

# The Beer Connoisseur

**JOHN  
McDONALD**  
*On KC's Boulevard*

**A Classic Romance**  
*Artisanal Pizza & Beer*

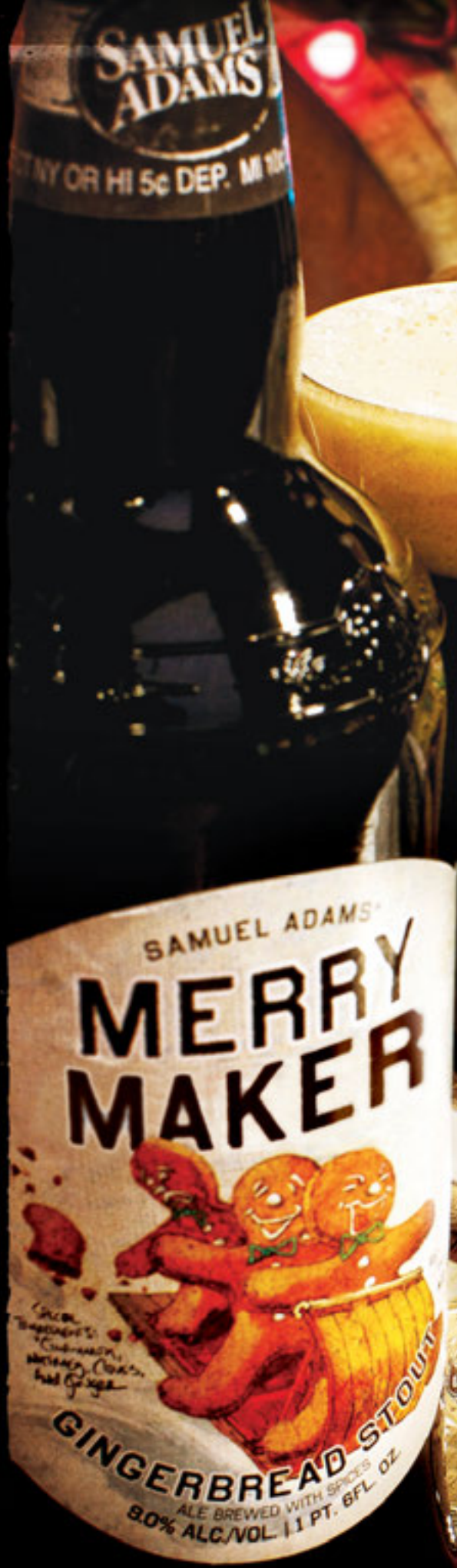
**Pilsner Urquell**  
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Issue 14, Fall 2013



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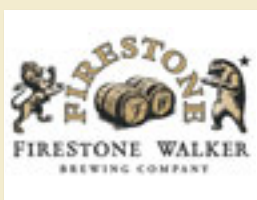
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Issue 14, Fall 2013

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Issue 6 cover featuring Michael Jackson.

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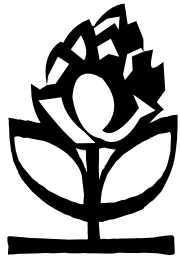
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# CONTENTS

*The Beer Connoisseur*® / Issue 14, Fall 2013

10 / Editor's Note

11 / Contributors

12 / News & Calendar

## FIRST RUNNINGS

### 18 / Innovators Series

We talk with John McDonald about the roads he followed whenever he asked what could be done to make a better beer? The former cabinet maker is a true craftsman who combined with Belgian Stephen Pauwels to create a distinctive wheat beer newly emblematic of the Midwest.

### 28 / The Traveling Connoisseur

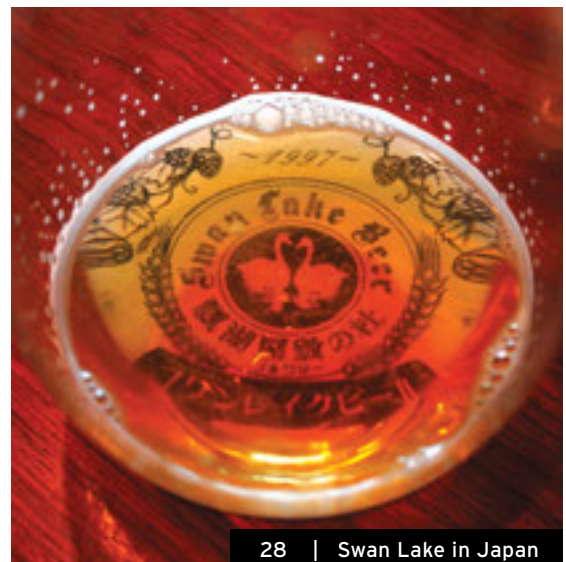
A change in the laws of Japan made craft beer a new possibility. The various locales of the islands provide a rich tapestry when it comes to ingredients for hand-made brews, including cherry blossoms.

### 36 / The Allure of Pizza and Beer

Looking for some aroma therapy? Try matching your favorite pizza with a transcendently delicious beer. We have some surprising pie combinations and the beers to match. Our guide Owen Ogletree leads the way.



18 | KC's Brewing Duo



28 | Swan Lake in Japan



50 | A Double Dose of Hops

## FEATURES

- 12 / News  
Brewers aid Colorado flood victims.
- 14 / Style Studies  
Bottoms up for Münchner Dunkel and Leipziger Gose.
- 72 / Connoisseur's Corner  
Is your attorney beer-worthy?



36 | Artful Pies, Stylish Beers

## FOOD & TRAVEL

- 46 / Restaurant Spotlight: The Pub at Monte Carlo  
Check out the longest beer list on the Las Vegas Strip.
- 69 / Brewery Tour: Jester King Brewing  
The best little brew house in Texas goes wild – with yeast.
- 71 / Brewery Tour: St. Louis Brewing  
When it comes to Schlafly, say it 'Shh-laff-lee.'

## REVIEWS

- 50 / The Road to Hoppiness...  
...is often paved with a variety of beers.

## EUROPEAN REPORT

- 60 / In addition to the news from Belgium, the Czech Republic, Germany and the U.K., there's a look at the beer from Pilsen that changed beer. We also meet the Aspalls, the 'cyder' family of England.



71 | St. Louis Brews

# From the Editor



Hoisting one of Kevin McNerney's creations with the brewer himself.

There are occasions when a journalist's job is not complicated. You ask a lot of people the same question – and then sort the answers.

Here's a question that's been asked a lot recently – by business magazines, major newspapers and even National Public Radio. How big can craft beer get?

A significant follow-up question comes from Peter Bouckaert, head brewer at New Belgium Brewing Company. "What is craft?" he replied when I asked him about how big the flavorful beer segment can become.

The Ft. Collins brewery where Bouckaert works may be the third biggest craft beer maker on the Brewers Association list, but it's not necessarily the largest in the state of Colorado. The biggest would be Tenth and Blake Beer Company, brewers of the Blue Moon brand.

A Belgian and the former head brewer at Rodenbach, Bouckaert knows that Blue Moon is a flavorful beer well executed in the Belgian witbier style. Hence his question – what is craft? Is it about volume of beer made, who produced it, or taste? Bouckaert poses the not-so-rhetorical question because he believes the craft brewers on the BA's list cannot take market share for granted.

If the answer to his question is flavorful beer, then there's a good chance that craft can eventually get to a 30 percent share of the American beer market over the coming years, especially if the up-and-coming millennial generation embraces it. And it also seems certain to happen if the number of new breweries, most of which are on the scale of brewpubs, continues to climb.

It really becomes a no brainer that the flavorful beer market share will reach 30 percent of the over-all market if major brewers like MillerCoors, which owns the Blue Moon brand, and A-B InBev, now producing the Kona and Goose Island brand of beers among others,

continue to make inroads. These brands, of course, are excluded from the Brewers Association's self-described list of craft beers, because owners MillerCoors and A-B InBev produce large volumes of beer. The BA, by contrast, represents small and independent brewers.

One of the more intriguing answers we got to the question of how big craft beer can get came from Ron Extract, one of the partners at Jester King, a small brewer by any standard, but especially in its home state of Texas. He summed up the dichotomy of big and small in the craft beer market.

"I don't see why craft beer can't reach 15 to 20 to 30 percent of the beer market," said Extract. "Here's the question. Will that market share be controlled by industrial brewers? Yes, it probably will."

"The key stats with craft beer," he continued, "is how much of it is produced by brewers making less than five thousand barrels a year. And how much is sold within 300 miles of where it's made."

If you want to see flavorful beer continue to evolve, there you have an answer that goes down easy. Think and drink local, because the brewery nearest your home is most likely nimble enough to constantly introduce fresh and creative beers.

Judging by the number of smaller brewers who were medal winners at the Great American Beer Festival, that process continues to go well. But make no mistake when it comes to size. It's what's in the glass that really counts.

\*\*\*\*\*

In our effort to craft content in our Atlanta offices that will keep even the most experienced beer drinker engaged, in this issue we have reached out to local, national and international sources.

Owen Ogletree, who hails from nearby Athens, Georgia, lends his expertise in food and beer to the question of what makes pizza a perfect match for flavorful brews? Writer Jim Pedley traveled across town – his place of residence being Kansas City – to get the lowdown on why people in the Midwest and now other regions are so keen on the beers of Boulevard.

We then went across our northern border to Montreal-based Martin Thibault, a connoisseur who believes in getting down to the last ingredient whenever he visits a country with intriguing beer makers. In this issue, the readers can travel with him as he discovers a whole new concept of farm to table in Japan.

In addition to a brewery tour in Texas at Jester King, yours truly went down the road and across the street to 5 Seasons Brewing at the Prado to chat with head brewer Kevin McNerney about recent developments in craft brewing. Not surprisingly, his place of work was recently listed among Atlanta's best beer bars by Atlanta Magazine, because Kevin's small batch creations are unsurpassed for body, structure, mouthfeel and flavor.

As we said, thinking and drinking local is often a rewarding experience for beer connoisseurs – wherever your travels may take you. 🍷

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jonathan Ingram".

**About...** A longtime beer enthusiast from the Washington, D.C. area, Jonathan's writing career began in newspapers before Ingram Publishing was established in Atlanta in 1983. He moved from publishing specialty magazines into freelance writing full time 20 years ago and since then has written six books, including biographies of Dale Earnhardt and Danica Patrick. Jonathan's by-line has appeared in Sports Illustrated, The New York Times and The Washington Post among over 100 other publications and websites worldwide.

# CONTRIBUTORS



## Bob Barnes

(Page 46) A native Las Vegas, Bob is the editorial director of The Las Vegas Food & Beverage Professional and has been a regional correspondent for Celebrator Beer News since 1998. He also covers the Vegas restaurant scene for Gayot.com and has been published numerous times in Nevada Magazine. He can be reached at Bob@lvfnb.com.



## Owen Ogletree

(Pages 36 and 52) The founder of the popular Classic City Brew Fest held in Athens, Georgia each spring, Owen runs ClassicCityBrew.com and writes often for Athens Magazine and the bimonthly Southern Brew News.



## Shawn Connelly

(Page 14) Shawn lives in southern Illinois, is the founder of both BeerPhilosopher.com and Aleuminati.com – a beer social networking site – and serves as a retail consultant and host for craft beer events.



## Jim Pedley

(Page 18) A Wisconsin native, Jim once lived within walking distance of the Miller, Pabst and Schlitz breweries in Milwaukee. A veteran journalist, he has worked at the Boston Globe, Fort Worth Star-Telegram and the Kansas City Star. He is the founder and managing editor of RacinToday.com.



## Phil Farrell

(Page 71) Phil has circled the globe many times educating his beer palate over the last 35 years. A resident of Atlanta, he is one of only a few dozen BJCP Grand Master beer judges in the world and serves as the BJCP's South region representative.



