

## 100 Bars in 100 Days

Hops MacBarley's 2012

Key West Bar Boondoggle

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

BAR 86:

Durty Harry's

202 Duval Street

[www.ricksbarkeywest.com/durty-harrys](http://www.ricksbarkeywest.com/durty-harrys)

Monday 10/15, 9:00 pm

*Sam Adams Boston Lager (bottle) \$6.00*

The Complex. Which one of them to choose? Rick's? The Tree Bar? There would be nothing "wrong" with including more than one of the Complex's bars on the Tour -- after all, I make the rules -- but there was this Under One Roof thing. Or the Share The Same Address thing.

Colette had already rebuked me for conniving to score the Honky Tonk Saloon and Salsa Loca as two separate bars when, she maintained, they were both Cowboy Bill's and, hence, the same business. Typical accountant. Jeeez.

So, with 85 bars already on the board, and not the least worry about running out of drinkeries before reaching 100, I figured I'd dodge another castigation (ouch) and limit myself to just one of the Complex. And this, being a Monday night during football season, made Durty Harry's the choice.

Marty had long been trying to sell me on the idea that DH was a great place to watch a game. He'd been catching NFL games there every Sunday for years and years. Crowd was fun, beer was inexpensive, you can win shots, and there were even free hot dogs. So, MNF might prove to be quite the good take there too.

Duval was pretty quiet, but there seemed to be a bit more life than in recent



weeks. Fantasy Fest was only a week away now, with Goombay kicking it off this Friday. I know I was psyched as hell, and with decorations going up and events being advertised, the buzz was definitely growing.

But it didn't seem to have made it into Durty Harry's. You do have to go down a bit of an alleyway to get there. DH is way in back. The entrance is kinda cool though. You walk past The Tree Bar and Angelina's Pizza, through a short corridor lined with close to 100 appreciation plaques from myriad Navy vessels, given over the last four decades to Mark Rossi. Many were weather-beaten and in deplorable shape, but have recently been refurbished and re-engraved by the experts at Local Awards.



Then, the roof goes away, and you're outdoors again for several steps. Durty Harry's lies dead ahead. A greeter (for lack of a better term -- he'd be a doorman, if there were a door to man) was waiting there to (a) check my ID, ha, and (b) fill me in on the how-it-works-here's. I was asked to pick a team -- I said that I thought Peyton and the Broncos would get it done this time after consecutive weeks of late-game rallies falling short. Greeterdude wrote a bold "D" on the back of my right hand. I hoped that did not stand for Death. He explained that every time my team scored, I could have a free shot. It didn't cross my mind to ask what kind of shot.

Thus stamped and enlightened, I was cleared for entry. I walked past the flanking bars with shingled overhangs, and under the white-railed balcony of the Crow's Nest. The arched neon sign above me proclaimed that I had arrived.

Durty's is like a big cavern. The ceiling is high, and the room widens out

significantly once you're inside. The stage is dead ahead, and another bar lines the wall to the right. For the game, the stage was hidden behind a very large projection screen. On other nights, a band would be rockin' the house.

I guess MNF's Denver vs. San Diego game wasn't all that compelling because the "good crowd" that I was anticipating contained about nine people. I made it ten. Double figures, baybee. That was OK, though. I could do without a crowd. A few more people did come in shortly after me, pushing the number up to a peak of about 20.

So, as I approached the flanking bars, I reached the food set-up. I asked the cooker dude what's the deal. He was The Angry Chef, according to the sign, but he seemed pretty pleasant to me. Anyway, he gave me the lowdown on the food: sliders and doggies, and, ha ha, be serious, *not* free. Of course not. The sliders did sound like a tasty take, so I put in my order and angled for the bar.

The young woman on bar duty didn't have a lot to do. I'm sure she had already resigned herself to a long and lean night. Bartending is not always a lucrative job. You have your nights where you rake it in -- if you're at the right bar -- but you often feel like you had to lose a slice of your soul to do it. Then there are these kinds of nights when attendance is down and so is enthusiasm. When a bar is crowded, the crowd drinks more. The party zeal spreads and you glug down more suds. If it's empty and echoey, your heart rate slows and so does your drink rate.

There are plenty of aspiring tenders who arrive in Key West and land a job at a bar and think they are All Set. But not every shift at every bar will fill your wallet. An autumn Sunday at Flats or Gecko should set you up pretty well, but a Tuesday afternoon at, say, Shots & Giggles might not pay many bills.

But my Harry's barkeep was trying to make the best of it. She brought me my beer with a smile and said sweetly, "six dollars, please."

That stopped me cold. SIX BUCKS for a bottle of Sam Adams?? Is that a joke? Man, that is no way to bring me back for another. WTF is going on in this town? No fucking way am I staying for a second beer if you're gonna

screw me like that.

But I had to have one to consummate the visit, so, with a sigh, I paid my six-plus-one and had a seat. There were plenty to choose from. Plenty of TVs too, as Marty had described, but only one that made a lot of sense. The big projection screen back at the stage was the obvious choice. Other TVs hung on the back wall of the bar, and a bank of ten were clustered in the back corner. It reminded me of MTV for some reason. For sports, another big screen would have been more effective. You could see the game on those others, but not the details.

So, big screen it was. I gave the place a good lookaround between plays. I hadn't been in here in years, but it looked pretty much how I remembered it: old wooden walls just about covered with sports, military, NASCAR, and booze sign booze signs, posters, and other memorabilia.

I got the word that my sliders were ready. Damn, they were small, and there were just two of them. A \$6 Sam, and now this. Things were not living up to expectations. So I settled in for some football. Surely, Peyton would win me a shot. But even the TV screen wasn't really getting the job done. The screen was too low, so with a table of people in front of me, my view was always partially blocked.



Three of those four guys had the Chargers, and life was pretty good. By the time I got settled in, San Diego had bolted out to a 17-0 lead, and made it 24-0 shortly thereafter. The happy three got and downed their shots, relentlessly taunting their thirsty Denver-fan companion. All he could do was

throw up his hands and shrug.

The first half ended at 24-0. I would not be staying for the second. I had beer and food at home that was already paid for, a big-enough-for-me screen to watch the game on, and the freedom to lounge in my skivvies if I so chose.

It did peeve me somewhat, though, when the Broncos woke up in the third quarter, scored three touchdowns in five minutes, and went on to a 35-0 second-half domination that would have won me five shots. Crap.

Sometimes your stars just don't align...

JUST 14 BARS TO GO!!!!!!!