

100 Bars in 100 Days

Hops MacBarley's 2012 Key West Bar Boondoggle
"The Peace, Love, and I.P.A. Tour"

BAR 4:

The Green Parrot

www.greenparrot.com

Southard & Whitehead Streets

Saturday 7/21, 7:51 pm

Yuengling Lager (draft)

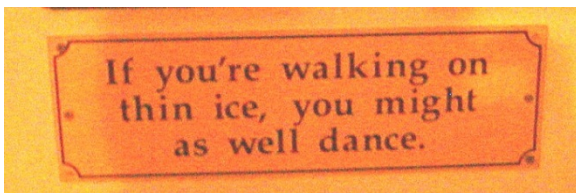


The Parrot is very high indeed on my Most Frequented list, but unlike the Gecko, the majority of these visits are late at night and most spill into the early morning hours. There have been daytime stop-in-for-one's and some late afternoon Sound Checks, where the band – usually either last night's ensemble or the group that will retake the stage for the 10 PM show – cranks it up for a fun show of live music from 5:30 to 7 in a daylight bar. It has all the feel of a Happy Hour, but none of the prices.



No, sir or ma'am, GP doesn't do HH, but it's OK. Their beer prices are not cheap either (\$5.50, plus gratuity, for my Sierra Nevada), but that's OK too. First of all, the Parrot experience is worth the price of admission, and admission is free. They always have some keee-rankin' bands rockin' the roof off, yet they ask for no cover charge – a damn fair exchange for an extra half-buck or two per glass.

The Parrot has endured since 1890, though it was something other than a bar during Prohibition. It is a shady place for sunny people, where no sniveling is allowed, and one posted motto is *If you're walking on thin ice, you might as well dance.*



Justin B (no, not Bieber, you moron) is not a fan of the place. Long ago he told me, *I have no desire to hang out at a place where the people have given up on life.* Pretty harsh assessment, if you ask me, but I have to admit that there have been a few late afternoons when I happened in for a cold one and



the crowd bore some resemblance thereto.

I've seen some well-to-do tourists who "want to go where the locals drink," but they quickly catch the vibe that they are out of their element, feel the trepidation that true underbelly can cause, and mosey on back to their comfort zone at Margaritaville. It's not that the Parrot exudes an evil vibe – far from it! – but some people bring in a vibe of their own that ventures across the room, finds no ferns or glass-globe candles and goes running back to mama. Everyone is welcome, but not everyone belongs. No judgement in that comment; just the way it is.

But on a busy night, when a good band like the Spam All-Stars is performing, the place is packed to the gills, and there'll be flowered touron shirts mingled comfortably in



with the shaggy T's of even shaggier locals. The dance floor will be full and bouncing, and you might even find some prominent local notables and some visiting mucky-mucks knocking down a few with the raucous rabble. The party spills out onto the sidewalk too. People will stand three-deep by the big open windows to watch the band and be spared the sweaty crush within.

One of my favorite things about the GP is the collection of signs that hang on the walls and ceiling: storefront signs from many now-defunct Key West bars and restaurants. Numerous paintings also adorn the walls and big shutters, of which *Smirk* is probably the most noteworthy.

The poster on the wall in the men's room is another GP landmark. It is a 36x24 framed work of art that is a mish-mash of dozens of odd characters doing a myriad of really strange things on what would otherwise be a fairly normal background of house, river, trees, and sky. It's called *Proverbidioms*, and below the image there is a list of about 200 words and phrases that make up familiar, well, proverbs and idioms. It's a good time passer. Or at least it was when my eyes could read the 5-point font list. Now I just look at the picture, try to find something – anything – that I've never noticed before, and finish my task.



But this Tour Stop was an unusual one, even by Hops' skewed standards. It came during a 5K road race. With my allergies giving me breathing troubles all week, I had a feeling that this race – on a beastly hot evening -- just wasn't gonna go well. My last act of pre-race prep was to tuck a \$5 bill on my hip as a jussssst-in-case. Sure enough, by mid-race, I was sucking wind and taking a beating; Plan B would be put into action. The course was of my own design, so I knew right where every split mark was, and the 4K point was exactly at the Parrot.

I trucked unhurriedly along Southard from Truman Annex and saw Brian and Jan standing on the corner ahead, ready to cheer me on. Instead, I trotted right over to them and said, *Let's go get a beer!* I was surprised that they were not very surprised. The bartender raised an eyebrow over it – an out-of-breath, shirtless guy, sopping with sweat and wearing tie-dyed shorts with matching visor and shades -- but smilingly supplied the beverage.



Brian actually bought me that Yuengling draft – thanks, buddy! -- and we went back to the sidewalk to watch my former-adversaries run by. I toasted a few of the ones I'm familiar with as they passed, and got some classic WTF looks in response. And, mannnnn, did that beer hit the spot!

Later that night, in a far more sloshy state of mind, I was back here to dig the better-than-their-name-suggests tunes of *The Revivalists*. Not sure what time I went home, but it was laaate.