## Carolyn Smagalski

(Page 72) A frequent contributor, Carolyn won the Brewers Association's Beer Journalism Award in 2006 for her work on the website BellaOnline, where she is known as "the Beer Fox."



## Charlie Gow

(Page 50) Charlie is a Beer Judge Certification Program Associate Exam Director and a National Judge. Charlie has been brewing for close to two decades and now calls Fairfax, Virginia home.



## Martin Thibault

(Page 28) A world traveler in pursuit of food and beer, Martin co-authored La Route des Grands Crus de la Bière, a gold medal winner at the Canadian Culinary Book Awards. A second book is under way and will showcase beer's vast flavor spectrum and pairing these flavors to different foods.



## BREWERS RESPOND WITH FLOOD RELIEF

**T**he deadly flooding along the South Platte River in September temporarily slowed down some of the multitude of craft brewers along the Front Range of the Colorado Rockies. But soon after the flood waters resided, many of these same brewers were hosting or promoting fund raisers to help those among the more than 16,000 whose homes were damaged, including more than 1,800 homes that were destroyed.

Much of the slowdown in the brewing business resulted from 200 miles of roadways and 50 bridges destroyed in the 17 counties affected, a count reported by the state's Office of Emergency Management. Those conditions discouraged brewers from bringing in workers or from opening tasting rooms.

"One thing about craft brewers, as we know, is they help each other out in good times and times of hardship," said Paul Gatza, director of the Brewers Association headquartered in Denver, which experienced some of the flooding. "So I think we'll see some creative, collaborative solutions to individual difficulties."

Among those that avoided damage despite being near the flooding was Left Hand Brewing Company in Longmont, Colorado, where employees used bags of malt to help block water at entranceways. The neighborhoods around the brewery were evacuated from Sept. 12 to Sept. 16, but ultimately the brewery stayed dry even though it was surrounded by mud, in part because it was built according to flood plain maps.

On higher ground in Longmont, the Oskar Blues Brewery's production facility also avoided damage. The same was true for its brewpub in Lyons.

Families of brewery workers, however, were among those who experienced some of

BY JONATHAN INGRAM

the massive devastation that literally wiped out some towns and homes, particularly in the hard hit cities of Longmont, Boulder and Loveland. Left Hand turned its Longmont Oktoberfest into a relief effort. The "Oskar Blues CAN'd Aid Foundation" launched by Oskar Blues founder Dale Katechis last year, also joined the relief effort.

In Loveland, Grimm Brothers Brewhouse & Tap Room hosted a re-located Oktoberfest where four other local breweries contributed to the relief effort along with support from four of Colorado's best known beer brands – Great Divide, Breckenridge, Odell and Epic.

Avery Brewing Company hosted The Great Rumpkin Raffle benefitting the Foothills Flood Relief Fund to help those in Boulder and Broomfield Counties. Another effort typical of the response from brewers was made by Star Bar in Denver, where the majority of Front Range brewers contributed to the fund raiser for flood relief.

## CRAFT CONTINUES UPWARD GROWTH

**T**he mid-year report of the Brewer's Association showed that craft beer continued to grow in terms of dollar sales and volume in the first half of 2013. The report showed that sales and volume increased by 15 percent. During the same period last year the growth reported was 14 percent in dollar sales and 12 percent for volume.

The increase comes at a time when the over-all consumption of beer is decreasing, indicating that the craft category is gaining market share over traditional style American beers, primarily lagers.

Approximately 7.3 million barrels of beer were sold by small and independent craft brewers, up from 6.4 million barrels over the first half of 2012. The BA defines craft brewers as being independent and small with less than 25 percent ownership by a brewer producing more than six million barrels of beer per year.

Though the growth figures exclude beers such as ales produced by major brewers, the report confirms the trend away from standard lagers. That growth is coupled with a boom in the number of small breweries.

"Demand for beer produced by small and independent brewers has never been higher, as evidenced by increased production and the hundreds of new breweries joining the playing field each year," said Paul Gatza, director of the Brewers Association. "Beer drinkers nationwide are responding positively to high-quality, full-flavored, diverse offerings from American craft brewing companies that continue to innovate and push the envelope."

There are 2,538 breweries operating in the U.S. as of June 30, 2013, an increase of 446 breweries since June 2012. The BA also lists an additional 1,605 breweries in planning at midyear, compared to 1,252 a year ago.

As of June 30, 2013, the count of small and independent breweries was at 2,483, showing that 98 percent of U.S. brewers produce less than six million barrels annually. Small brewers currently employ an estimated 108,440 full-time and part-time workers, many of which are manufacturing jobs, contributing significantly to the U.S. economy.

"More breweries are currently operating in the U.S. than at any time since the 1870s," Gatza added. "With each new brewery opening, American craft brewers are reinforcing the U.S.'s position as the world's most diverse brewing nation. It's a very good time to be an American beer lover." 🍷

# CALENDAR

Visit [www.beerconnoisseur.com/calendar](http://www.beerconnoisseur.com/calendar) for a complete listing of events!

## NOVEMBER

**8-10:** International Beer Fest, Cleveland, OH  
[www.ixbeerfest.com](http://www.ixbeerfest.com)

**9:** Brew Your Cask Off, Atlanta, GA  
[www.brewyourcaskoff.com](http://www.brewyourcaskoff.com)

**9:** Boulder IPA Fest, Boulder, CO  
[www.boulderipafest.eventbrite.com](http://www.boulderipafest.eventbrite.com)

**9-16:** Houston Beer Week, Houston, TX  
[www.houstonbeerweek.com](http://www.houstonbeerweek.com)

**16:** Festival of Wood and Barrel Aged Beer, Chicago, IL  
[www.illinoisbeer.com/fobab](http://www.illinoisbeer.com/fobab)

**16:** Treasure Coast Beer Fest, Port St. Lucie, FL  
[www.treasurecoastbeerfest.com](http://www.treasurecoastbeerfest.com)

**16:** Inaugural Bayou Beer Fest, Houma, LA  
[www.bayoubeerfest.com](http://www.bayoubeerfest.com)

**16:** The Ponce De Leon Beer Fest, Atlanta, GA  
[www.theponcedeleonbeerfestival.com](http://www.theponcedeleonbeerfestival.com)

**21-23:** Grand Rapids International Wine, Beer & Food Festival, Grand Rapids, MI  
[www.showspan.com/GRW/Home.aspx](http://www.showspan.com/GRW/Home.aspx)

**23:** Philadelphia Winter Beer Festival, Philadelphia, PA  
[www.winterbeerfest.com](http://www.winterbeerfest.com)

## DECEMBER

**4:** Holiday Ale Festival, Portland, OR  
[www.2holidayale.com](http://www.2holidayale.com)

**7:** Valley Forge Beer Festival, Oaks, PA  
[www.valleyforgebeerfest.com](http://www.valleyforgebeerfest.com)

**7:** Smugglers' Notch Brewfest, Part 1, Jeffersonville, VT  
[www.smuggs.com/pages/winter/skiride/winter-events.php.com](http://www.smuggs.com/pages/winter/skiride/winter-events.php.com)

**13:** Friday the Firkinteenth, Philadelphia, PA  
[www.greyloodge.com/fri13th.html](http://www.greyloodge.com/fri13th.html)

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# Style Studies

In this issue, Shawn uncovers the story behind Münchner Dunkel and Leipzig-style Gose, two German beers deep in history. Although one tends to think of a dark beer as more suited to fall and winter or a tart beer rife with wheat as summer fare, these two styles remain popular in part because they are so portable across different seasons.

When it comes to **Dunkel**, it's nice to have something dark that's not a brown, a porter or a stout, yet is predictably rich and flavorful. As for **Leipzig-style Gose**, there's nothing quite like a very distinctive and flavorful brew that's so different yet still very

beer-like. Gose has long been one of our favorite styles to write about and is increasingly available – such as the excellent example from Westbrook Brewing Company out of South Carolina.

Interestingly, the Dunkel style in Germany adheres fiercely to the Bavarian-born Reinheitsgebot in its most pure form while the Leipzig-style Gose manages to include additions of salt, coriander and lactobacillus. Read on to find out more about how these two classics differ – and reflect the locales from whence they came.

*Cheers!*



## Münchner Dunkel

When the beer purity law, which would come to be known as the Reinheitsgebot, was adopted in Bavaria in 1516, the intent was to preserve the use of traditional ingredients in beer-making and protect Bavarian brewing heritage from the use of adjuncts. This decree established barley, hops, water and, later, yeast, as the constituents in beer. Beer classification, in terms of styles, wasn't an issue. Lagering had become common practice in Bavaria and conditioning beer in ice-filled caves for long periods produced smooth, clean beer and avoided the spoilage that often occurred during the hottest months of the year. Although the bottom-fermenting *Saccharomyces pastorianus* yeast strain wouldn't be formally identified for another 300 years or so, the famous Bavarian "lager" yeast, capable of fermenting beer at cold temperatures, gave birth to dunkel, the formative beer style under the Reinheitsgebot.

The word dunkel simply means "dark" and these dark beers of Bavaria were pervasive at the time, particularly around Munich. Until the late 19th century, when advanced kilning technologies allowed pale malts to be produced and used in brewing, all beers were somewhat dark and smoky in character. Because of this, early "dunkel" beers were

more of a broad categorization than a narrowly-defined style, which wouldn't be necessitated until after the onset of the helles ("pale") lager. Originally, dunkel was brewed using exclusively dark well-kilned malts, but most modern iterations employ the use of both Munich malt and some pale malts in the grist. Occasionally, small amounts of specialty malts, like caramel or chocolate, are used to further enhance body and color, but are not traditional. Noble hops, such as Hallertau, and classic Bavarian lager yeast are obligatory to the style.

Probably the most distinctive characteristic of the dunkel style isn't an ingredient at all, but rather a traditional mashing technique called decoction mashing. In a nutshell, decoction mashing involves the removal and boiling of a portion of the wort (pre-fermented beer) from the mash tun in order to concentrate color and flavor. Traditionally this was repeated at three intervals to increase the mash to very specific temperatures, or rests, to facilitate enzymatic conversion of the malt. The result is intensely rich, malty wort with complexity of flavor that, it is believed, cannot be achieved through simpler, less labor-intensive mashing techniques. Since the development of a myriad of well-converted specialty malts, however, much of the same result can be achieved without



this difficult process and it is becoming much less common.

The classic Münchner lager ranges from medium copper to deep brown in color and often exemplifies a ruddy hue in the light. The head is soft tan and not overly voluminous. Generally, dunkel will have very good clarity, although some unfiltered examples exist. On the nose, expect a bready malt character accentuated by notes of sweet caramel and nutty toffee. Noble hops play only a supporting role in this style and should never be a prominent aroma component. A clean, lager fermentation leaves no fruit esters in the nose. The palate is all about rich caramel-like flavors from the Munich malt and melanoidin compounds produced by the traditional decoction mash and/or use of specially-modified malts. Over all, this lager favors a sweet character, but should never come across as cloying. Despite its deep color, the style should never present roasted or burnt characteristics, although some subtle toasty notes are common. In the mouth, dunkel should possess a substantial body, without being thick, and finish cleanly with lingering maltiness and just enough hop bitterness to offset the sweet malt. Being a lager beer, dunkel is smooth, clean and even refreshing despite its dark demeanor, making it a year-round favorite with a wide appeal and versatility that is second to none.

As far as food pairings are concerned, dunkel naturally fits exceptionally well with Bavarian fare such as wurst, kraut and knödel, but the mild sweetness of the beer is also a terrific counterbalance to spicy Asian or Mexican food, roasted meats or even a good old American burger.

