



## Bar Hoppin' With Hops

The Keep On Hoppin' Tour  
Hops MacBarley's Ongoing  
Key West Bar Boondoggle

Bar 216:

### **The Other Side**

429 Caroline Street

[www.theothersidekw.com](http://www.theothersidekw.com)

Saturday, June 28, 11:30 PM

*Bacardi & Coke (glass) \$0.00*

So, *this* is why the chicken crossed the road. I knew it had to have a good reason, and what better reason could there be than a new bar? Hey, that's why *I* crossed the damn road.

An alternative exchange here could be: "Why did the chicken cross the hall, Paul?"

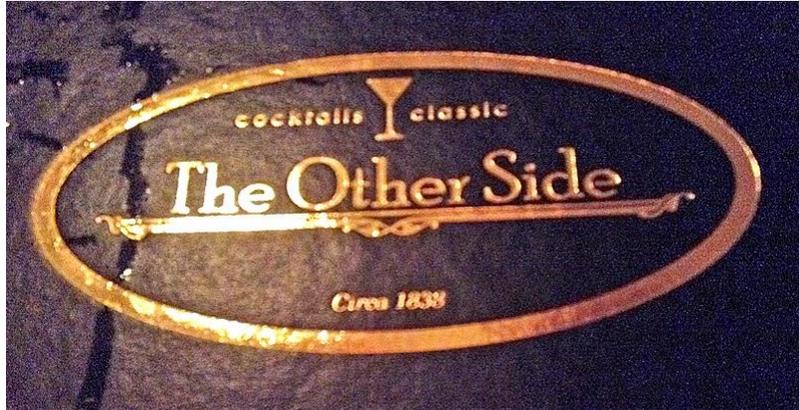
"To get a freaking cocktail, Gail."

That's kind of a pun on chicken and cock, yeah, but it is a legit motive. The Other Side sits on the first floor of the grand Victorian house at the corner of Duval and Caroline Streets. That address should sound familiar because it's the same one used by the very first Hop of them all, The Porch. The entrance doors are directly across the hall from each other, a mere six steps away.

But, while The Porch has made its name with a delicious array of craft beers and fine wines, The Other Side is about booze: classic cocktails, marvelous mixed drinks, and crazy and creative concoctions that will dance all ovah yo minnnd. They will also take a bit of a chomp outa yo wallet, but that's par for the course in K-Dub these days. Gotta keep out us riff-raff.

The bar itself is not immediately obvious when you open that tall wooden door and enter. You look straight ahead and feel like you're walking into Grandma's living room. Look left, though, and the suspended glass rack, hanging lights, and tall bar grab ya. Take a few steps in and look a little more left and the peacock will really grab ya.

That peacock, man, it's a dazzler. It's high up above the shelves of bottles and it just dominates that wall. You sit there at the bar and you can't help but stare at the damn thing, thinking, *Mannn, that is one serious ferkin peacock.*



*If I had a peacock like that, I could rule the damn world.*

Peacock envy aside, this was kind of a sloppy Hop. No fault of TOS, of course; all fault of *moi*-self. No, wait, this was not *all* my fault. I have to wave the blame flag at Hard Rock Cafe (Hop #79). They had a Grand Opening of their new outdoor bar (#214) -- which actually opened for business **forty days ago**. But, in Key West, ya get around to it when ya get around to it.

The party was by VIP Invitation only, and somehow, through some gross error in judgment, I was given one.



Kooky Claire and I hit World of Beer (#101) for a couple of warmer-uppers, then went for the Rock. We arrived at the same time as the Junkaroo Band. Those costumed crazies actually blocked the entrance for a few minutes with their bouncin' and jouncin' and jangling and spangling. 'Twas a merry vibe indeed.

