

100 Bars in 100 Days

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

BAR 45:

JDL's Big Ten Pub
www.jdlbigtenpub.com
920 Caroline Street
Sunday 9/2, 5:00 pm

Red Stripe (bottle) \$3.50

I couldn't have picked a much slower day to come here. It was Recovery Day for me, after a thorough Brew Fest sloshing. Say no more for my condition. As for the bar, it was doing Double Recovery. They were reeling from the Fest as well, but also had to deal with the opening day of college football. Big Ten Pub, college football. Kind of a big deal.



It was primarily the need to check off another one for The Tour, but I also had a hankering for a BLT. Yup, a BLT at JDL, WTF. B & J come here often, so we met for a social sauce.

The first thing I noticed as I sat down was the tap bridge. As I went to scan the taps for my selection, my keen eye noticed that none of them had any handles, just their shiny silver bases and naked screws pointing upward. It looked sad.

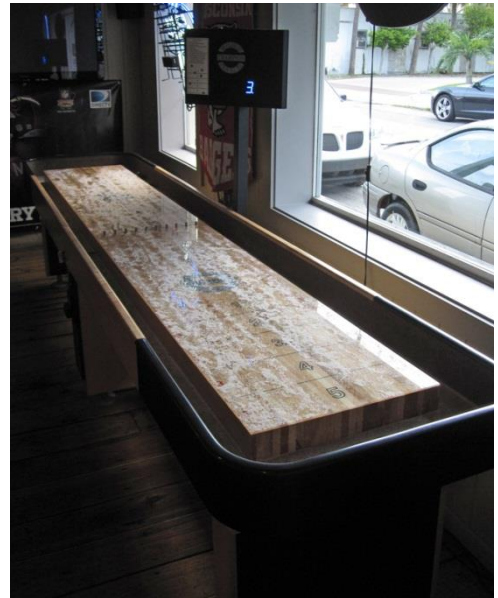


Missy, our friendly blonde barkeep, lamented that the college football fans had wiped them out. JDL hosted a couple of Brew Fest Ivities, and had swapped out several of their regular drafts for festival crafts. The fans slurped up all that remained of the crafts, but as each tap spurted its last blast, there was no refill to reload. One by one, they went out, gasping and choking, rasping out their harsh dying cry.

And, of course, they couldn't just hook the Coors Light back up to the tap that had been running the Swamp Ape IPA. The flavors might not get along. The lines would have to be cleaned before they could return to normal.

In increasing numbers, the fans turned their ravenous eyes on the bottles. Clinking and chiching echoed through the room. Or it would have if the TVs weren't so loud. And the people weren't making so much noise.

Anyway, Missy said most of the bottled beer was gone too, and suggested I just take a guess and she'd see what she had. My first guess was a Red Stripe. *Yup, got it!* Hooray, beer!



I'd been in JDL's a few times already. I was at this address a LOT back when it was PT's Late Night, with their treeemendous Thursday night Turkey dinners, and sweet smiling Rebecca with her Rapunzel hair. 'Twas a grand place. A tough act to follow, for sure.

When JDL had their Grand Opening Party, Jan held the winning raffle ticket for a private room party. Five hundred dollars worth of food and beverage for up to eight people. It was a good time! An all-star team from Island Dogs and Krawl Off Duval were in attendance. We had the Patriots game on, platters of sandwiches and wraps, beer upon beer, shots, and – the most popular item of the night – *tater tots!* Multiple orders of them. Tots, tots, and more tots! Yum, yum, yum, tots!



We left our server a good tip, but just as we were shifting into Get A Move On gear, I slipped in a final order: a BLT. Why a BLT after all that food and booze? I don't know. A hankering, I guess. Some lightweight food to drop down on all that boozy tot stew in my tum. *But, mannnnnnn, was that BLT **gooooood!!***

Seldom has a sandwich hit the spot with such force and precision. Fresh bread, toasted just right. Crisp lettuce, still chilled. Hot crispy bacon. Mmmmm, baconnnnnn. And thin-sliced tomato; the only way to do tomato is to slice `em thin. And, of course, mayo. Maaaaaayo. Perrrfecct. Sweet God in Heaven, what a sandwich that was.

I vowed that I'd come back for another. It took a while, but here I was. Brian and Jan got the bug too, and ordered up some of their favorite JDL food. Brian was especially enthusiastic about the fish fingers.

While we waited for our food, we had some unexpected entertainment. JDL's has large front picture windows, with a clear view of the stairway and buildings across Caroline Street at Key West Harbor. The stairway leads up to the mezzanine that overlooks Dante's pool, and brings you to Prime 951. That's normally not very entertaining, I'm sure, but today was special.

Dante's was having a big raucous pool party, and, with the afternoon waning, some people were leaving via this stairway. One couple in particular started to put on a show. The blonde woman/girl – low-20's, I'd guess – was bombed and bitching out her tall, studly, unshaven boyfriend. He put up with her shit for a little while, then they got into a shouting match. Right on the sidewalk, heads shaking, hands waving, faces red and fierce. We had all left our seats and stood at the window, watching them go at it. Even Missy abandoned the bar to lead our cheers.

After a couple of minutes, the BF just said something along the lines of *Fuck it, and fuck you!* and stormed off. Drunk blondie stood there teetering, fuming, and getting ready to sob.

The BF's friend came along to try to equivocate matters. Blondie lit into him, bitching him up and down. It didn't take long before he gave her a double-fisted flip off and walked after his buddy.

She did the typical sob poor-me shit for a little while, then got up and walked unsteadily in their direction. We returned to our places.

Thinking it was over, we were eating our food and I saw the three of them climbing back up the stairs! We had a good laugh at that, speculating how things had transpired, when the two guys came back down the stairs without her. One woman commented, *Ten bucks says they threw her over Dante's waterfall.* I responded, *I think she's impaled on that swordfish statue they got there.*

All right, so it wasn't *great* entertainment, but it was funny to us. Our reaction to it was probably funnier than the fight itself.

I had come here a week or so before, fully intending to add it to the tour and get my BLT. Both the front room and the back bar were almost full, and most of the 19 TV's were on a pre-season NFL game. Two were on soccer.

Before I ordered a beer, I asked if I could get one TV turned to the Little League World Series game. It was the US Championship game. I was pretty surprised that a sports bar wouldn't have had it on anyway. They lamented that this bank of TVs are all on the same box, and this one is hooked to that, and, well, no, we can't do that. Hm.

They did offer to let me use one of the private rooms and they would serve me in there. It was a generous offer, I guess; I'm sure they meant it as one. But I didn't come to a bar to sit in a room alone, isolated from the 100 other people like some leper.

I chuckled at the offer and thanked them politely, saying, *No, if I'm going to sit in a room by myself, I'll do it at home where the beer is free.*

But there were no BLT's at home. Flaw in that plan, Hopsy.

B & J headed home after we finished our food. I headed across the street to check out the pool party. No sign of Drunkie Blondie, and no blood on the fish's sword either...