## Leipzig-Style Gose

I have a good friend who is a light beer drinker by default. He is known to imbibe in the occasional craft beer or two, but inevitably goes back to the pale, fizzy lager in a can. Funny thing is, he decants (or de-cans?) the beer into a glass and methodically adds a dash or two of table salt. I've long decried this practice, but on one fateful occasion he persuaded me to give his salt-infused lager a try. I had to admit the salt actually made the notoriously insipid, flavor-challenged beer somewhat more palatable and, dare I say, complex. Who knew?

And who knew that the practice of adding salt to beer isn't so novel after all. The Germans, apparently. Goslar, in Lower Saxony, is the original birthplace of a unique beer that dates back to the 16th century and shares some

commonalities with another German original, the Berliner Weisse, as well as several of the wheat-based ales of Belgium. Gose (pronounced "goes-uh") is traditionally brewed with a grist of sixty-percent unmalted wheat and forty-percent barley with the occasional modicum of oats thrown in for good measure. Noble hops and German ale yeast are requisite. Nothing out of the ordinary there and, if I were to go on to explain the ale was traditionally fermented with yeast and lactobacillus bacteria, via spontaneous fermentation, one might think the difference between gose and Berlin's Weisse is merely one of geography.

The same might be said for a comparison of gose to the witbier of the Flemish region of Belgium since gose is also spiced with coriander. So what makes this ale unique and why

*One of the first breweries to produce a traditional gose in Leipzig, in the modern era, was Gosebrauerei Bayerischer Bahnhof – a small brewery opened in 1990 that is housed in a train station that dates back to 1842.*

does the Brewers Association call the beer "Leipzig-style" if it was conceived in Goslar? Good questions, all, and the answer to both are interrelated. The unique ingredient in gose, which I have already alluded to, is salt, and the groundwater supply in Goslar possessed a natural salinity from the ore and mineral-rich mountains of Harz, creating a unique flavor profile. As the popularity of the beer spread to the nearby city of Leipzig, and the mines were eventually depleted, the practice of brewing gose gradually centered in Leipzig and ceased altogether in Goslar. In time, gose would be brewed in the "traditional style" in Leipzig but additions of salt, cultured yeast strains and lactic acid or acidulated malt would replace the naturally-derived sources. By the mid-1700s, and through the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Gose production was thriving.

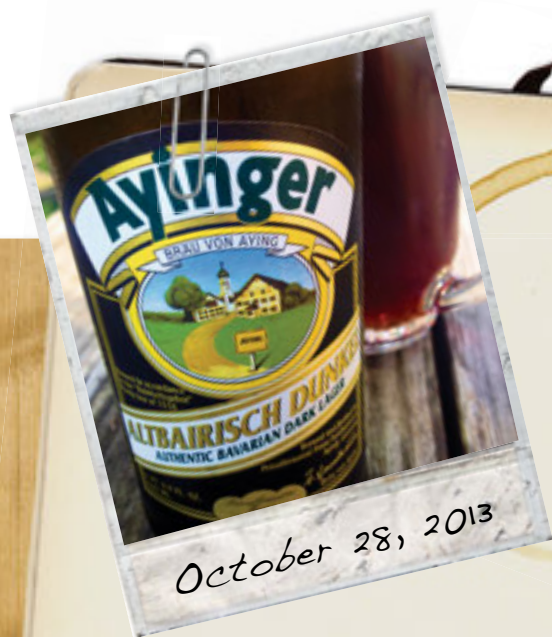
The beer style was practically lost to history, however, after the physical and political impact of World War II and the subsequent Cold War era in East Germany. Only after the reunification in 1989 did brewers once again have the freedom to produce this long-loved and long-lost ale style. One of the first breweries to produce a traditional gose in Leipzig, in the modern era, was Gosebrauerei Bayerischer Bahnhof – a small

brewery opened in 1990 that is housed in a train station that dates back to 1842. Their Leipziger Gose is one of the few German-made examples available in the U.S. and bottled in a traditional long-neck, round bottle which is easy to spot but still rather hard to find outside of the occasional specialty beer retailer. Several American craft brewers have tried their hand at reproducing this rare style in recent years as well, with The Boston Beer Company (Samuel Adams) being the most ubiquitous with their small batch gose, Verloren (“lost”).

In the glass, which is traditionally a stange (German for “stick,” a narrow, cylindrical glass which is commonly associated with Kölsch), expect gose to pour a medium gold to pale amber color and produce a billowy, tan-white head with plenty of staying power from the high protein content of the unmalted wheat. The beer is typically cloudy and displays very active carbonation in the glass. On the nose, little to no hop aromas should be evident and subtle grainy notes, along with spicy coriander, should be the most prominent

elements. Unlike Bavarian ales, don’t expect pronounced fruit esters, but rather a clean, slightly spicy nose. The flavor profile is where gose really distinguishes itself as a unique world beer style. Look for a very crisp, clean wheat ale with no perceptible hop bitterness or flavor, but rather a mild lactic tartness, lingering spiciness, restrained citrus flavors and surprising saltiness that is quenching more than off-putting. The salt also adds to the perception of a fuller body and lingers long into the finish. Gose is effervescent and lively, yet substantial and imminently drinkable. The addition of salt encourages the next sip and, thankfully, at a moderate ABV, why not?

For food pairings, gose can be treated much like its cousins, the weissbier or wit, but its residual saltiness and full body can stand up to a somewhat wider range of foods than either of these. Try one with goat’s milk cheeses, mixed green salad, white fish or herbed chicken or a classic cheesecake for a sweet and salty treat. 🍷



October 28, 2013

### Münchner Dunkel

Stats - O.G: 1.048 - 1.056, IBUs: 16 to 25, SRM: 15 to 20, ABV: 4.5 - 5%

Commercial Examples: Ayinger Altbairisch Dunkel, König Ludwig Dunkel, Harpoon Dark, Lakefront Eastside Dark.



October 30, 2013

### Leipzig-style Gose

Stats - O.G: 1.036 to 1.056, IBUs: 10 to 15, SRM: 3 to 9, ABV: 4.4 - 5.4%

Commercial Examples: Gasthaus & Gosebrauerei Bayerischer Bahnhof Leipzig Gose, Brauhaus Hartmannsdorf GmbH Döllnitzer Ritterguts Gose, Boston Beer Company (Samuel Adams) Verloren, Upright Brewing Gose, Westbrook Brewing Company Gose.

\* FALL~WINTER \*

# MONTAGE

12 BOTTLES - 3 OF EACH



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## \* FALL-WINTER \* MONTAGE

12 | 3 EACH  
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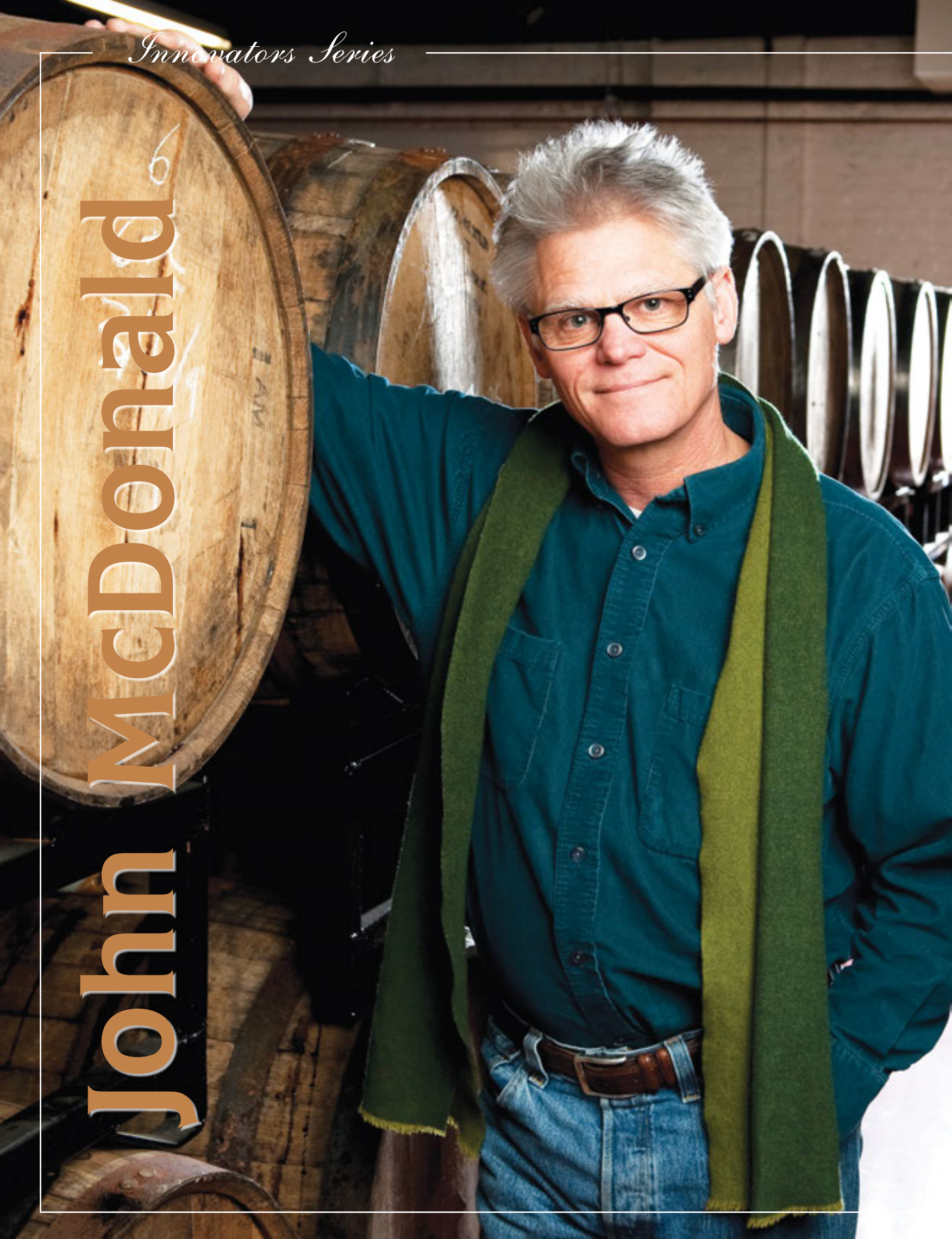


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*Innovators Series*

# John McDonald





# On a Boulevard of Bottle-Conditioned Dreams

By Jim Pedley

**J**ohn McDonald seemed kind of amused and bewildered when informed that an interview with *The Beer Connoisseur* was going to focus on innovation in craft brewing at the regional level. “Well, um, OK... sure,” said the founder and president of Boulevard Brewing Company.

But when questions started flying at him from right, left and center field about his brewery, the thin, elegantly graying owner of the Kansas City beer maker dispensed answers that proved he was the perfect authority to talk about innovation in medium-scale brewing.

Somewhere about the midpoint of the hour-long chat, McDonald – seemingly without realizing it – encapsulated the entire subject of innovation at Boulevard with one short sentence.

“Our aim has always been to make absolutely world class beer,” he said. “So anything that would make our beer better, we would go down that road.”

Twenty-five years ago, McDonald set up in downtown Kansas City in an old brick factory that had been converted into a warehouse and then a carpentry shop. Since then, a gigantic maze of roads have weaved their way in, out and around what has become the heartland’s

largest specialty brewery, one whose beers are wildly popular locally.

There are roads that have taken Boulevard across watery oceans and into the less tangible ionosphere of original thinking. All along those roads, McDonald’s beers have caught on with consistently happy brewing competition judges and a legion of ardently loyal customers, especially in Kansas City, which consumes 40 percent of the brewery’s output.

## Midwestern Philosophy

McDonald’s philosophy on the topic of brewing was developed years before the brewery opened. And a non-traditional brewing philosophy it was.