Things got *much* merrier, though, when it became obvious that this shindig was Open Bar. *Ohhhhh-pennnnnn bahhhhhhh, yahhh.* And I did what I often do in such occasions: shun beer and guzzle mixed cocktails. Bacardi-n-Coke was the chosen poison for the evening. Tall and strong and two at a time -- one for me and one

for my imaginary friend Slick Rick, who somehow snuck in behind me (what a freakin' sleaze) -- to avoid the lonnnng wait at the very busy bars. The staff was outnumbered big time but fought gamely to keep the thirsty horde at bay.



Anyway, at 10:30. HRC politely said, *Thanks for coming, now get the fuck out.* Well, Steve and Barb and Evan and I had kinda formed a posse as the evening unfolded (Claire ditched surprisingly early, citing some vague early-morning responsibility, like golf or some other *you're leaving an a Open Bar for **that?** thing.*

Steve made the executive decision that The Drinking Must Continue, and I immediately suggested The Other Side. After a quick explanation of where this brand new bar was, the posse agreed to adjourn thither forthwith. We even said it like that,

or *I* did anyway. They just looked at me in that weird way that I have grown so accustomed to.

So, like good chickens, we crossed the road, and here we were, drunk in pursuit of drunker. I kept the Bacardi train rolling. No idea who picked up the tab on it, probably Steve.

The specialty drink menu here is impressive. The barkeep admitted that some of the drinks can take three-to-five minutes to make. That could be a significant deterrent to service when there's a full house. A foursome orders a variety of those? Ugh, wouldn't want to be behind them in line.

That kind of thing did happen to me when was barkeeping at Uno up in Massachots. We had one -- count' em, *one* -- blender and eight "house specialty" Island Oasis frozen drinks on the board. One hot Summer Sunday afternoon, a group of six young ladies came bouncing in and ordered six different slushies. You can see where this is going. Despite my *I can only--* and their *No hurry, baby--*, they still got disgruntled. Had they been sharing each one six ways, they would have been right on mark, slurrping down the last gurgly slurp on Slush One just as Slush Two was arriving. But no, they all wanted their own.

I was doing these things pretty damn quickly, I thought, but Mixing Time is Mixing Time, drinks don't garnish themselves, the blender pitcher had to be washed out each time before I could begin the next drink, and Tyler had done his usual shitty job of stocking the bar before he dashed out the night before, leaving me scrambling for thawed IO mix, cherries, Hershey's chocolate syrup, and, *of course*, the ever-elusive spoons.



So, it was probably working out to two-to-three minutes per concoction, and by the time the fifth drink was being served, the first one was down and gone, and number six was still only a notion not yet a potion. The chickies got bitchy, blew off the last drink, left their cheerful mood somewhere on the floor, and stormed out. Ahhh, eet vuz doomed from ze start, *mes cheris*.

So, yeah, a five-minute drink might test the patience of a full and thirsty bar.



The Other Side has a "back room" of sorts. It's more like a wide support beam of an erstwhile doorway that stands at the corner of the bar, creating a partial divider. But the walls are different back there, and it has this sort of in-the-know wink-wink sense. You can still sit at the bar there, though, in the big open window, and get the long, behind-the-bar view of the room.

Eventually, you might need to ask, *where's the rest room?* and you're told, *through that door*. So, you go through that door and you're thinking, *WTF? I've been punked* because you're standing outside in the rain (if it's raining, which, well, it wasn't) looking at the

back tables of Caroline's (#36). Hmm. Aha! Caroline's bathrooms are down this alley back here. Got it. When I got back, I caught a look at an Other Side bar tab and saw the name Caroline's across the top. Makes sense now.

I rejoined the posse for some more festive hoo-ha. By now, Kimball had joined the mix and mirth abounded. My sensibility spoke up after B&C number two or three, though (that's number two or three *here*; I won't even attempt to tally the overall), strongly suggesting that I shut the intake valve and move on. I always heed the advice of my sensibility, *as you know*, so I bid my posse-mates a fine good evening, and set out to figure out where the hell I had parked Trekkie The Wonder Bike.