

100 Bars in 100 Days

Hops MacBarley's 2012 Key West Bar Boondoggle

"The Peace, Love, and I.P.A. Tour"

BAR 30:

Sunset Pier

www.oceankey.com/key-west-sunset-pier.aspx

0 Duval Street

Saturday 8/17, 7:45 pm



Key West Sunset Ale (draft)

Sometimes I wander out here late at night. I drift out to the far end of empty pier and wonder, *why aren't there people getting high out here?* Maybe I just pick the wrong times.

I like it when the pier is empty. Day or night, the rows of colorful tables, stools and umbrellas are a cool sight. People ruin the picture. Whenever I'm taking a picture with any scenic or aesthetic value, people better stay the hell away.



If I'm on a roadtrip and in a National Park, or some other beautiful area, I freaking *race* tour busses from place to place. If I get there first, I have solitude and beautiful, unspoiled photos. If not, I have dozens of clueless douchebags blocking all the best stuff. It sounds like I'm stereotyping, but Asians really are by far the worst.

One time at The Windows area of Arches National Park, I stood waiting patiently (at first), to get a photo of the bizarre rock formation, while a group of four Japanese, each with camera, rotated through about 12 different posings. Each was photographed individually in front of the window, then in *pairs*, then in *threes*. I couldn't believe it. I was about to scream, *Just take one picture and email it to the others!* But each had to have his/her own photo with his/her own camera. And before they would leave, they were about to set up a tripod for a picture of the four of them. I stepped in said, *I'll take your picture*. And, yes, you guessed it, I had to take four pictures with four cameras. As I handed back the last camera, I was about to burst, *NOW GET*

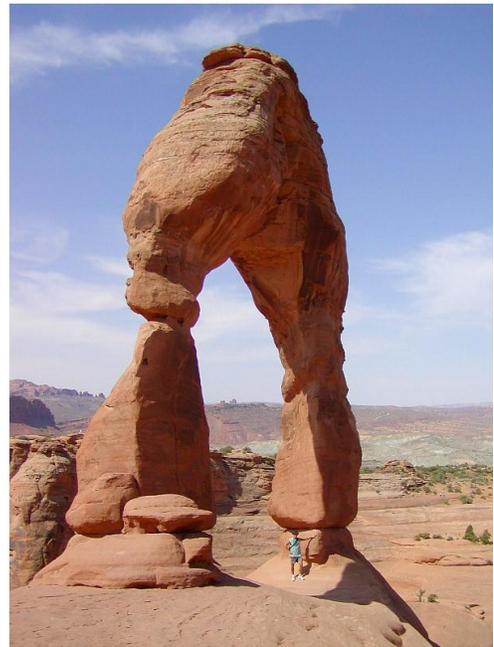
THE FUCK OUT OF THE WAY!! They *had* to know why I was there. They *had* to know what I was waiting for. So inconsiderate.

While I waited, another bus had just pulled in, but had not yet puked out its cargo. I quickly took my coveted pictures, then bolted out of that area before the IA (Inconsiderate Asians) group could board their bus, hell-bent on getting a lead on them all. I skipped the next area completely, resolving to hit it on the way out, just to get a good gap. I ended up falling into a good niche, arriving at an overlook just as a different bus was leaving, staying and snapping to my heart's delight, until the IA bus came into view, then skedaddling.

It worked out OK, but there should never have been such stress in a place like this. Our National Parks really are getting loved to death.

I also don't get it when you're at the Grand Canyon or someplace similar, with a gorgeous scenic vista in front of you, and you have your companion stand in front of it and block it in the pic! WTF?? Get out of the way, jerky! I can look at *you* anytime; I'll never see this view again! I don't need proof you were there. I'll take your word for it.

And, with one exception (photo, right), you won't find *me* in any scenic photos. I want to see the Canyon, damn it! It's much more impressive than any human ... especially me.



Same with Key West pics. Look at my Facebook photo galleries and you'll see minimal people. People suck. Not you, though. You're wicked awesome. *Other* people.

So, Sunset Pier became Bar 30 on Day 28. Ahead of shhhhedule. Every table was taken, and I got the last open bar stool. Not surprising for a Saturday, especially since half of the pier was covered with a huge white tent for a private wedding reception. Must be a dang cool place to have a party.



I came to enjoy a Key West Sunset ... Ale. It was \$6.00, which seemed a tad high, but it was a noticeably bigger cup than most bars serve (maybe even 16-ounces), it was filled to the brim (none of that one-inch head malarkey -- thank ya kindly, barkeep!), and the floorshow was free.

Talk about a rush hour. The Pier begins to fill up about an hour or so before the appointed sunset time, and is cleared out within an hour afterwards. It is a Pier with a purpose, for sure. It's open from 11 to 11, so they have staff on for 12 hours, but they must quadruple it for that two-hour window. Gotta be a lot of 2-3 hour shifts on that server schedule. Good part-time job, I would think.