“My background was in fine arts and then I was a cabinet maker for 15 years and I loved beer and home brewing and started the brewery. The brewing is a result, I think, of being curious. The more I learned about beer, the more I applied all the other things I’ve learned in my life to making beer.”

Early on, it was that curiosity which led McDonald to a couple of discoveries in his personal journey through the beer universe that have become Boulevard signatures.

The first of those was bottle conditioning – where instead of artificially carbonating the beer, yeast



McDonald was an early convert to bottle conditioning for 'flavor stability and shelf life'.

is allowed to naturally carbonate the beer in the bottle after fermentation is complete. The process is anything but new. But it is also anything but standard in the brewing industry, especially the Midwest. And it is also anything but the easiest or most economical way to brew beer.

"I really became a fan of bottle conditioning early on," said McDonald. "I still believe it's a really value added process. I can't say I innovated because historically, it was a process that all breweries used to do at one time. Then a few of them either stopped doing it or kept doing it. I'm a big fan of Sierra Nevada. Ken Grossman and I are good friends and at Sierra they were bottle-conditioners before we were and I just saw the value in better flavor stability and shelf life. So that's why we still do it. It costs a lot of money and sometimes I think it would be a lot easier not to do

it, but I also believe that it makes the beer better."

The bottle conditioning road was one which Boulevard headed down cautiously.

"When we started out, we were not a bottle conditioner," McDonald said. "There are a lot of ways to do it. There's what's called complete bottle conditioning, and I think it wasn't long after we started, three or four years, that I understood the principle benefit of it, which is basically you go through either a total or partial re-fermentation in the bottle to create more carbon dioxide. Of course I knew that yeast is an antioxidant. It helps eat up some of the oxygen in the bottle during packaging. So it just had these benefits."

"But not all of our beers are bottle conditioned; just all those that are a style where it's appropriate. Our Smokestack (wooden-barrel aged) beers are even more bottle conditioned than the regular

line of beers that we make. It's a very costly thing. If you see our warehouse, it's jaw dropping. For most small brewers, to hold all that beer for two weeks in consistent temperatures as it goes through the conditioning process, it's quite a space hog and challenging. But we do it and are quite glad we do."

### Left Turn

The bottle conditioning road soon led to another important intersection – and then a left turn – on the Boulevard map. That would be the production of what is viewed by McDonald and fans of the brewery – which has become a very proud landmark in Kansas City – as its signature product – Unfiltered Wheat Beer.

Again, wheat beer was not invented at Boulevard. But Boulevard's version of it comes with a significant twist.

It was the third beer the company produced after a pale ale and a porter.



CEO Mike Magoulias started with Miller Brewing.



The local market in Kansas City consumes 40 percent of Boulevard's annual output.

"The Wheat Beer," said McDonald, "is what we call an American style wheat beer. It has an English ale yeast strain and uses unmalted wheat grown in Missouri. It was a wheat beer that I think an immigrant would have made in the 1800's in the central Midwest."

"And we didn't call it a Hefeweizen because we didn't feel it was true to style. Hefeweizen, to me, has a peppery, clovey taste and is typical of Germany or parts of Belgium, with coriander a lot of times, and that spicy taste. Our beer was not really that. It was just a very approachable refreshing cloudy beer.

"So we call it American style wheat beer. And I really think that was an innovation that we really kind of did. I don't know of any other. It's been copied by other people over the years but I think we were one of the first brewers to actually do what I would call an American style wheat beer. It was a little bit of a different animal."

### **Smokestacks Rising**

The flavor-loaded Smokestack beers are very different animals from the bottle-conditioned wheat beer. The specialty

Smokestack beers are aged in old bourbon barrels. The process, which allows for a wide range of experimentation, are offered in corked champagne bottles and distinctive four-packs.

"We were not the first, but we were early on in embracing the idea of wood aging," McDonald said. "I think some of the complexities you get from that through a little bit of oxygen egress and also just the aging of beer with yeast present, just a bit like bottle conditioning, is a real interesting thing. And then the ability to make sour beers and to blend beer to make a very interesting product out of two or three different types of beer you've produced is really exciting."

McDonald again bowed to history as he further explained the Smokestack Series, which is named after the brewery's prominent, century-old brick chimney which has become a Boulevard touch point.

"I think if you go back 100 years, all brewers – before the invention of aluminum or stainless steel – they would have put



beer in a wooden barrel at some point in its life. But they didn't really understand the microbiology and science of that and so I think you probably had a fair amount of spoiled beer and bad beer. What's interesting now is the approach we take is we take this ancient practice and apply a lot of science to it and really try to recreate – and create – beers that can be reproduced. It's really an interesting time in brewing where there's access to the history of brewing. But you can really adapt some smart science to it and that's really exciting to me."

### **Home Cooking**

Boulevard prides itself in being an American brewery. All of its 30 or so varieties of brew are infused with American brewing sensibilities. The American Heartland has had a big influence on production, which has soared past 600,000 barrels a year.

Boulevard considers involvement in central Midwestern culture and being a good corporate citizen essential to its mission. It proudly provides jobs and income to over 120 Kansas City employees. The brewery supports local sports teams and community programs. It is a leader in glass recycling in the

community. And it has entered into innovative collaborations with other like-minded local companies.

"One of the things we've done, and we've done maybe half dozen of them now in the last three or four years, is collaborative brews, like the chocolate ale with (famed Kansas City chocolatier) Christopher Elbow that was just a huge success for us."

One of the latest collaborations was with semi-iconic Kansas City coffee producer, The Roasterie. "Danny O'Neill with the Roasterie, who started in business about the same time and has always been a couple blocks away," said McDonald. "He'd been bugging me for years to do a collaboration and I felt we needed to. To be honest, coffee beers are not one of my favorite categories but finally I just said, 'Yes, we're going to do this.'"

The two companies came up with an elegant solution to how to make a unique coffee beer. "Typically, coffee beers are always going to be like a stout or dark beer with coffee flavor," said McDonald. "We did an amber beer with a very light flavor. It turned out great. The challenge is always how do you make them work together to where they're not competing, the beer



Jeremy Danner is one of three brewers who oversee a 24-hour regimen in the brewhouse.



Boulevard prides itself when it comes to using locally sourced ingredients.

flavor versus the coffee. I think Danny and our head brewer Stephen Pauwels did a great job with that beer.”

Customers obviously thought so, too. The run on the specialty coffee beer forced some local liquor stores to put a limit of two of the bomber bottles per customer on it.

### **Hitch Hiking**

Boulevard’s unique collaborative efforts are not confined to Kansas City or even the Midwest. Last year, Boulevard got together with Grossman and California’s Sierra Nevada Brewing Company to form a highly innovative alliance.

“Sierra Nevada made part of the beer in Chino and we made part of the beer,” McDonald explained. “They shipped it to Kansas City, we barreled it and we put together a blend and we made it for SAVOR last year.” The two breweries decided to call the

brew Terra Incognita, an archaic name for the old Oregon Trail which started in Kansas City and ended in Northern California. The result, McDonald said, was terrific.

“Such a cool package and just a fantastic beer,” he said. “One of my favorite beers that we’ve made.” Terra Incognita was an extremely limited run. It never hit the shelves. But, the process has resulted in plans for more collaboration between Boulevard and Sierra Nevada.

Back on the home front, Boulevard has plunged headlong into producing unique seasonal beers. No, producing beers to fit the season is not new. “In the Old World they used to brew based on temperatures and times of year and according to the harvest,” said McDonald.

Boulevard’s twist is regional and specific to the unique seasons of the

America’s heartland. “I think beer makers have done a great job as an industry in coming out with the idea you do things in a seasonal way. You know, making lighter beers for the summertime, making big heavy beers like Nutcracker (in the winter). Our Nutcracker is kind of a winter warmer. It’s great in the winter to get a big, robust, flavorful, viscous fantastic tasting beer. So yes, we’ve embraced it.”

While some innovations at Boulevard are the result of careful planning – like the decision eight years ago to hire young Belgian brewmaster Pauwels to come in and add experience and interesting ideas to the operation – some are the result of pure chance. Like the recent opportunity to begin storing and aging Smokestack brews in limestone caves.

Such caves dot the landscape in and around Kansas City. Massive and



*‘It’s been copied by other people over the years, but I think we were one of the first brewers to actually do what I would call an American style wheat beer. It was a bit of a different animal.’*

plentiful, the caves are leftovers from the mining industry. The largest of the caves, dubbed SubTropolis, contains 55,000,000 square feet of storage and is billed as the world’s largest underground business complex. In addition to storage space, offices and production facilities are located in SubTropolis.

The cave being used by Boulevard is in the suburb of Independence, Missouri – the hometown of former U.S. President Harry S. Truman. “We’ve got over 2,000 barrels right now in our storage,” McDonald said. “In fact, we just rented some space in caves to store all the barrels. I think that’s really cool because hundreds of years ago, caves would have been the places where they would have done this kind of aging of beer.”

Asked if cave-aging adds character to the brew, McDonald said, “Probably a little bit. One of the things is the caves have a little bit higher level of humidity than we have in most above-ground buildings. Therefore I think we have less evaporation out of barrels. What the wood barrel does is breath a little bit and that’s what creates some of the flavor maturation in a barrel. So

the fact that they’re in a little higher humidity level keeps some of that evaporation from happening.”

#### **Oceans Away**

Beer from those caves will soon be making its way to Scandinavia. According to McDonald, Boulevard is selling quite a bit of beer in Sweden and Norway right now – mostly in the Smokestack category.

“There is an incredible market for American-made craft beer,” said McDonald. “Brooklyn (Brewery), for example, their second largest market next to New York City is Sweden. That’s pretty amazing I think.

“We had a connection with a guy in England who approached us. He was a friend of Bob Sullivan, our former vice president of sales and marketing. We started looking into it. We ship it in refrigerated containers. It doesn’t take that long to get there. And it was very profitable for us and we thought why not? We jumped into that a year and a half ago and it’s going very well.”

Where to from here for Boulevard? Well, down actual roads for one thing.

The company has been expanding its geographical market boundaries for a couple of years now. It’s distributing to places like Georgia to the east, California to the west and Alaska to the north. McDonald is also looking into expanding into other areas of consumables.

“We’re working on a vinegar project,” he said. “We’re making balsamic type vinegar right now. I’m interested in dry-cured sausages, which also incorporate a type of fermentation.”

Fermentation and brewing have shaped McDonald much as he has shaped brewing. “I think the beer business has made me see the world in a different type way. A lot of historical stuff had to do with fermentation because it was really a form of preservative. So I’m fascinated with all that stuff right now.”

As McDonald steps back and takes a look at the innovative roads he and his company have raveled, he takes a deep breath.

“I think back to the day we said, ‘We’ll only sell beer in the central Midwest because why would we go anywhere else?’ But in reality it’s all changed for us.”

Innovation, any way you look at it. 🍷



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# The Blossoming Of

# CRAFT BREWING GROWS FROM JAPAN'S EXTRAORDINARY GARDENS

❖ *By Martin Thibault* ❖

**I**n Ushiku, an hour outside Tokyo via crowded trains where people are stacked up like slices of fresh fish on a sushi counter, a microbrewer is isolating the yeast found on cherry blossom flowers in order to ferment his yearly Sakura Kobo, or cherry blossom yeast wild ale.

In Shibu Onsen, a couple miles into the mountains east of Nagano where snow macaques bathe in natural thermal pools, another brewer is walking through his rice, hop and fruit fields, planning the brewing season ahead, inspired by his crop yield.

In Kofu, where the southern point of view is dominated by the elegant giant that is Mount Fuji, yet another brewer is throwing ume plums into his 14 percent ABV barleywine in order to give his wine yeast some extra fodder.

