

Bar Hoppin' With Hops

The Keep Calm and Hop On Tour
Hops MacBarley's Ongoing
Key West Bar Boondoggle

Hop #314

I.C. Double's Cocktail Craftery

203 Duval Street
Fri 4/5, 9:00 pm

Lazy Way IPA (draft) \$6?

Well, this was different.

The one-time Lazy Gecko (#2), and erstwhile Duval Central (#283), went retro for this most recent permutation. While #2 dwelt in the Depression Era architecture, and #283 tried to gloss it over, #314 decided to dive into it and bring it back to life. The result is a classy looking place.



You know how I like ceilings. Well, this one is sweet, all coppery with old-style rings, fancy swirlies and very interesting light fixtures. Nice.

The three of us – that would be B&J and I – walked most of the way towards the back and settled onto two stools. Ha, no, *I* stood.

As we were settling, I met Patrick, the owner. He greeted me amiably, clearly glad to have another local in the house. I asked him if he had been in the bar business before, and he replied that he had not, but that it had always been a goal/dream of his. He then boasted about the food that ICD offers, proudly calling it “real food.” That’s a pretty vague description, I have to say. I wondered if cheeseburgers, lasagna, pasta, and chicken salad – my faves – qualified, or if I had been eating unreal, or even surreal, food all these years.

He had some work to do – go figure – so he excused himself. This gave me a chance to give the place a good lookaround. There’s more to a bar than its ceiling, you know.

There's a small alcove beyond the bar – roughly where Back Bay (#180) used to be – that is done up in total Roaring 20's style. And, yes, that is pre-Depression Era, thanks for noticing, but it's also Prohibition era, when boozing in speakeasies was all the rage.



I will never understand how the Volstead Act ever got passed. Did our Representatives and Senators think they were voting for something else, like, maybe, big raises for themselves, and not see the little paragraph at the end? Ya, that little one about the 18th Amendment to the Constitution. You know, where it says you can't drink *booze* anymore?? WTF were they *thinking*?

Well, actually, Prohibition did not prohibit *drinking* booze, but it did make it illegal to make it, transport it, or sell it. However, if you somehow found yourself in possession of it, well, bottoms up, ya lucky bastid.

Anyway, this alcove I alluded to three paragraphs ago had wallpaper and furnishings like you would have found 100 years ago, and a painting of a nude woman that reminded me very much of the artwork at The Strip Bar (#160). The ones there, though, were all backlit images, while this was the more authentic period art.

When the occupants moved on, I strolled over there have a sit and test out the cushions. They weren't bad, though not the deep and luxurious ones like that eat-you-alive chair at Greene Street Cigar Company (#107), or the sink-in-and-stay sofas at 90 Mile Lounge (#104).



From the chair, you get a good-angle view of the entertainment, which, in this case was a solo female singer/guitarist. She, though, just did not match the décor. Clad in short-legged, sleeveless, black spandex, she looked like a new arrival via time machine. She was good singer, and all that, and she did look good in her sleek stretchy threads, but she looked more 2020 than 1920.

A good portion of the crowd couldn't see that anyway, though; they were seated at the bar with their backs to her. I've often wondered how entertainers feel about that. They know, of course, that the normal way to sit at a bar is with your feet on the rail, and your arms resting on the bar, where your drink is. It's abnormal to sit with your back to that bar (and drink), your legs having nothing but the rung of your barstool to rely on for support, and your drink – if you do hold it -- precariously in your hand – all just so you can look at the performer.



When this place was The Lazy Gecko (#2), it was pretty common to have the whole bar crowd facing away from the band, especially if there was a big Sox or B's game on the tellies. But IC Doubles didn't have TVs back there. What video screens there have display very old black-and-white movies. I wondered if they were even color TVs. So, unless you're really into silent movies, you don't have that as your excuse for blowing off the singer.

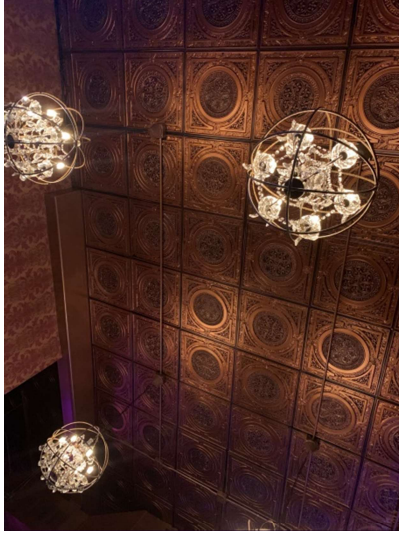
The "I.C." part of the bar's name is a tip of the hat to Island City National Bank, which inhabited this space a century or so ago. There is a large replica of the bank door on

the wall behind the bar, and the original safe sits next to the stage, looking very heavy indeed.

And when you have to hit the head, you have entertainment of another kind in store for you. No, not the stainless steel trough in the men's room (I'm pretty sure there's not one of those in the ladies' room); there are period posters all over the walls of the long hallway that leads you there. You glance at them on the way in, but can take a more leisurely perusal on way back out.

There's a very cool old aerial depiction of K-Dub in 1884, and a bright poster advertising Lady Jean, a sword swallower, with the highlighted boast, "See her





swallow a lighted neon tube.” I bet talents like that made her right popular.

ICD is a definitely different kind of place. It has a good vibe: comfortable and mellow. Here at Ground Zero of KW’s party zone, though, I’m not sure that comfortable-and-mellow is the biggest draw, especially after dark. It’s a nice alternative to the more raucous venues nearby, but most who go to the 200 block are not looking to mellow out. I can’t help thinking that they’d do better elsewhere, but we’ll never know; they are *here*.

Time will tell.

ADDENDUM:
June, 2019

Yup. Time told -- told them to shut the doors. Too mellow, old fellow, I reckon.

I walked by on a few nights and saw good crowds, and even looked in on decidedly un-mellow gatherings, like their KISS Tribute Night, when hard-edged music and face paint were all the rage.



But there are very few local owners these days, and out-of-town investors invest solely to make a profit, not to support a decent business that is finding it hard to make the ridiculous rent.

ICD lasted only a few months before their plug got pulled, even less than their predecessors, Duval Central (#283).

The Gecko is proving to be a very tough act to follow.

LADY JEAN



SEE HER
SWALLOW
A LIGHTED
NEON
TUBE

SWORDS
and
SAWS