It's pretty mellow here in the non-peak hours, which is cool. I've hung out here, being a lazy ass, savoring a beer, and watching the water. (Ha, sounds like I'm stoned, ha.) There is usually some easy music.

A couple of weeks ago – before the *Peace, Love, and IPA Tour* was conceived – I was chillin' here and the band was a group of a half-dozen high school and middle school kids. The female vocalist was outstanding – especially on their version on Fleetwood Mac's *Landslide* – and the ukulele player was crisp and clear. I never caught their name, but they were *on*. Check 'em out sometime. I dunno how; you don't know their name or when they played, but that's on you. Let me know what you find out.



Tonight, the sun would not be sinking into the warm, glittering Gulf waters. In summertime, with the northern hemisphere tilting towards it, the glowing orb lowers quietly behind the aptly named Sunset Key. No sizzle, no green flash.

The green flash is real, by the way. I've seen it more than once. Here's proof: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Green_flash .



This time of year, if you want a wet sunset, the place to go is Fort Zack. You can swim in the 88-degree water, or just hang out in the serene setting right up till splashdown. I love Fort Zack sundowns. As a concierge, if a guest was staying for multiple nights, I always urged them to experience both: a night at FZTSP, and another at Sunset Pier and Mallory Square. Two problems with Fort Zack, of course: *no alcohol allowed* (ouch), and they kick your ass out ten seconds after the sun vanished. You can't even relish the afterglow.

Here at the Pier, conversely, not only are you allowed to drink, you are encouraged to drink, urged to drink, more-or-less *required* to drink (or

at least eat) if you want a seat. And the longer you stay, the better: afterglow, moonrise, starshine.

My angle on this particular sunset put Mister Sun right between two tall classic palm trees. I had to stick-and-move a little to get it, though. Our planet wasn't spinning on a straight path, I reckon, because I had to shift left, left and more left to keep Old Sol framed. In all, I stood closely behind three different tables to keep up. It would have been a bit awkward, standing right next to a table and snapping photos across it while the people sat right there, but fortunately they were all facing away from me.

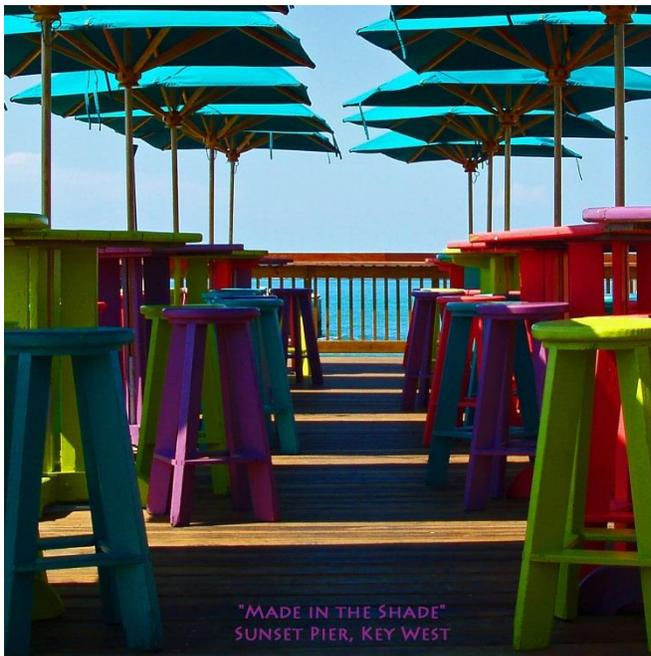
I noticed one thing near the bar that I had never seen before. We've all seen some graffiti, where people have written or carved their names or initials to commemorate visit – like the rest of us really give a turtle turd that *Andrew N Donna* were here. Well, these notes were carved into the thick, rubbery, green leaves of the tree next to the bar. That seemed so wrong to me. If trees could scream...

Andrew and Donna probably had a fight later that night and broke up anyway. The lures and vices of Duval Street claimed more victims. Andrew got a few Jagermeisters in him and started drooling over the girls on the bar at the Gecko, so Donna got pissed off, started doing tequila shots with a vengeance, got into that *nasty zone* that her friends know so well, ditched him when he went to the bathroom and ended up getting scooped by a Cuban named Hector at Fat Tuesday. The rest, well, you can read the grisly details in the KWPD report.



So, uhh, yeah.

Ocean Key changed their outdoor color scheme a few years ago. All the umbrellas and canopies are a Key Lime Green now. They look good, but I



preferred the rich marine blue that they used to be, as in this photo I took called *Made in The Shade*.

It's a good take here. Unlike many of my friends who brag about not having been to a KW sunset in years, I do like to come down here to the Pier and the Square, like maybe once a month or so. The entertainment isn't exactly Cirque du Soleil, but it's OK. I like watching them trying to get and keep the crowd.

And there are always some people in the crowd who are worth watching. Some are gorgeous,

some are hot, some are just freaking weird, but the sun and the water are a good display, and it's a good occasional alternative to sitting in a bar staring at a TV. Not that there's anything wrong with that. I sure wouldn't be on this tour if I thought there was.