

Bar Hoppin' With Hops

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

Hop #327

Tipsy Rooster Liquor Store & Bar

1325 Simonton Street

Saturday, December 14, 2019, 7 PM

Founder's Day IPA (can > cup) \$6.50

Third time is a charm? Define charm. I had walked past this combination packy and bar twice already and had declined it both times. I knew it would be getting hopped, don't misunderstand me, but I wanted the right circumstances.



This a bar tour, after all, so the goal is to sit at the bar. This can be a challenge at the smallest ones. For instance, at Café Sole (#118), B&J



entered a minute before me, sat at the empty bar, and I, being the next person to walk in, found the bar full. The CS bar has only two seats. So, I stood. It still counted.

So, it is not *required* that I *sit* at the bar – I can stand, as long as the barkeep hands me my beer. Sitting at a table, with a server serving me, does not qualify, though. That's a dang restaurant yer at, mate, not a bahh.

Of course, Tipsy Rooster is also a liquor store, or a "packy" as they were called in New England. "Packy" is short for "package store" -- you know, a

place where you can buy a package of alcohol. I know, it didn't make sense to us either, but you have to admit that "packy" is a pretty cool word to throw around when you're looking to get some beers.

I was 15 the first time I bought at a packy. It was in Wolcott Square in Reedville, which was a neighborhood of Hyde Park, a mostly-urban section on the south side of Boston. HP was definitely no suburb, but it was the last onion layer of city before the suburban sprawl began.

Anyway, it was total joke that the kids I was with chose me to make the buy. Bruce – yeah, that's right, Mike's older brother, good call – was driving



the shy-blue Oldsmobile, and he was the oldest. The other four of us did have licenses yet. Mike and Bobby and Wally had all made their scores here on previous occasions; I was the lone virgin in the vehicle. As per their coaching, I walked in and went directly to the cooler, as if I had done so every day since my First Holy Communion, confidently grabbed a case of Carling Black Labels (brewed on the shores of nearby Lake Cochituate), carried it up the aisle, and placed it and seven bucks on the counter, never making eye contact with the clerk. He rang up my \$6.60 with no qualms, thanked me blandly as he handed over my 40¢ change, and I wordlessly departed.

What a joke. The drinking age was 18 then, but no way in hell did I look even close to that. Plus, I was still only about 5'2" tall, so I had to heft up the suitcase to put it on the chest-high counter.

I didn't foresee any problems here at the Rooster, though. My fly-bys were more scouting missions than anything. TR has only four stools, and two of those are kinda on the half-line where the open window sticks right out at you. They are usable, yeah, but the primo stools are the middle two. And to do the Hop right, I wanted to lay claim to one of those, park myself right in the middle of the purveyor's window and enjoy my frosty beverage.

But, yeah, as you can guess, that's what everyone else wants to do too.

On the first pass, a scruffy local was more-or-less sprawled across the whole window. He was seated, yes, but was slumped forward like a melted candle and his long arms were flopped out to both sides. In theory, one of the primo seats was vacant, but I just didn't think I wanted to risk the conversation that might ensue. So onward I went.

A half-hour later, he was still there. Bah. Move along, Hops, nothing to see here, yet.

So, I went and had "dinner", if you can call a cardboard basket of chips with liquid cheese dip, a plate of lukewarm sauce-less wings, and a plastic cup of IPA "dinner." It tallied up to \$32.25, plus tip, so I reckon it cost dinner-cost. The GC I had earned by cozying up to the flag on #7 better than all the other golfers did – all \$25 of it – softened the blow, but still. Ten bucks for a plastic cup of beer. Twenty ounces, OK. IPA, OK. Ten bucks, no-K.



By the time I was done there (SoMo Beach Café, #99), darkness had descended on the southernmost city on this balmy late-autumn evening. The walk over to Tipsy Rooster was quiet and pleasant. From a distance, I could see one dark-shirted patron sitting on one of The Choice Stools. No sign of Slouchman. It looked like my timing was just right, so I strode with eagerness up to the window. Only when I got right to that open stool, did I see the keys, cigarette pack, and beer bottle. Rat farts. Someone had gone to the head and had left his hosey on the bar.

Well, darn my luck. Ya can't argue with a hosey.

So, when the dark-haired woman inside gave me an emotionless and wordless look, I stood there and brightly and politely asked for a draught IPA.

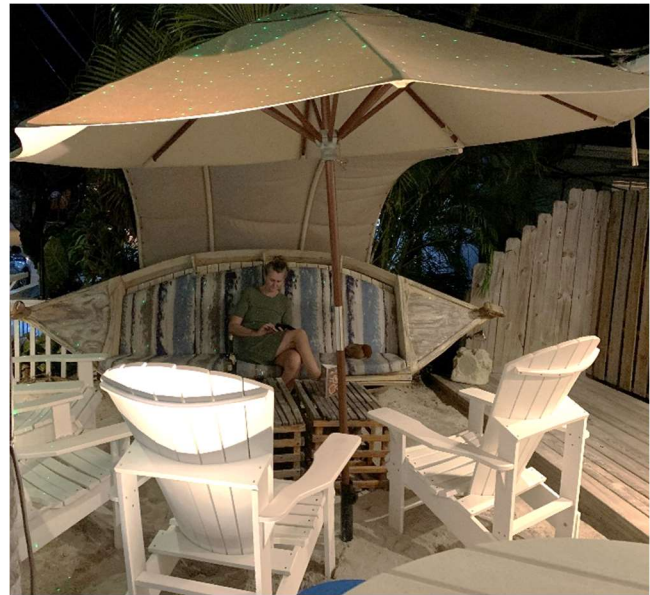


She was not in a good mood. She was in a *dark* mood. Maybe her extended interaction with Slouchman had robbed her of her soul. Whatever it was, my bright-and-polite was not what she wanted to hear. With an audible sigh, she asked, "What kind??"

I asked, "What do you have?" but quickly, seeing the ire rise in her eyes at having to actually rattle off her selections, I headed her off with a less bright and not quite as polite, "Gimme a Founder's Day."

She poured it and set it on the counter. "Six-fifty."

I fanned out a five and three ones on the counter and thanked her. She whisked the cash off the bar without a word and turned back to whatever she had been doing. Writing a suicide note, perhaps. Ha. Just kidding. We all have bad nights. It just sucks extra when you're at work, because being at work kind of automatically makes it a bad night anyway.



I shrugged and took a few steps to one of the vacant tables in the sand yard. They can seat a lot of people here! I guess I never paid attention to that part because my focus was always on The Two Stools. There are four four-top tables, all with large umbrellas, and a side area with four big white wooden loungy chairs around two wooden-crate-tables and a strange-but-cool couch shaped like a tipped boat.

In addition to all that, there are a couple of, um, strange seats that have rooster legs and tall wooden tail-feathers. I guess those would be the cock-tail chairs. Har har har. Ohhh my...