On a large scale, the Japanese craft beer scene may not have found its own identity yet, but a deeper look reveals that microbrewers in the Land of the Rising Sun have been finding fascinating ways to stand out. These craft brews, or ji-biru, aren't nearly as rare as geisha sightings, if one knows where to go.

## **A Burgeoning Identity**

The surreal white tree canvases during cherry blossom season have been the site of many a hanami, a ritual party for viewing the new flowers. It's not much of a surprise that Tomoyuki Kakui, a brewer and microbiologist once thought, inspired by this traditional moment of spring revelry, of taking one of the flowers under a microscope in order to see what it could hold. Chateau Kamiya, also Japan's oldest winery, is the brewery in Ushiku where one can taste



Cherry Blossoms by the  
Ninnaji Temple in Kyoto Japan

# Ji-Biru

find this experimental cherry blossom yeast brew every spring. Its delicate floral bouquet flows towards banana esters, herbal hops and light wilderness for a refreshingly different quencher, one far less intense than the brettanomyces-laden brews popping up around America in the last decade.

A handful of Japanese breweries have also embarked on this wild cherry blossom yeast adventure, which is not surprising considering the high number of cherry blossom-based food products available around springtime in Japan. If they choose to develop this yeast, the Japanese hold the perfect ingredient to forge a distinct identity.

Up on the cool mountain slopes of the Nagano prefecture, crops of all kinds are being put to use in another brewer's creations. From the ubiquitous rice to buckwheat, from fruit and vegetables to a newly named endemic hop variety called Shinshu Wase (actually a blend of Saaz and a wild Japanese cultivar), everything that grows here is subject to being used in one of Eigo Sato's refined ales.

This eighth generation entrepreneur, who operates the Shiga Kogen brewery with his savvy two-man brew crew after his forefathers had concentrated on the family sake brewery, is indeed crafting some of the most characterful beers Japan has ever tasted. Super aromatic new world IPAs of all colors and strengths are joined by saisons imbued with modern flair by a fair sprinkling of Miyama sake rice here and there. Impeccable execution, openness to different brewing cultures and intelligent use of local ingredients make Shiga Kogen a champion of the country's brewing scene. An image of the torii, the traditional gate at the entrance of Shinto shrines, should be stuck to every glass of Shiga Kogen Oak-Aged Saison One to show that it contains a passage to higher realms.

This use of high quality rice seems to be another way for the Japanese

brewers to set themselves apart. Swan Lake Beer, from the scarcely visited Niigata prefecture, brews Koshi Hikari Lager with the namesake sake rice. Its well developed barley malt and rice character sets the stage for a meticulous Noble hop display reminiscent of some Czech brewed Svetly 10°. Rice adds delicate subtleties to the beer's flavor



Chateau Kamiya's Sakura Kobo beer, fermented with wild yeast found on cherry blossoms.

environment much like the tinkling of bells does to an onsen, or hot spring spa, and there is no need to strip down to bare essentials in order to bask in its soothing currents. Sadly though, rice is still known as a cheap source of sugar for brewing; mostly because of the country's macrobreweries and their characterless use of what some Japanese call "an alternative to oxygen." Detractors obviously haven't laid lips on Hitachino Nest's captivating Red Rice Ale and some of the other delicacies from the brewer known by its owl symbol.

### Overprotection Hinders Maturity

The special brews striving to forge a local beer identity are far from the norm in Japan. The four megabreweries (Sapporo, Suntory, Asahi and Kirin) still dominate the scene with their German-style lagers. And while there is nothing inherently wrong with most of what they are brewing, the system put in place by the Japanese government at the beginning of the 20th Century, as well as the cheaper prices at which these breweries can sell, nearly obliterated any attempts at brewing something different, something truly Japanese.

Major efforts were made as early as 1906 to stop the proliferation of smaller breweries. Initially, these measures were meant to protect the growing beer businesses already in place by making sure smaller local producers did not compete with the bigger brewers. In 1908, a change in the taxing laws introduced a yearly minimum quantity of beer to be produced, set at 1,500 barrels. That number rose to 150,000 barrels in 1940 and 156,000 barrels in 1959, making it virtually impossible for a new brewery to open.

Thankfully, that law was adjusted in 1994 and brewers have since been asked to only brew "at least" five barrels in a year. As a result, in the last 20 years or so, close to 200 new breweries have come on line. The vast majority of these breweries, understandably, try to emulate the best of Germany.

That's what they have been exposed to and what beer is about for them.

As an indirect result of these teachings from bigger breweries, some of the best craft breweries in Japan, still today, offer excellent, authentic renditions of German styles. Fujizakura Kogen, for example, has one of the most impressive weizen's going outside of Bavaria. Set near the base of Mount Fuji, this brewery sits right next door to one of those theme parks for dogs. The brewery owns the Sylvans restaurant, a huge building where brewer Miyashita Hiromichi's wares wow beer travelers and





Otaru Beer Weizen is served in this strange albeit photogenic horn-shaped glass at its Tokyo restaurant, The Beer Horn.



Even though you can dine on raw fish innards, Beer Belly Tenma in Osaka looks like many beer bars in the Occident.

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# CRAFT BEER *in* Japan

the essential guide

by Mark Meli

The **first** English-language guide to  
**Japanese Craft Beer**

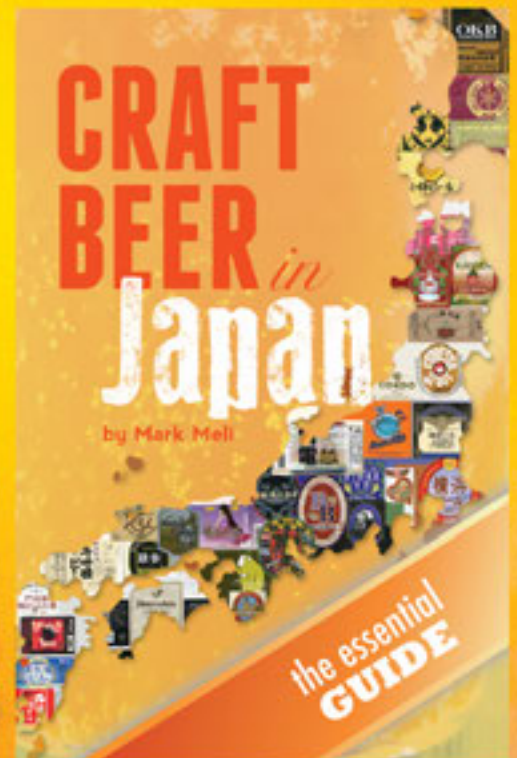
Information on **219** present and forthcoming  
**Japanese breweries**

Completely independent, in-depth analysis of  
**104 Japanese craft breweries**  
and their beers

Listing and evaluation of  
**136 brewpubs, bars, tap rooms, and stores**  
where one can drink or purchase Japanese craft beer

**50 pages of essays**  
on the development of and culture surrounding  
**beer in Japan**

Guide to Japanese  
**Craft Beer Festivals**



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<http://japanbeertimes.com/craft-beer-in-japan>

hikers alike, who are brought in by the hordes on free buses from the nearby lake town of Kawaguchiko. The Rauch brew also could sit right next to a krug of Spezial in Bamberg and experienced tasters might think it comes from a Franconian brewer unknown to them.

The same could be said of the Bavarian-inspired brews of Otaru Beer. Based in a canal town on Hokkaido, the country's northernmost island, this talented brewer has now reached Tokyo through its Beer Horn bar. Even if the gimmicky horn-shaped glasses detract from the bubbly show of prowess master brewer Johannes

companies and are rarely chains. They are often locally owned by small entrepreneurs, a market not unlike craft breweries in a way. But the bridge hasn't been crossed yet.

Craft beer bars, on the other hand, are trying to reach a crowd seeking modernity, openness to the world, which sometimes results in bland I-could-be-anywhere-in-the-world on the visual front. Some excellent establishments like Tokyo's Watering Hole or Osaka's Craft Beer Kamikaze or Q-Brick, for example, look like they could anywhere in the Occident, from San Francisco to contemporary London.

### No Tipping, And Other Such Tips

Getting lost trying to find an address, whether it's a brewery or your hotel, is part of the Japanese experience. And it's one of the first aspects of traveling which will burst your occidental convenience bubble. You're jet-lagged but very excited, you've written down the address of the first beer bar you want to try out and you know the train station you have to reach. The rest can't be wizardry, right? Without a GPS device, it might be. Reality hits: street names are more often than not absent from street corners and door numbers are in no clearly understandable order. And then alleyways don't always appear on official maps, which can mean the "third on the right" is a narrow path towards the unknown.

The best way to find what you want: plan ahead and write down landmarks instead of street names. Something like close up: «Shinjuku station, east exit, walk towards the Green Peas pachinko building, turn left after walking by Green Peas and walk on that street until the first temple on your right.» And so forth. Using this method to get you around should lead you to your purveyor of choice as efficiently as a sushi master's knife slicing through a piece of sumptuous chutoro tuna.

Whether visiting a lively izakaya to check out how typical Japanese raise elbows, or a craft beer bar where ji-biru brewers' most recent delights are on display, some basic knowledge of pub etiquette should also help you ease into the first tulip glass.

First, remember that most craft beer bars are seen as upmarket establishments where people consume a luxury product. Prices for a pint can be much higher than lagers from the "Big Four," just like some farmer's perfect strawberry baskets at the market can go for many times the price of the mainstream, slightly-dented strawberries next to it. For example, when a guest walks in, a server will immediately come to see him to ask how many people there are in his party. This is when a reservation can come in handy. Most craft beer places in cities are cramped holes-in-the-wall, and thus get full



Fujizakura Kogen's Pils is a perfect match to gigantic shrimp tempura.

Braun can deliver, the place remains a vibrant reminder of the Japanese's ability to imitate. The Pilsner, for example, possesses an intricate hop signature which displays spicy, citrusy herbs that freshen up the crunchy, straw-like base malts.

The colorful izakayas everywhere around the country though, where the tie-wearing salarymen join after work for a few pints and snacks in traditional Japanese decor, are exclusively serving beers from the aforementioned "Big Four." One would expect the microbreweries to want to integrate this market because these often tiny, atmospheric bars are not run by large

Devil Craft, a recent addition to Tokyo's rapidly expanding bar scene, sometimes ignores the local ji-biru, or craft selection, to make room for American micros on tap. It also specializes in Chicago-style deep dish pizza. Similar story for Shibuya's Craft Heads, where you can find a larger selection of bourbon than most quality bars in America. These places are godsend for hardcore craft beer lovers looking for the most varied and elaborate beer lists. But don't look for a typically Japanese experience beyond the ji-biru that flows from the tap handles.

rather quickly. When a bar is a priority, it's always a good idea to reserve ahead of time – as if you were going to a high-end restaurant.

In any case, the server will take you to your seat as soon as you tell him the number of guests in your party. Contrary to some North American practices, this diligent type of service is not done for tips. In fact, tipping is seen as reprehensible behavior, a bit like bribing. Try it and the server may laugh uncontrollably, start blushing, or try to look away, flustered. The servers' seemingly exaggerated courteousness is not displayed because they are looking for an extra on your part. Even if they follow the guest out onto the street to bow farewell, that's just what they do and they're paid decently to do it.

Once seated, the last potential obstacle to a successful evening will quickly become apparent – the lack of an English menu. And that means, of course, you can't even deduce something because you can't decipher one single word on the beer list. One obvious solution is to look at the tap handles. These can sometimes help to give you the name of the brewery. But more often than not, the handles will not help you out much. What you can do though is ask your server to read the menu for you... in Japanese, mind you. From their reading and pronunciation, you can at least understand a few brewery names or beer styles.

