

Bar Hoppin' With Hops
The Second Century Tour
Hops MacBarley's 2013
Key West Bar Boondoggle

Bar #145:

Crow's Nest

202 Duval Street

Sunday, 14 July, 1:30 AM

Sam Adams (bottle) \$6.00



This one had to be a late-night hop. Some bars are great for lunch, some for swimming, some for a Happy Hour, some for dinner, some for dancing or music or sports. But this one, I was told, was all about midnight and beyond.

Tucked way up in the back of the top floor, this would be the fourth of the Rick's Complex bars to be hopped. Dirty Harry's (#86), the Tree Bar (#111), and Rick's Bar (#123) preceded it. The complex has a few more on the front deck, but, well, maybe later.



A network of stairs and walkways leads you back among the Crows. It all surrounds a courtyard that has, basically, nothing in it, though very large beer signs and liquor ads abound. Back in this area, you can look down and get an upper-balcony kind of view down onto the stage of Dirty Harry's.

The Nest itself is very small. The bar has about six stools. Twenty people would jam the place. About fifteen were here right now. The lighting is red, and there is a skull on a hook on the side wall above the bar. That was where I squeezed in to order my beer, a cold bottle of Sam, for *six bucks*.

What ever happened to \$2.50 Buds and \$3.50 Sams??? I know, what happened to \$1.75 gasoline too? But these beer prices have jumped so

fast! And there were no international incidents that messed with supply and demand -- this is just plain greed.



Yeah, but I'm not gonna stop drinking it, so STFU, me.

On my first look around, I didn't see anyone I recognized. This didn't amaze me; the 1:30 AM crowd and my meanderings don't have much of an overlap. They once did, but the late-night, street-strolling Hops has morphed into Happy Hour Hops, and ya just can't be both ... and hold down a decent job.

A few more people arrived and I was feeling a little cramped next to Ol' Skully, so I slithered out to the doorway and hung out on the periphery for a bit. I watched the comings and goings of the Complex for a while. From in here, it does seem more like a complex

than it does from Duval; the bars seem to mesh from this vantage point, while they look more separate from outside.

When I looked back into the bar, Amy was there. My favorite lesbian! She must have snuck in behind me. Probably tended TGIF all night and was out on the prowl. She was with a pack of friends (I assume they were friends), so I did not run over to her, lift her over my head, twirl her around, and scream crazy things in her ears.

I once described Amy as "a kick in the head." She said she was very flattered by that description.

I have not mentioned bathrooms much in these ruminations, and that's definitely for the best. But this time, I have an almost-bathroom tale to tell. Ehhh, no, not really a tale. You decide:

I didn't really have the need, but as a matter of convenience, I thought I'd tour the men's room before I left. The room is small, so the walk was short. The ladies' room, on the left, had three ladies in line. Pretty normal,



yes? They stood dutifully by the doorway, and spaced themselves a respectful few feet apart -- standard rest room waiting line protocol.

OK, so, I approach the men's room door. No one is standing dutifully by the doorway. No men are spaced a respectful few feet apart. Hence (I love that word), I stepped right up to reach for the door. BUT some crew-cutted jamoke *near the middle of the room*, grabbed me by the shoulder -- didn't tap me, didn't "ahem" me, *grabbed* me -- and said, "hey, pal, I'm next in line."

Welllllll, it didn't look like it to me.

So, what do ya do? This 20-something Coast Guard guy is clearly being a dickhead and calling me out, for whatever reason. Maybe he needed to show off and an almost-60 guy was the best target he could find, I don't know.



But I shoved his hand off my shoulder like it was Disease Itself, looked him in his cocky-drunk I-am-military-so-I-am-cool eye and said, levelly, "I don't see any line."

Now, I have the utmost respect for the Coast Guard, Navy, and so on that live and work down here and have signed off on their lives -- their freaking *lives*, wives and kids and all of it -- to

defend MY right to tour 200 bars (yes, among other things, whatever). I've done a lot of work at work for them. They are great group of young men and women. The Sun Downers, especially -- I am a huge fan of the VFC-111 pilots. Those guys rock.

So, it wasn't like I was scratchin' to get at the young dude. I just had no cause to agree with his approach. You want Next, then go stand in the Next position, not 15 feet away in the middle of the bar, and then get all uppity when someone had the temerity to step between you and what you think is your right to Next. There is no fucking way that works on a USCGC, and it's not valid here either.

But, like I said, I was about convenience, not necessity. So, instead of being confrontational, I opted for a more fatherly approach. I gave a wide Hopsy smile, rested my hand on his shoulder, looked him dead in the eye, and said, "You do not *understannnd*. You need to *learrrrn* to *understannnd*."

I have no idea what the heck that was supposed to mean. Neither did he. But it left him with enough of a WTF, that I was able to shuffle on out like Mr. Creamsicle Cool, and be on my way.

Amy was long since gone. I had gotten a smiley bye wave from her before the bathroom tale -- does it count as a tale? -- ever got underway.

I did not give Coast Guard Dickhead a smiley bye wave, but moved on out into the weirdness of 2:00 AM Duval.

Addendum, October:

Amy is gone. Up and moved her wild and crazy self to Nashville. I never got to give her a goodbye hug, or, more importantly, some good old shit before she hit the road. I didn't see her very often, but she always took things up a notch whenever I did. Best of luck to ya, ya nutty bitch!!