

100 Bars in 100 Days

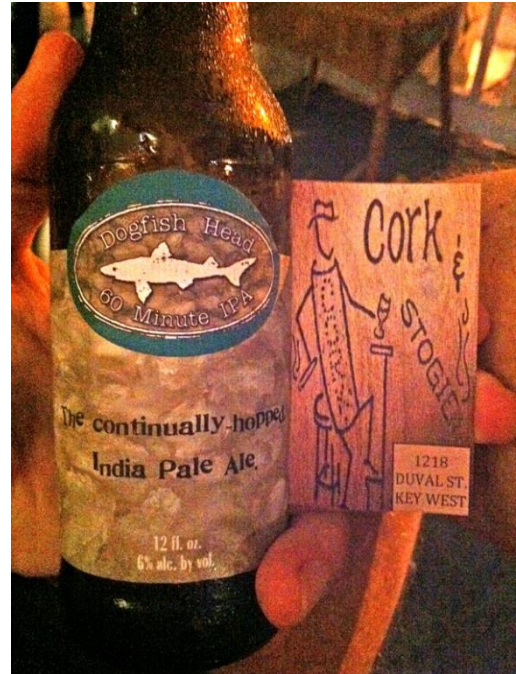
Hops MacBarley's 2012
Key West Bar Boondoggle
"The Peace, Love, and I.P.A. Tour"

BAR 71:

The Cork and Stogie
www.corkandstogie.com
1218 Duval Street
Thursday 9/27, 10:30 pm

Dogfish Head 60-Minute IPA (bottle) \$5.50

OK, ten weeks in the books, and still a month remains in *The Peace, Love & IPA Tour*. Thirty more days (or nights) of havin' a beeh in a bahh. My goodness.



So, virgin turf for #71. Mannn, the 1200 block. I'm almost at the Atlantic Ocean. Wine and cigars looked to be the house specialties, but maybe the sign wasn't telling the whole tale.

C&S is a big, classy private home that became a place of purveyance some time last century. There was a shuffling around of businesses several months – maybe even a year? – ago that, I think, plunked the Cork here. Banana Café moved when their neighbor moved out, and the prior tenant here jumped into BC's old spot, and C&S leapt at the chance for roomier digs here than where they were across the street. If I remember correctly. Good chance that I don't.



I wouldn't have been expecting much here, but the Upper Duval Bar Crawl had recently included The Cork & Stogie as one of their stops, and how can you host a herd of pub crawlers with just wine and tobacco? So, I actually approached the wide front steps and the spacious porch with eagerness.

The screen door opened easily, and as I looked left, my first impression was unimpressive: a brightly lit room with wine bottles on shelves, and a small round table

covered with winey-type doodads and gifty things.

I could feel my crest begin to fall, but as I turned my attention to the right, I saw dimmer light, a small bar with shiny beer taps, and, in the corner, a tall glass-doored refrigerator, well lit, and just packed with lots and lots of choice brews! Ding ding! We have a winner!

It didn't take long for the Dogfish to slap my brain. I requested a bottle of that fine, flavorful brew, and did a little conversing with the friendly woman barkeep. I started to tell her about the Tour and she got all excited. She showed me the *second* big beer frig, that had some *really* exotic brews, including one that tasted like cherries and was about 14% ABV.



Now, I like alcohol, but once you pump up the volume that high, it just gets too damn sweet for my tastes. The Dog-60 is strong, and the Dog-90 starts to turn the corner into sweetland, but the Dog-120 that I tried one night was like Sugary City. The bitterness of the hops gets drowned out and it creeps into the realm of a fortified wine. It packs a punch-and-a-half, but I need some water to cleanse my palate as I drink it. So I declined the 14-ABV'er and stuck to my 60 IPA.



I'm not sure if she was Leslie, one of the owners, but she sure showed ownerish pride in the place. She gave me a card, described everything they had – including Jell-o shots – and urged me to spread the good word.

I settled into a big, cushioned, wicker chair on the front porch and enjoyed the first-week-of-autumn breeze. Not exactly arctic.

The porch has those huge thick white pillars on the corners and at the stairs. They taper at the top and

almost look like they should be holding up the old Seven Mile Bridge.

You can tell this place was definitely built to be a residence rather than a public victualer. The rooms don't have that here-comes-the-crowd flow to them. The bar felt like it was kinda plunked into a space that should have been a living room, with the dining room right over there.

There were stools at the bar, but I wasn't picturing a big crowd fitting in easily. Still, that's also a big part of the character of the place. It's not your usual bar with your usual flow, so you have to shift your gears a little, enjoy your beer, and adjust to the house.

My Dogfish bottle was still so cold that I could hardly hold it. That is one good frig they have in there!

A few of the barkeep's friends stopped in and they were soon kicking back on the porch as well. We all shared some comments and laughs at the expense of some vehicular passers-by. It was good to see that they shared a touch of the same caustic misanthropy that I routinely wield so cavalierly.

I just stayed for the one, but I did promise Leslie (or pseudo-Leslie) that I would be back. 'Tis a very cool and laid-back place.