

100 Bars in 100 Days

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

BAR 44:

Dons' Place

www.donsplacekeywest.com

1000 Truman Avenue

Friday 8/31, 6:15 pm

Yuengling (bottle) \$2.50

Dons' would be the third smoky bar of the week. The Tour hit Shimp Daddy's and Stick & Stein on the same night, detoured to the pool party at Pelican (to rinse off), and came right back to the Where The Smokers Go.

And, for the second time in as many weeks, I learned that I didn't even know the right name of the bar. Just as it wasn't *Antonio's* there, it is not *Don's* here. This is *Dons' Place*, as in, belong to more than one Don. A singular Don would drop the apostrophe after the n, but this place was launched by *two* guys named Don, not just one, so it is not *Don's*, it is *Dons'*. Got that, all you grammarphiles?



On the outside door frame, you can see the words *Million Dollar Bar*. That, too, is all 'splain'd in the history section of the web page linked above. Cool tale, actually. Check it out.

I cajoled Jacko into meeting me here. He had to conquer his fears of this place. Sure, there had been a shooting thing here once, but so what? Sure, a former co-worker of his used to come here every day at 7 ... AM. What's so odd about that? Cut yourself a hefty slice of underbelly and dig the fuck in.

As we reached for the front door, the first impression was surprising: very nice stained glass windows in both doors. Dolphins facing

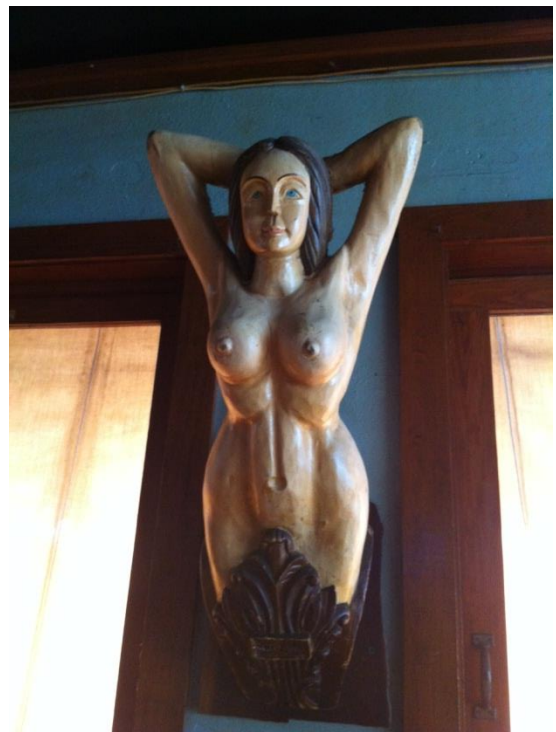
each other in bright blue. Heyyy, niice.

Then the door opens and the smoke hits ya. Now, if you like smoke, you're thinking, *Awww riight, I am home!* You pull up a stool, slide an ash tray to your most comfortable spot, and light up, free from scorn and disapproval. If you're a non-smoker, you have no right – none, *none, none* – to cast any negative waves at a smoker in a place like this. It would be like going to Brew Fest and tsk-tsking anyone drinking beer. If you don't like the smoke here, then *git da fuk owwwttt*.

We took seats at the back end of the bar, looking back up the whole length of the long, narrow room. Every bar customer – and I think all were solo guys – was smoking. Beer bottle and ash tray on the bar, cigarette in hand. Good for them. Enjoy, dudes.

I grabbed a Yuengling, Jacko got his usual Bud Light. We admired the décor. The most obvious feature was hanging on the wall to our left. What do you call it when a ship has a carving of a person on the peak of its bow? What is that carving called? If it was on a building, it could be a gargoyle. Oh, yeah, a figurehead. [I suppose I could go back and delete my stupids, but WTF.]

Anyway, this figurehead was striking, almost alarming. It was a naked woman with her arms behind her head (probably for buoyancy while floating in the pool), and barely kept modesty by the leafy carvings nestling against her happy place. As wall decorations go, it's kinda hard to miss.



When I was taking pictures of the stained glass, the two guys nearest the door called me paparazzi. I promised to blur their faces. Not a bad idea anyway.

Dons' has an outdoor bar too. We could've gone there; we would have dodged the smoke, and it still would have counted. But Jacko needed the full experience.



The outdoor bar is actually pretty cool. It's shaded by some big trees, has the back yard barbecue feel, and a few yard games to feed the competitive urge of these more outdoorsy type.

Indoors, they have a poolroom with a dart board. Two women were tossin' darts this day, and nobody was shooting pool, so I guess it's a dart room with a pool table.

I spent a full Sunday afternoon here one day, working as the timer for a carpentry contest. I forget what it was called. I brought the Southernmost Runners club's smaller clock and timed about 60 different heats of men and women hammering nails and sawing planks. The noon event looked like a total flop at 11:59, but, in true Key west style, competitors came strolling in, picked up a beer, grabbed a hammer and started banging.

It actually got pretty intense as some dudes from rival carpentry crews got a little liquored up and began talking shit. It was funny as hell, though the late-afternoon sawing session was starting to look a little dangerous. There were a lot more bent nails too, as people's aim started to get a little bit off. Must've been fatigue.



Dons', like several other bars in town, also has a liquor store. Haven't had enough yet? Buy some for the walk home!

Jacko and I drank up and departed. Our bottles will end up in a good place, though. Dons' is one of the very few bars in Key West that diligently recycles. It's staggering to think how many bottles and cans just get thrown away on any given night here. I mean, there are *at least 100 bars*, we know that. Multiply that by bottled beer sales on an average night. Then multiply that by 365. Yikes.

So, a big Hops Huzzah for Dons' recycling effort!

The halfway point of *The Peace, Love, and IPA Tour* is only a week away!