Asking a bartender to speak English is sometimes another way to create discomfort. This is true even in megalopolises like Tokyo. Waiters are often shy if their English isn't perfect and will refuse to answer you in other languages than Japanese... even if they understand you.

The Japanese identity brings out large doses of perfectionism, no doubt. One can always hope more and more brewers follow this path and stay authentic and true to who they are.

### A New Spring In Sight

All signs point towards the Japanese craft beer scene gaining an influx of talent and creativity. Luc 'Bim' Lafontaine, for example, former head brewer at the Montreal's Dieu du Ciel! brewpub, will be setting up his own brewery near the temple town of Nikko. Known for his elegant sour ales and mouth-watering use of Japanese ingredients at the world-renowned Québécois brewpub, he will surely regale Japanese craft beer lovers with recreations of his Noce de Soie, Ochamena Bi-ru, Toji Bi-ru and Yuzu Blanche, among other brews. All intelligently juxtapose ingredients like sancho peppercorns, green tea, ume plums, shiso leaves and yuzu rinds with acidic fermentation characters for tantalizing results the likes of which the Land of the Rising Sun has never seen. This can help the country showcase its high potential.

Many of the thousands of people crossing the street every minute in front of Tokyo's Shibuya station might never know of the pleasures derived from Japan's own gardens and creativity when it comes to beer. But the rest of the world may well latch on to such tasty idiosyncrasies like they already have with some of Hitachino Nest's liquid wonders: Japanese Classic Ale, matured in cedar casks commonly used in the sake world, and XH, matured in shochu, or distilled sake, barrels. Along with growth of demand in the local market, this in turn can help the identity of ji-biru blossom to maturity just like the cherry trees every awe-inspiring spring. 🌸



Eigo Sato, master brewer of the Shiga Kogen brewery.



Spent grain from Shiga Kogen is taken to its rice fields.

# THE ALLURE OF PIZZA AND BEER



By Owen Ogletree

Anyone with the least bit of awareness of beer and food combinations can rattle off a few celebrated, classic pairings such as a bacon cheeseburger with an American pale ale, bratwurst washed down with an Oktoberfest-Märzen, oysters complemented by a dry stout, fish and chips paired with a classic British bitter, or steamed mussels accompanied by a Belgian witbier. Of all the well-known food and beer permutations, none seems more perfect, diverse and ingrained in American culture than pizza with beer.

Why do pizza and beer make for such a perfect marriage of flavors and bliss? Is there an ideal beer for every type of pizza? Like modern beer, has pizza now entered into the artisanal or “craft” arena?

## More Alike Than Different

Firstly, both pizza and beer have been around for a long time. Long before the Italians fired up their pizza ovens, ancient Egyptians, Babylonians and Greeks were cooking up flat breads with a variety of toppings in clay ovens. As a precursor to today’s focaccia, Romans and Greeks topped their bread with herbs and olive oil. Our current concept of cheesy pizza with tomato sauce did begin in Italy, and American troops returning from both World Wars brought home a taste for the dish that quickly permeated our culture.

In a similar tale, beer was first brewed in ancient Mesopotamia as a part of a daily diet and quickly spread to Egypt and surrounding cultures. Made from soaking baked bread in water, these early brews also contained a variety of herbs and fruit and were remarkably different from modern ales and lagers that are inspired by styles first brewed in Europe during the Middle Ages.

Immigrant brewers brought European styles to America in the 1800s, and U.S. soldiers contributed to the popularity of flavorful, European-style beers in our country by picking up a taste for these beers overseas.

Crawford Moran, brewmaster for 5 Seasons Brewing in Atlanta, says, “I remember reading many years ago that every culture – every group of people on the planet – made some form of basic flatbread with toppings and some form of fermented carbohydrate beverage. The combination of beer and pizza is so basic, it’s like some universal constant.”

Pizza and beer make up two extraordinarily similar food products. Pizza dough comes from milled grain, and the fermentable sugars of beer originate mostly from crushed, malted barley. Brewing monks from medieval times often called beer “liquid bread.” Most pizza dough and all wort (unfermented beer) require yeast to complete the transformation into their final, delicious outcomes.

Moran is partnering with friend Russ Yates in opening a new brewpub and pizza kitchen near Atlanta’s Emory University called Pint & Slice, and he explains, “As lovers of fermentation, we’re going to actually ferment our dough with wild Italian yeasts and add my favorite Belgian beer yeast from a Trappist monastery to the mix. I love this yeast, and, yes, there will be many beers at Pint & Slice brewed with the yeast to pair with our pizza.”

Pizza dough and sweet beer wort would be lifeless and lackluster without ingredients to add spice and complexity. Pizza benefits from a tomato zing, while ales come to life from fruity yeast esters. Herbs and garlic complement almost any pizza, while hop flowers provide a spicy, herbal, bitter balance to the sweetness of barley malt.

PHOTOS COURTESY MELLOW MUSHROOM



**MELLOW MUSHROOM BUFFALO CHICKEN**

*Mozzarella cheese, grilled Buffalo chicken, caramelized onions, Applewood smoked bacon with a swirl of Buffalo sauce.*

Suggested beer style –  
American Pale Ale or IPA





*‘Every group of people on the planet made some form of basic flatbread with toppings and some form of fermented carbohydrate beverage. The combination of beer and pizza is so basic, it’s like some universal constant.’*

#### **A Harmony of Flavors**

In Italy, red wine makes up the standard beverage to enjoy alongside a slice of pizza. The hop bitterness of beer compares easily to the bitter tannins in some red wines, so it makes sense that any foods that complement a dry, tannin-rich red wine will also go well with a dry, hoppy pale ale or IPA. In America, almost any beer lover will argue that beer forms a better pairing with pizza than wine. A reason may be that beer is less acidic than wine and makes for soft, complex flavor amalgamations with the components of pizza.

Many pizzas offer sweet, caramelized, earthy aromas and flavors – much like a malty brown ale, amber or German-style doppelbock. The earthy flavors of mushrooms, peppers and meats go well with rich, malty beers and form amazing flavor complements.

“Beer gives resonance with the taste of the dough right away,” says Daniel Imdieke, manager of beer operations for the Old Chicago pizza pub chain. “Then, you have the hops, malts and any spiced esters from the yeast all reacting differently to the cheese, the sauce and any herbs and toppings like pepperoni, sausage or mushrooms. All of the individual elements of pizza go well with beer on their own, so when you mix them together in one place, it’s hard to go wrong.”

Annica Kreider, VP of brand development for Mellow Mushroom, adds, “At the base, I think that pizza and beer are a classic pairing of cold and hot. Beer is a great carbonated refreshment that cuts through the tomato and cheese of a traditional pizza very well. Craft beer with pizza is just the natural evolution of this, now that consumers have a more sophisticated palate and are realizing that craft beer takes the pairing to a whole new level.”

#### **Beer and Cheese, Please**

Beer and cheese produce a mouthwatering range of flavors when enjoyed together, as the sweet, malty backbone of beer complements the creamy texture of cheese. Since cheese is a major component of most contemporary pizzas, here lies another reason for the popularity of pizza with beer.

Unlike the acidity in wine that washes the creamy coating of cheese quickly off the tongue, beer nurtures the flavors of the cheese on the palate, and beer’s carbonation mingles with the cheese to volatilize and release delightful flavor notes.

When deciding on a craft beer to match with a specialty pizza, consider the type of cheese on the pie. For example, dry, salty Parmigiano-Reggiano pairs well with a dry, spicy, mineral-like IPA, and the citrusy hop flavor of an American pale ale tends to be enhanced by the creamy essence and somewhat dough-like texture of mozzarella. Asiago is an Italian cheese with an elegant, nutty flavor that really complements a nut brown ale or caramely American amber ale.

#### **Pizza Goes “Crafty”**

“Pizza and beer belong together,” says chef, restaurateur and Top Chef judge Hugh Acheson. “They’ve been married for so long, they are like the happy, old couple we all look up to. They have also gotten so much better at the same time in the last decade.”

These days, the combination of pizza and beer is so much more than just a slice of pepperoni with a yellow American lager. Pizza and American beer have both experienced an artisanal rebirth, and it’s a brave new world out there for the pair.

The immense successes of pizza-centered brewpubs like Pizza Port in California and Piece in Chicago demonstrate the appeal of





**MELLOW MUSHROOM FRESHIES PIZZA**  
*Mozzarella, Roma tomatoes and basil.*

Suggested beer style –  
Flanders-style Brown Ale/Oud Bruin





A variety of tastes from Twain's Billiards and Tap

# Cheers!

## Decatur Loves Beer

With more than 20 places to enjoy a craft brew, see one made, or take one to go, the city of Decatur, Georgia, is your craft beer destination.

**D**rink in the local flavor of Decatur's thriving craft beer culture. Local beer lovers and business owners in Decatur have been making, sipping, and celebrating beer since before it was cool – paving the way for a community overflowing with craft beer buffs. It all started with a couple of taps downtown. More followed, making Decatur a dynamic destination for beer lovers seeking ales and ambers. Now with more than 80 great restaurants and pubs, Decatur attracts foodies and brew enthusiasts with great taste. Not to mention the 4,000 folks who flock to the downtown square every October for the much-anticipated Decatur Craft Beer Festival.

**BEST IN CLASS.** The renowned **Brick Store Pub** ([brickstorepub.com](http://brickstorepub.com)) is a long-standing Decatur favorite, offering a blend of hometown hospitality and international taste. The pub's expertly curated collection of rare bottled brews attracts beer connoisseurs from all over. The rotating draft selections drive it home – this is not your average pub. In fact, the Brick Store Pub was recently named one of the best beer establishments in the country.

**HOMETOWN BREWMASTERS.** Twain's Billiards and Tap ([twains.net](http://twains.net)) is Decatur's only brewpub. In 2006, the pub started serving up its own beers and brought Decatur into the neighborhood microbrew scene. Typically, you can choose from at least six varieties of Twain's house-made beers. You can even see the magic happen through the storefront window.

**TAKE SOME HOME.** No time to sit and sip? Take a beer to go. **Ale Yeah! Craft Beer Market** ([aleyeahbeer.com](http://aleyeahbeer.com)) offers an extensive selection of bottled beers from around the globe and local American craft beers as well. They'll also fill a growler from a rotating selection of top-quality drafts for you. **Greene's Fine Foods, The Cook's Warehouse and Sherlock's Wine Merchant**, and **Oakhurst Market** are great growler sources, too. **Wine Workshop and Brew Center** ([wineworkshop.net](http://wineworkshop.net)) has all the goods to make your own beer at home.

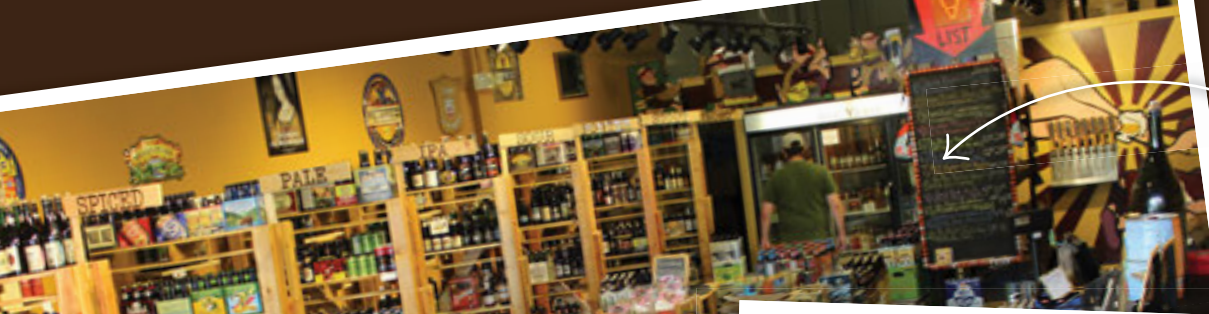
**IN SEARCH OF THE PERFECT POUR.** Knock around town or stop by the **Visitors Center** at 113 Clairemont Ave. for insider tips on where to find the best pubs and pints in town. Ask for the "Decatur's Best Brews" brochure and plan your own crafty beer tour of Decatur.

