively time.