

## Bar Hoppin' With Hops

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

Hop #316

### Mermaid Lounge (Lucy's)

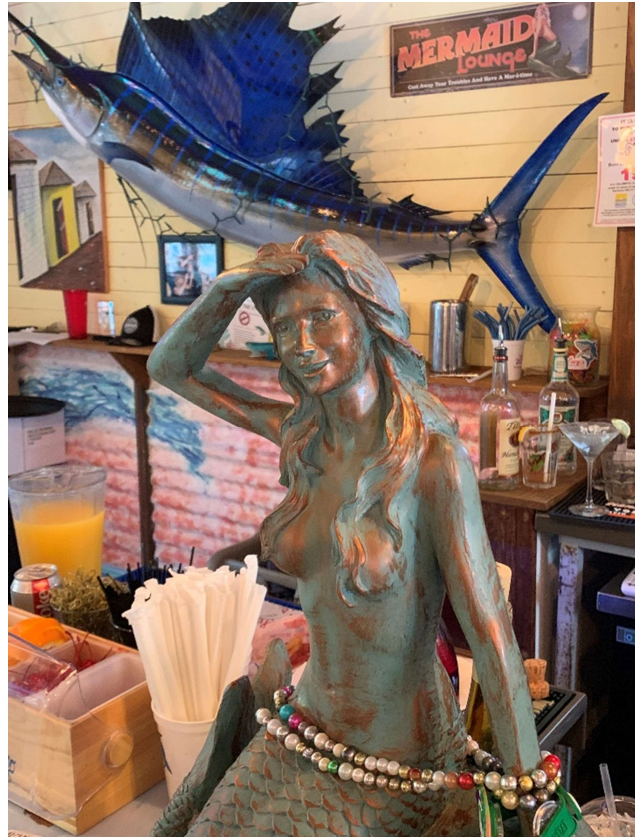
213 Duval Street

Sat 5/4, 12:15 pm

*Whale Tale IPA (draft) \$6*

It was a good decision to allow multiple Hops at one address. Just as Lazy Gecko (#2) and Back Bay (#180) were like two different worlds – though only a doorway apart – Mermaid Lounge is a much different take than Lineup Bar (#303) and the Service Bar (#306).

For one thing, it's bigger than its satellite bars, even though it only boasts a dozen or fewer bar stools. It's a pretty big room, and it overflows without barriers into the entrance hallway and the dining area, making it seem much bigger. Wooden plank walls, wooden beach furniture, curved-board backless stools, a huge blue marlin, a couple of greened-bronze statues, a bunch of surfboards in the rafters, and strings of – for lack of another term – Christmas lights make up the décor.



This was one of the earliest Hops of the first 316, being barely past noon. You probably saw "12:15" above and unconsciously read "AM". Well, I unconsciously typed it that way too. These tours have seen a lot more midnight-hour beers than noon-hour beers.

I rendezvoused with B&J – my usual partners in hoppage – to watch the annual Papio Kinetic Parade, a very entertaining display of vehicles, floats, and sundry contraptions that are propelled by human power only. Key West is at its very best when the locals get to show off their creative skills.

We were a tad early, or the parade was a tad late -- the latter would be in keeping with the "Key West time" concept -- and the sun was beastly hot (noon, go figure), so we looked for a place to hang in the shade for a bit till the parade came into view.

I pointed this way, expecting zealous affirmation, and got a "ya, ok" shrug. Hm. Undaunted, I strode eagerly towards the new Hop. It was pretty jammin' in there. Plenty of other patrons were drawn out for a midday pre-festivities libation. It's good to have a reason, iddinit? I mean, you don't need one, certainly, but if you have one, you feel damn righteous.



So, I was in there with all these righteous sumbitches, standing at the front end of the bar, near the steps down to Service Bar (#306) and the window with a view of the street. I watched a small group gather near the bartender as she set out a handful of glasses, a bottle, and a few foot-long green rubber sharks.



She began a practiced spiel, filling a shark with red liquor and moving it in wavelike motions in time with her tale. I couldn't hear the words, but the gathered group was hanging on every detail, until, with a flourish, she blurted out the climax and tipped the shark forward, gushing the blood-red liquid into the patron's glass. Great mirth ensued, glasses were raised, and shots downed. This was The Shark Attack, a house specialty. In fact, the green rubber sharks are for sale in the gift shop.

I turned to offer to buy Brian a beer, but he was down at the Service Bar buying his own. No Coors Light bottles at Mermaid, I was told. Maybe that was why I had gotten a tepid response when I suggested this bar? Dunno. I still woulda bought him one, but maybe next time.

Things began to stir street-side, so we ventured back out. Great to be able to carry my beer with me. Great also to have such a prime location:



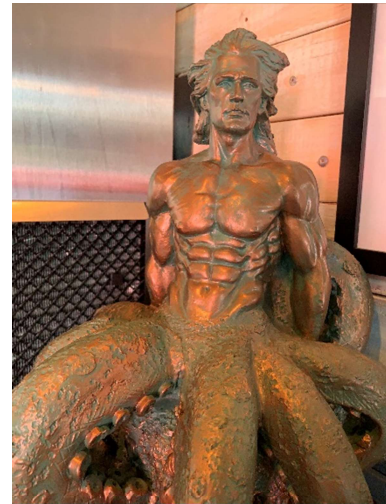


middle of the famed 200 block. What a change from their original remote location at Grinnell and James.

They do have corporate support, with other Lucy's Retired Surfer Bars existing in New Orleans, Biloxi, Aruba, and OWA (a resort near Foley, Alabama), so that helps, especially during the dog days of September.

The parade began! And a very entertaining display it was! Towering bicycles, a man-size hamster wheel, Star Wars walkers, a vivid great giant iguana, and so much more. [See photos at the end of this Hopter.] I really should have run out and poured myself a bev from the rolling keg cart. In all, it lasted about 20 minutes. Not bad at all. It outlasted my beer, in fact.

Thus, when the last gizmo rolled by, I headed back inside, dragging my co-hoppers with me. One of the perils of Key West is the tendency to get the ball rolling too early. A couple of beers at lunch can easily lead to a few while you watch the game, followed by a Happy Hour, followed by some live music somewhere. Twelve hours, twelve beers, and \$120 later, you turn into a conch fritter at midnight.



That was NOT going to happen here and now. We all had stuff to do, but it just seemed to me that the stuff would be more enjoyable to do with a second beer in me. It's pretty rare to have the day's Hopping finished by 1:30 PM.

### The Papio Kinetic Parade