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Ogle the bottles at Ale Yeah! Craft Beer Market.



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Get your growler filled at Oakhurst Market

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#### OLD CHICAGO'S DOUBLE DECKERONI

Suggested beer style – Double IPA / Pepperoni, hot sauce, parsley

offering a massive range of house beer styles alongside a vast menu of unique, flavorful pizzas that are loaded with personality and intriguing ingredients. Following suit, Russ Yates and Crawford Moran plan to add whole new levels to the general pizza concept at their Slice & Pint brewpub. “I spent some time in Chicago last year and went to Piece Brewing,” says Yates. “I was very impressed with what they were doing up there, and the experience really got the gears turning for me on our pizza brewpub here in Atlanta. Our customers will never get bored with our house beers and pizza, as there will always be new flavor combinations to experience.”

For the string of Your Pie pizza restaurants in the Southeast, pairing craft pizzas with craft beer makes perfect sense. “We put the ‘craft’ building back into pizza,” says Your Pie founder Drew French. “We

do smaller, individualized, customized, flavorful and healthy pizzas that we hand-toss and finish off in a brick oven, while hand-turning with an oven peel.”

Paul Childers, owner of Your Pie in Savannah, adds, “Craft beer is bringing back taste, quality, freshness and the individuality of its brewmasters – it’s about choice really – not ‘one size fits all.’ Your Pie does this with pizza, and craft breweries do it with beer. Simply, bigger isn’t always better, and the individual’s choice may be better than the mainstream.”

This current atmosphere of craft beer and artisanal pizza makes for enjoyable, yet challenging choices. American craft beer lovers and foodies are experiencing enormous arrays of flavors that seemed unimaginable just a few years ago. Moran sums it up, “A beer that pairs well

with a pepperoni pizza may not be the best fit for a green Thai curry pizza or a chipotle with adobo sauce pizza or a barbeque pizza. The fun is in the tasting and experimentation.”

#### What Goes Into a Great Craft Pizza?

Hugh Acheson explains, “Making the best pizza depends on using great ingredients, sound skills and a light hand to make those ingredients shine. If you take the best mozzarella and sop it up with too much so-so sauce, then the results are going to be lackluster. But if you take great dough, just a touch of beautiful sauce, and awesome cheese - cooked at a really high heat - then you’ll have a winner.”

Your Pie’s French believes that a great deal of thought and energy must go into making impressive pizza. “Having

PHOTO COURTESY OLD CHICAGO

great sauce and toppings to work with, and how you make the combinations work well together are what separates a good pizza from the very best pizza,” he says. “Of course, without our brick oven to finish it all off, our ingredients would not be highlighted so well.”

“At Mellow Mushroom, we put a tremendous amount of care in sourcing ingredients that meet our high standards,” says Kreider. “We use all-natural products whenever possible, spring water in our famous ‘mellow dough,’ the highest quality cheeses, fresh produce from a local company... and the list goes on. Another critical differentiator for us is that our pies are stone-baked. We believe that this attention to detail creates a product where the sum is greater than the parts.”

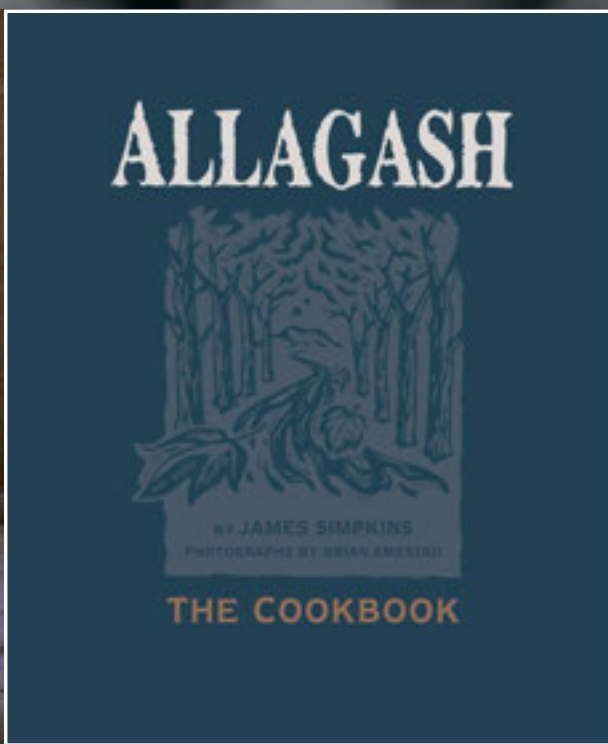
Indieke agrees, “At Old Chicago, we hand make and toss our dough fresh every day with all natural, from scratch ingredients. We have different dough recipes for our Chicago-style Thick Crust and our Tavern Thin Crust. We use different cheeses and from scratch pizza sauces. Making the best pizza in town is something we take seriously, and having 90-110 craft beers to go with our pizza doesn’t hurt either.”

Contrary to mainstream thought, Moran notes that cranking out exceptional pizza can be quite a complex process. “Everything that goes into the pizza is important – the flour, the yeast, the time and temperature of the ferment on the dough, matching the temperature of the oven to the type of dough, the type of oven, the sauces, the toppings, and, of course, the style and quality of the beer you enjoy with the pizza.” 🍷



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Portland, Maine



**MELLOW MUSHROOM KOSMIC KARMA**  
Suggested beer style – American Amber Ale

*Red sauce base with feta and mozzarella cheeses, spinach, sun-dried tomatoes and Roma tomatoes with a pesto swirl.*



**MELLOW MUSHROOM GOURMET WHITE PIZZA**

Suggested beer style – Belgian-style Saison

*Olive oil and garlic base with sun-dried tomatoes, Provolone, feta and mozzarellas cheeses, Roma tomatoes and onions.*



**MELLOW MUSHROOM HOLY SHITAKE**

Suggested beer style – German-style Doppelbock

*Olive oil and garlic base, Shitake, button and Portobello mushrooms, caramelized onions, Mozzarella and Montamore cheeses drizzled with garlic aioli and black truffle oil. Garnished with fresh chives and shaved Parmesan.*

# AND THE WINNER IS... *IPA*

When asked for a personal favorite craft beer and pizza combination, interviewees went overwhelmingly with the ever-popular American IPA (*India Pale Ale*) for their choice of brew...



## HUGH ACHESON

Atlanta chef, restaurateur and judge for TV's Top Chef

*"I love Antico Pizza's Diavola with a good IPA. Sopressetta, buffalo mozzarella, Calabrian peppers... the spice of the peppers on the pizza just works with the hoppy complexity of a good IPA like a Dogfish Head. Full flavor meets full flavor."*



## DREW FENCH

Founder of Your Pie

*"I would have to go with our Ischia pizza – extra virgin olive oil, Roma tomatoes, fresh mozzarella, basil and garlic – then we add marinara, more garlic and pepperoni. I pair it with an American IPA, because the hoppy notes balance out the garlic and pepperoni."*



## ANNICA KREIDER

VP of Brand Development for Mellow Mushroom

*"My personal favorite is our Philosopher's Pie paired with a hoppy IPA. The pie is very unique and rich with a lot of flavor-forward ingredients like steak, three cheeses, grilled Portobello mushrooms, artichoke hearts and Kalamata olives on our olive oil and garlic base. To me, the hoppy bitterness helps cut all those savory flavors."*

## FOR A LITTLE VARIETY, ALSO TRY THESE PAIRINGS...

- Thai-style pizza with curry or sweet chili sauce alongside a Belgian saison or tripel.
- Wild mushroom and three cheese pizza with a German-style doppelbock.
- Spinach and caramelized onion pizza matched with an English-style strong bitter (ESB).
- Margherita pizza with anchovies washed down with a hoppy Bohemian pilsner.
- Veggie pizza with yellow peppers and arugula alongside a fruity, clove-like German-style hefeweizen.
- Pizza with smoked salmon and capers with a rich, dark, robust porter.
- Chicago-style deep dish pizza loaded with cheese and tomato sauce paired with a dry, acidic Flanders red ale.





By Bob Barnes

People arrive in Las Vegas for many reasons! Fortunately, craft beer lovers are not neglected when visiting the city that never sleeps.

One of the largest of selections on the famed Strip can be found at The Pub at Monte Carlo, a mega-beer list gastropub. The location is mega, too – at the Monte Carlo Hotel near the hotbed intersection of Tropicana Ave. and Las Vegas Blvd.

Inside The Pub you'll find a massive 13,000 square foot space with a post-modern décor featuring copper ducting, red brick walls, a high ceiling and a lighted array of kegs behind the long bar showing off its wares. A second level accommodates guests, especially at night, when crowds pack the room. More than 35 TV screens offer viewing capability from any quadrant of the room and project a variety of sports programming. Dining al fresco is an option, with a patio area overlooking the Monte Carlo's pool allowing for optimum people watching while enjoying the desert weather.

While the competition in Las Vegas for tourist attention generates many nice atmospheres, The Pub at Monte Carlo holds a strong hand with its beer list. More than 300 beers are offered, and with 11 of its 120 taps pouring local beer there's a good sampling of Vegas craft brews. Designed for easy navigation, which counts for something with a list this long, the menu carries symbols for draft, bottled and local beer. It's arranged into 19 major beer styles with style description, serving size, price and the specific sub-style.

No matter the preference or mood, there's something to like here. The list includes Belgian styles (St. Feuillien Saison, for example, and Goose Island Pepe Nero); Trappist ale (Rochefort 8 and 10 and Westmalle Dubbel or Tripel); Pale Ale (Anchor Liberty Ale and Firestone Walker DBA); IPA (Dogfish Head 90 Minute and locally brewed Tenaya Creek Hop Ride); Porters (Ballast Point Black Marlin and Stone Smoked Porter); Stouts (Young's Double Chocolate Stout on nitrogen and locally-brewed Joseph James Red Fox Imperial Stout); Fruit Beer (Samuel Smith Organic Strawberry and Wells Banana Bread); and Ciders (Woodchuck Apple Amber and Sam Adams Angry Orchard Crisp Apple).



With another nod to the emphasis on hospitality in Vegas, five varieties of beer flights are offered: Local Brews (select 4 for \$15), Belgian Styles (4 for \$19), Hop Heavy (4 for \$17), American Craft (4 for \$15) and Customized (any 4 of the 120 taps for \$15).

General Manager Robert Parekh is the mastermind behind the carefully selected beer menu and has a wealth of beer knowledge. "The inspiration behind picking the beers is to select beers that represent well the major styles," said Parekh, who is on track to become a certified cicerone. "With craft beer taking off and revolutionizing the beer industry, we want to be in the forefront on offering new releases and styles."

PHOTOS COURTESY MGM RESORTS INTERNATIONAL





The bottle list rivals the extensive draft menu at The Pub.

Parekh also believes in supporting local beer. “We showcase five of our local breweries – Big Dog’s Brewing, Chicago Brewing, Joseph James Brewing, Sin City Brewing and Tenaya Creek Brewery. While it’s important to support local breweries, they also sell very well and are in big demand, with people from all over the world coming in to see us and what’s brewed here in Las Vegas.” The Pub Private Label Pale Ale, made locally by Joseph James, is on the list. Other notable local brews being poured include Big Dog’s Red Hydrant Red Ale, Joseph James Hop Box IPA and Sin City Amber, Tenaya Creek Hauling Oats Stout and Chicago Brewing Root Beer.

