

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

Bar #187:

Hammock Cafe

3420 North Roosevelt Boulevard

www.theinnatkeywest.com

Tuesday, 28 August, 6:15 PM

Yuengling (draft) \$3.00 HH

This was Day 88 of the *Second Century Tour*. Still on pace to make 100 bars in 100 days for the second straight summer. Forking A.

I'm sure that the Mauling Of North Roosevelt has not been good for business here, but, I'm equally sure that the closing of their four neighbors to the east, Comfort Inn, Quality Inn, Lexington Hotel, and Days Inn -- and the 500 rooms that they totaled -- was not *bad* for business.

That said, though, this was still August, and it was still just a Tuesday. And an overcast Tuesday at that. I have no idea what kind of occupancy The Inn At Key West had on this day, but whoever was staying there was somewhere other than the bar.



When I passed through the hotel and into the back area that constitutes The Hammock Cafe and pool bar, I had one immediately thought: *Are they open?* Not a human in sight. No one lounging under the gray clouds by the pool, no one seated in the comfortable-looking lounge area of the actual Cafe, no one on any of the stools at the tall bar hut with the bright yellow awning, and not even anyone *behind* the bar. Hmmm.



Undeterred, I approached the bar and took a seat. The TV was on; that was a good sign, I guessed. After maybe a minute, a man in a hotel uniform shirt came out and walked towards the other side of the bar, pushing a mop bucket. He looked almost amazed when he noticed me sitting there. "Hey!" he called out amiably, "whatcha havin'?"

Ha, I should've recognized the stock equipment of a bartender's dead day: the mop. It is an unwritten rule: if there are no customers, clean something! In fact, I'd bet that actually is written in many places. A reasonably conscientious keeper will use a few minutes of down time to wash out the drink mats or wipe out the gutter. Taking down the hanging wine glasses and specialty glasses and washing -- or at least wiping -- the smoke and accumulated exhales off them is much more of a commitment.



This dude, though, was going the whole nine shebangs. He had the disgusting black rubber grid mats up and draped over the back railing, and he was getting ready to scour and clean that floor. That's an admirable task for a daytime employee. Those suckers are almost always saved for the final duty of night, and many places even slough that dirty job off to the dishrats. But, as an end-of-the-night duty, it is done minimally. This dude looked like he was ready to attack it.

Then it occurred to me: he must be the Bar Manager. I don't imagine this bar has a big staff. Maybe two barkeeps on the busiest days of the year, but one person could surely handle it most of the

time. You give your number one bar dude forty hours (plus), a couple of other dudes or duchesses their thirty-ish, and you're pretty much covered. So, that doesn't leave a lot of subordinate shoulders for the Head Tender to delegate to. And if he does hand it off to his less-dedicated part-timers, will they do as good a job? Or do it at all? End of the night? Nah, better to do it yourself.

Maybe I'm giving him too much credit, though. Maybe *he* was the underling doing his boss's bidding. Didn't seem like it, though. He had the purposeful demeanor of someone who was gonna do it right, damn it. Like when you're going to take the whole freaking afternoon to really, honestly, completely clean the inside of your car. In your mind, you know it's a suckass chore,

but those stone-stale fries, errant bottle caps, crumbled napkins, lost pens, stray coins, and unidentifiable clumps aren't going to get up and leave on their own. You know this because you've *given* them eight of nine months to do it and they haven't budged.

Stubborn little bastards.

Well, that's the kind of mindset Scotty seemed to be in: whatever it is, if cleaning it needs, cleaning it shall get.



But he was all too happy to take a short break and be a bartender for a moment. He promptly let me know that Happy Hour was in effect, and grabbed me a Gling. Three bucks. That's too much to be a 2-4-1 deal, or a half-price domestic, so it must have been a set HH price.

Scotty got back into Mr. Clean Mode and I settled into Solitary Dude At The Bar Mode. I'm very familiar with it, and, actually, I like it. I wouldn't like it all the time; like if every bar cleared out when I walked in, that would suck. But I'll take one guy at the bar (me) over two guys at the bar (me and one other). Sometimes, the second guy turns out to be OK, but there have been a lot of times when he didn't. I mean, a guy alone at a bar is just a loser, right? Except, of course, me.

I did a short bout of Facebooking, then did a walkaround for photos. No worries about any disapproving glances from other patrons, just take my time and click the dang thangs.

The TV over the bar was showing Sports Center, but it was not very compelling -- some football highlights being analyzed by some analysts. Does it bother anyone else that *analyst* begins with *anal*? Like they are talking out their anuses? Just wondering.

The overcast sky wasn't exactly boosting the mood either. Not a real lot of Happy in this Happy Hour. I'm pretty sure Scotty was not happy. I thought about leaping into the pool fully clothed -- ha, shorts and tank and water shoes, fully clothed -- just to mix things up, but then recognized the idiocy of such a thing. Nobody to mix up but me. Scotty probably wouldn't have even looked up.

It's safe to say that I caught this bar at an "off" time, so I polished off my Gling to consummate the Hop and moseyed on. This bar may not have been busy, but it was going to be clean.