

100 Bars in 100 Days

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

BAR 23:

Rumor Lounge

www.RumorLoungeKeyWest.com

430 Greene Street

Saturday 8/4, 6:45 pm

Sierra Nevada Pale Ale (draft)

First time here, with "here" being called Rumor Lounge. When it was Cowboy Bill's Reloaded, I had a few stop-ins. But the landscape does change. Cut down a tree and plant a new one. Pull up a weed and another grows right in. Close a bar and open a new one. Don't ask, *Why did that one close? Was it not making enough income to cover expenses? Was that killer rent impossible to overcome? Nahhhh, heck, we'll do better, you just watch.*

Never know till you try, I scubbose.

I freely admit to being wary of Rumor from the get-go. Big sweeping wet red letters in the sign, like it was written in melted lipstick. The word "rumor": so suggestive, secretive, and sexy. And it's a "lounge", not a bar or saloon or tavern: a lounge, where you unwind, relax, and feel the seduction; where there are lounge chairs and people lounging about.



But Rumor Lounge has a wide open entry way. Nothing very secretive or whisperish about that. Big, open, come-on-in doorways. Ssssh, right? And if it's a lounge, where is all the lounging furniture? There is small red velvet loveseat that might hold a cozy two, but other than that, just a couple of small-talls. Try lounging on a tall wood-backed barstool and let me know how it goes. The room – it's just a one-room bar -- is done up in red and black accents, but the walls are still mostly white – maybe a light light gray, but light enough to count as white. There are a few grayscale photos of women's legs and feet in mesh stockings and high heels, which are trying to say, *hey, we're bein' sexy here.*

There is a small platform built into the back corner of the room, where either a tiny band, or a



DJ, or a dancer might gyrate and entertain. But it was vacant. With the small-tall tables being where they were, not much square-footage was left any would-be dancing, though. You could have a handful of people movin' and groovin' as long as they kept it in low gear.

So, you can't lounge, it's too bright to be the place where gossip is born, and it's way too small to be a dance club. Dear sirs, WTF?

I dunno. You come in and look left and you see all that, but you look right and there is the same brown polished wood bar that fit so well in the cowboy bar. Kind of a head-scratcher.

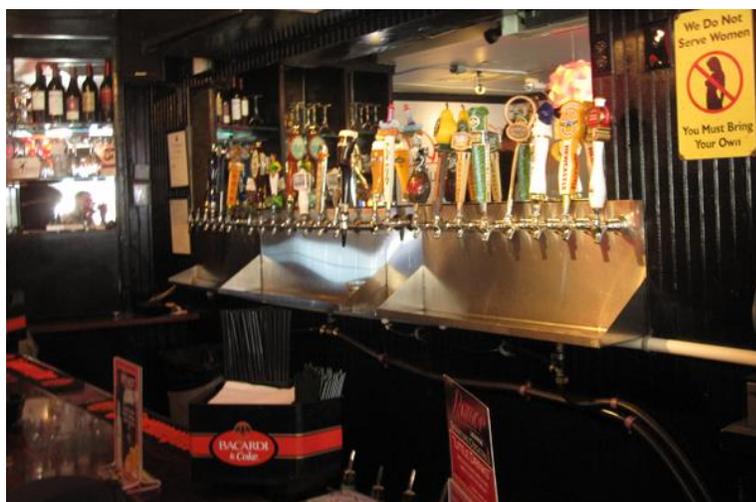
So what, though! And you know why? Happy Hour, 4:00 to 8:00, seven days per week, with (drumroll) TWO DOLLAR BEERS. My cold draft Sierra Nevada Pale Ale cost me two bucks! Twoooooooooooooo dollahh! Happy Hopsy! And it's not just a two-buck PBR. This was Sierrrrra. Two bucks. Ya ya ya yaaahhh.



Who gives a rat's rectum if there's a weird red loveseat behind me.

Or a confused room scrounging for a sexy identity. You want sexy? Two dollar Sierra Nevada. Now, *that* is sexy.

There were a few other customers in Rumor when I got there. Everyone was at the bar, and nobody (self-included) looked like the sexy-bar type. The couple to my left, who looked like 50-year-olds from Arkansas, were talking sports with the bartender. Or trying to. The barkeep – I think someone called him Nick, a tall, fit, mid-twenties, unshaven dude -- was spinning circles around them with sports talk. Arkansas guy was kind of on the level of, *I'm pretty sure Derek Jeter plays for the Yankees*, while Nick was more like, *Man, what did you think of that trade for Barnsworth? Can you believe they parted with their best AAA pitcher? I mean, the guy had a 2.20 ERA with 116 K's at Albuquerque*. It was a mismatch.



I once had a Cuban lady come into shop, looking to get something for her son who was

on a baseball team. Her English was good, but her accent was heavy and thick. I asked what team her son played for and she said, *The Junkies*. I double-took on that a bit, but, hey, it's Key West, so I rolled with it. Maybe her son was older than I thought and he played in some boozin' softball league. Her accent was giving me trouble, so I had her write down her son's name and the wording. I asked her to write the team name to, and to my amusement, she spoke it out loud as she wrote, *Y-a-n-k-e-e-s, Junkies*. As a Red Sox fan, I was lovin' it.

Nick had been, apparently, a college baseball player, so his knowledge of that sport was on a different plane anyway. While we *might* have heard of this minor league phenom, Nick might have actually struck out swinging at the guy's hard-biting cutter. Sports-knowledge-wise, he seemed like he'd be a better fit at a place like Jack Flats than in this pseudo-sexy spot. Of course, you don't just roll into K-Dub and pick the bar



you want to tend, so he's probably fortunate to have the gig at all. And his skills do need a little sharpening; he had a heck of time finding which tap was Sierra Nevada.

I can't hold that against the guy, though. There are 20 or so taps, and SNPA is surely not the most common order, even if I do think it's the best brew on the rack.

The bar itself is a cool-hang bar. Nothing controversial or whacked-out about it. The seats are different than Reloaded's, but to sit at the bar and gaze

at the long row of tap handles, the signs, the gleaming stainless steel, the mirrors, the machines and the backlit booze, you could be in almost any bar.

I made a mental note to wander by Rumor Lounge late at night. Let's face it: a place is only as sexy as the people in it. Me and my present bar companions were not the red velvet loveseat types, but maybe, just maybe, as the witching hour passes...

ADDENDUM: October 2012

Much sexier at night. I'm pretty sure the owners were not banking on that midday biznizz.