

## 100 Bars in 100 Days

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

### BAR 37:

#### **Jack's Seafood Shack**

430 Duval Street

Saturday 8/25, 10:00 pm

*Magic Hat #9 (draft) \$4.00*

Little bit of a special circumstance at Jack's tonight. Tropical Storm Isaac was closing in on the Conch Republic, and much of Key West was already boarded up and braced for lots of wind and rain.



Trouble is, it wasn't stormy at all. It was warm, breezy, and partly moony – hardly an emergency situation. Plus, Jim Cantore was in Tampa, so how bad could it be?

I was going to hit Joe's Taproom and add it to the Tour, but it was closed. OK, maybe the Hard Rock Café; haven't done that one yet. Nope. Closed. I was angling towards Krawl Off Duval, actually, when Jack's caught my eye. The news crews from Miami and from The Weather Channel had arrived the day before and many of them used this corner and its underhang as an HQ. So, I walked across to see if anything was going on.



The last time I had been in Jack's did not go especially well. We were on another SSDC function, and this time it was a Bar Crawl. We had started the Crawl at Krawl, then walked down to Bobalu's, and then to Willy T's, spending 30-45 minutes at each place. When you're in the Bar Crawl mindset, that is a LOT of time, and it feels quite idle without some cold bev in your cup.

Kona Brewery was sponsoring the event, so at each bar, they were pouring a dozen or so freebies (mostly Longboard); you could still buy other flavors from the bar – which I did –

but invariably, a few cups of Longboard would end up near me. I'm not much of a Longboard fan, but the ones who slid them my way were even less so. I was a trooper and choked a few down. What a fucken saint.

As a group, we were a tad giddy after Bobalu's. When we left Willy T's, we were smashed. When we walked into the fourth stop, Jack's, the group was festive indeed.

Liquid as we were, we flowed into JSS and bellied up to the bar. The tour directors had balloons blown up at each stop too, and as I waited for a barkeep to make his way to me, I stood there tap-juggling a balloon, from hand to hand and up in the air. Nothing rowdy, just keeping my simple mind occupied.

I ordered my Longboard and, as he brought it back, I asked for change for a \$20 bill, partly for raffle tickets, and partly to tip him. He brought me back two \$5 bills. Hmm. Not right.

It took a few minutes to flag him down again, which led me to believe that he knew what he had done. When I finally got his attention and told him I had given him a 20 and not a 10, he never argued, but took the two fives, and came back and put *three* fives on the board. WTF is this stupid shit? I shot him one nasty look and practically growled, *I did NOT ask for change of a **15***. At which point, he took a fourth fiver from his other hand and laid it with the others.

I swept those bills off the bar so fast. What a douche! He had the right amount *in his hand* but was **again** deliberately trying to cheat me. I'm sure he thought we were all drunk to the point of stupid – maybe because I was balloon juggling – but you need to be slicker than that, shit-for-brains.

We were here for another twenty minutes or so, and within five, I spread the word to just about everyone there. If I saw him waiting on someone, I'd walk right over and scrutinize the transaction, or I'd say right out loud, *Count your change!* And WTF could he say about it? Nothing! He was the fucking thief, not me.

I forget his name, or I'd definitely warn you. That's his picture. I look for him whenever I stroll by, but haven't seen him for a while. Hopefully, he got canned, or maybe some less peaceful customer shot him in the head.



The other barkeep that day – in your classic Good-Barkeep-Bad-Barkeep dynamic – was Jeff, and he is who was manning the bar for this Tour Stop. What a contrast: mellow, easy-going, working at his own good pace and showing a slightly sly smile for all. He's been in KW for about a year.



*The Peace, Love, and IPA Tour* found him working solo and in the process of making a Mojito. The *bar* was not very busy, with about a dozen customers. As I sat down, I commiserated with him about that labor-intensive drink and I promised I would not order one. He nodded gratefully. I asked if the media types had been keeping him busy. He looked at the Mojito, tilted his head toward the table behind me, and said, *Ummmm, yes!*

I did a casual turn to survey the room, and spied a well-dressed Latin woman with an almost-as-well-dressed gray-haired man. She was the Mojito culprit, and he had what looked like a Manhattan. Hey, if the TV station sends you to Key West, enjoy!

I ordered a Magic Hat #9, one of my regular occasional brews. I consider #9 to be the Dr. Pepper of beers. It has a unique taste created by several distinct flavors intermixing. It tastes good right off the bat, but by the time I finish one, I'm ready for something else. Just like Dr. Pepper.

While I was there, a guy from the other social strata of mobile TV news – the truck – came in. The clothes gave him away. He didn't have to look good for the camera, and he didn't have to wear weather gear. Jeff was making another Mojito when he came in. He promised that he would not order one. Jeff nodded gratefully. The guy ordered three Miller Lite bottles, put them on his tab, and scooted back outside. Can you blame him? He couldn't have been that stressed out. An occasional 30 MPH gust does not warrant Miami News coverage.

Now, I know that Isaac turned evil and swamped New Orleans, Mobile, and Biloxi on the anniversary of Katrina. Bad show, Isaac. When he walked through here, though, he was snoozing: low on fuel and not feeling very rowdy.

But the way The Weather Channel portrayed it was just plain funny at times. Reporters could be seen, leaning into the wind, saying things like – and this is an actual quote – *the rain feels like bullets hitting my skin.*

I have to interrupt myself and just say to the TV execs out there, *Fire the douchebag who thinks that a splat of rain feels like a fucking BULLET.* WTF??

Anyway, so they'd be leaning into this horrific gale, and the camera would begin to pan and you'd see people out in t-shirts and shorts, standing calmly nearby watching the camera crew, or strolling by walking their dog, or standing on a pier watching the water slosh around while the reporter would rail on about what a crazy idea it was to do that.

All about ratings, babe. It may be weather, it may be news, but it's *TV* weather, and *TV* news, and nobody stays tuned to a wimpy storm.

Jeff and I were having a small-talk chat when Mojito Maria came up to the bar. She asked about a place that one of her colleagues had told her about, down by the Pier House, where they could get camera shots from under a balcony and stay out of the rain. Wuss. It's storm coverage, not a pageant. Get your hair wet and tangled and be proud of it.



The customers to my left were a foursome of Tampa fans. This happened to be the day when the Red Sox jettisoned four players and almost a quarter-*billion* dollars in salary. The owners finally realized, as Nick says, *It shouldn't cost this much to SUCK.*

Anyway, I told them that, yes, the trade rumors were true, and they smugly reveled in the news of the Sox demise. The broad-shouldered Italian guy in the middle surprised me by saying that Crawford was not that popular in Tampa: too streaky, too moody. I wish I had known that, not that it would have changed anything.

His wife was a kick, though. She had something funny to say about almost everything sentence we said. She kept the Sox-Rays conversation from an almost inevitable nasty turn.

Tour duty done, it was time to move on. I drained my Hat, thanked Jeff, wished the Tampa fans an insincere *good luck*, and braced myself for the deluge.