While guests may come for the beer, they stay for the food – another Las Vegas tradition. The menu is stacked with an array of appetizers, burgers, soups, salads, large plates and wood-fired flatbreads. Burger connoisseurs can design their own with choice of five meats, nine cheeses, three buns, nine sauces, nine toppings and five fry selections. Or one can choose from dishes made with beer, such as Goose Island Braised Short Rib, The Pub Pale Ale Fish & Chips or Newcastle Beer & Cheddar Soup. Large plates include dishes of grilled salmon, whole roasted chicken, filet mignon, bone-in rib-eye and shepherd’s pie.

Starting this spring, The Pub and Executive Chef Timothy Radigan have been hosting “Gus’s Beer and Bites,” a series



PHOTO COURTESY JOE IURGIOLI

*“The inspiration behind picking the beers is to select beers that represent well the major styles. With craft beer taking off and revolutionizing the beer industry, we want to be in the forefront on offering new releases and styles.”*

**- Robert Parekh, General Manager**

of beer pairing dinners. Named after Gus, the Pub’s whale mascot and logo, each dinner is priced at \$50 (plus tax and tip) and is a six-course beer pairing held in The Pub’s upstairs dining room. Past dinners have featured the brands of Ballast Point, Left Coast, New Belgium, Sam Adams and Goose Island and are slated to continue monthly through 2014.

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# BEER REVIEW

Notes by Charlie Gow

The American love affair with hops continues unabated. So we focused on IPA's and pale ales in the current review. Our line-up shows there's more than one way to brew up these classic styles, such as a barrel-aged IPA and a low-alcohol / low-hop IPA. Among the pale ales, we sampled a "Louisiana" model and an English version from out West. The bill includes a leaning toward Belgium, too, with sour, fruit, strong and saison styles sampled here. For those always in the mood for lagers, we've got them in different shades, plus a sweet and unique wheat beer. Enjoy!

## OUR JUDGING PROCESS

The beers were judged based on their individual merits but with an eye toward how well they exemplify specific styles, as defined by both the Brewers Association and the Beer Judge Certification Program. To ensure the validity of the judging and to provide all of the beers being sampled with a truly objective evaluation, each and every beer was tasted blind. The beers were presented to the judges as numbered entries, with the only identifying information being the entry's style.

## THE SCORES BREAK DOWN AS FOLLOWS:

**100 to 96: World Class**  
You need this beer in your life.

**95 to 91: Exceptional**  
Don't hesitate.

**90 to 86: Very Good**  
A brew to savor.

**85 to 81: Good**  
Enjoyable but not life-altering.

**80 to 75: Average**  
Somewhat unimpressive.

**74 and below: Not recommended**  
Just walk away.

# JUDGES



## Tim Artz ~

Tim started homebrewing while in college, and since then his brews have earned many awards, including Best of Show at the Virginia State Fair. A longtime member of the Brewers United for Real Potables (BURP) homebrew club and a beer judge since 1992, he currently holds the National rank in the Beer Judge Certification Program. Tim is the founder of two premier regional beer events: the National Capital Spirit of Free Beer Homebrew Competition and the Spirit of Belgium Conference and Homebrew Competition.



## Pete Garofalo ~

Pete has been appreciating good beers since the days when locating a tavern with two "alternative" taps was a major find. He has been a homebrewer since 1991 and an active member of the Beer Judge Certification Program since 1994, and he now serves on the BJCP Board of Directors as the Northeast/International representative. A co-author of the BJCP Style Guidelines, he recently achieved the rank of Grand Master III. He and his wife Lesley moved from Upstate New York to Delaware two years ago.



## Tom Cannon ~

Tom has been drinking beer for 35 years, hunting for good beer for 22 years and homebrewing for 18 years. He is currently an Exam Director for the Beer Judge Certification Program and has reached the rank of Grand Master Level II beer judge within the organization. He has visited breweries from Portland, Ore., to Plzen in the Czech Republic and would expand his explorations if there were any decent beers west of Portland or east of Plzen (he still needs to get to Australia). Tom lives in Fairfax, Va., and works as an architect for the United States Navy.



## Charlie Gow ~

Charlie coordinated this review and wrote the judges' notes sections. He has been brewing for nearly 20 years, and for the past eight years he has served as a National level Beer Judge Certification Program judge. Currently an Associate Exam Director on the BJCP's Board of Directors, he has basically committed the past 12 years of his life to an extensive study of the brewing process. The common thread among his entire circle of friends is beer.

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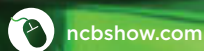
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# Van Steenberge Monk's Café Founders All Day IPA



# 95

Style: Flemish Sour / Oud Bruin  
ABV: 5.5%  
IBUs: 10  
Serve at: 42° to 46°



## Monk's Café Sour Flemish Ale

### Brouwerij Van Steenberge

Ertvelde, Belgium

[www.vansteenberge.com](http://www.vansteenberge.com) (imported by Global Beer Network, [www.globalbeer.com](http://www.globalbeer.com))

Distribution: Available throughout the U.S. except MS and WY.

### Food Pairing Recommendations

Oven roasted lamb shanks; chicken stewed in a brown fig sauce

Cheese: Epoisses; Meadow Creek Grayson

### Judges' Notes

Philadelphia's Monk's Café is one of America's iconic pubs, considered one of the great Belgian beer destinations on this side of the Atlantic. Proprietor Tom Peters has contracted with Brouwerij Van Steenberge to produce Monk's Café Sour Flemish Ale, a sweet/sour Flanders-style brown ale. Rife with notes of sour cherry and luscious caramel, the aroma is classic Oud Bruin. Pete was a bit taken aback by the upfront acetic tang, likening it to "finely aged Modena balamico," but felt the underlying malt sweetness and plum notes help to balance the nose. Pouring a deep, saturated brown and showing flashes of ruby along its edges, this beer is topped by a persistent creamy, tan-colored head. With this beer, as

goes the aroma, so goes the flavor. Gobs of Montmorency cherries, warm toasty malt, and a pronounced underlying sourness dominate, yet no component overpowers in this exceptionally balanced brew. The deft interplay of "flavors of sweetish young beer overlaid on aged sour beer" and a quenching, slight dry-ish finish really impressed Tim, who pronounced it "classically inspired Old World Flemish ale." Tom, too, enjoyed the puckering sourness, but found it tended to be lactic, leaving him wanting a bit more "crisp, lightly vinegary" element that helps define the style. With limited distribution, Monk's Café Sour Flemish Ale presents the perfect excuse for an impromptu trip to visit Philadelphia and the café.



# 95

Style: American Pale Ale  
ABV: 4.7%  
IBUs: 42  
Serve at: 45° to 50°



## All Day IPA

### Founders Brewing Company

Grand Rapids, Michigan

[www.foundersbrewing.com](http://www.foundersbrewing.com) | (616) 776-2182

Distribution: AL, CT, DC, GA, IL, IN, IA, KY, ME, MA, MI, MN, MO, NC, NH, NJ, NY, OH, PA, RI, SC, TX, VT, VA, and WI.

### Food Pairing Recommendations

Garlic hummus with toasted pine nuts; grilled trout alongside new potatoes

Cheese: white cheddar; Caerphilly

### Judges' Notes

Somewhat of a dichotomy, All Day IPA is a "session" IPA, weighing in at a conservative ABV of 4.7 percent and sporting just over 40 IBU. With its low alcohol and bitterness, All Day IPA is a rather welcome refuge in a world teeming with strong IPAs, Double IPAs and enamel-stripping Triple IPAs. Rich, juicy tropical fruits dominate the aroma, all floating over a faintly nutty, Ritz Cracker-like malt. Tim was "blasted by fistfuls of guava, overripe pineapple, and bright tangerine zest." Brilliantly clear and radiating from the glass with a fulgent golden glow, this beer boasts a mountainous, rocky white head. Adroitly balanced, All Day doesn't throttle the palate with aggressive bitterness. In this

brew, the bitterness plays a supporting role, balancing the malt and showcasing hop flavors and esters. The overt fruitiness surprised Pete, who found the beer "a bit out of balance, with sweet tropical fruit" masking the underlying malt base. However, he was impressed by deft melding of the mélange of pineapple, mango, papaya, and guava flavors. Tom, as well, keyed on the "dense fruity notes of dragon fruit and grapefruit," and digging further, teased out hints of green tobacco. The slightly bitter finish rescued this beer from being overly sweet, and all judges agreed it is a truly "sessionable" brew. All Day IPA is a perfect compromise between quaffable session beer and hop monster.



# Breckenridge Agave Wheat

## Dogfish Head Burton Baton



### Breckenridge Brewing

Denver, Colorado

www.breckbrew.com | (800) 328-6723

Distribution: AR, AZ, CA, CO, CT, FL, GA, IL, IN, IA, KS, KY, MA, MD, ME, MI, MN, MO, NC, ND, NE, NH, NJ, NM, NY, OH, PA, RI, SC, SD, TX, VA, VT, WI, WV and WY.

### Food Pairing Recommendations

Cream cheese stuffed jalapenos with bacon; halibut crusted with garlic parmesan bread crumbs

Cheese: Queso fresco; mild Camembert

### Judges' Notes

For almost 25 years, Colorado's Breckenridge Brewing has provided thirsty devotees with an ever-growing repertoire of characterful, occasionally quirky beers – including Agave Wheat. Another session strength brew in this issue, Agave Wheat just barely tops 4 percent ABV with just enough bitterness to tame the underlying malty sweetness. Swirling with notes of freshly baked bread, tart lemon zest, and the faintest whiff of alcohol, the aroma is unmistakably American Wheat Ale. Diving a bit deeper, Tom found traces of lavender among the cracker-like malt and tart wheat tang, noting the overall effect as “suggesting the coming of Spring.” As expected, this beer shows a pale golden countenance, shot through with milky white flecks. The prodigious, meringue-like

head collapses quickly, leaving a small collar of foam in its wake. No real “agave” flavors put in an appearance, but there is a lingering sugary sweetness lurking beneath the prominent lemony tartness. Tim detected hints of mango and a light background “citric, lemon-lime hop flavor,” lauding the brewer’s “skillful balancing of sweet, tart, and sour.” Conversely, Pete lasered in on the “grainy, slightly toasted” malt, and felt the beer would benefit from a touch more bitterness. Like Tim, he founds notes of mango, but drilled down and discovered a “Sweet Tart-like” flavor to balance the sweetness. Eminently drinkable and chock full of flavor, Tim and Pete both deemed this a superb summer quencher.

# 94

Style: American Wheat Ale  
ABV: 4.2%  
IBUs: 19  
Serve at: 40° to 45°



### Agave Wheat

### Dogfish Head Craft Brewery

Milton, Delaware

www.dogfish.com | (302) 684-1000

Distribution: CA, CT, DC, DE, FL, GA, IL, KY, MA, MD, ME, MI, NC, NH, NJ, NV, NY, OH, PA, TX, VA and VT.

### Food Pairing Recommendations

Toast points with olive tapenade; barbequed baby back ribs

Cheese: English stilton; Idiazabal

### Judges' Notes

Dogfish Head's mastermind, Sam Calagione, has never been apologetic in his pursuit of beers that push stylistic boundaries, creating some of the most sought after brews on the market today. The sublimely wood-aged Burton Baton IPA is just one of those beers. Oozing with massive notes of sultry Madagascar vanilla and sticky caramel, the nose is unabashedly oak-driven. Tim pushed through the sweet vanilla to reveal “potent earthy, almost minty” hop notes backed by an underpinning of Oloroso sherry, leading him to proclaim this a “beautifully oak-aged brew, reminiscent of the finest Old Ales.” This beer does not throw the longest-lived head, but sports a decent collar of foam. It sulks in the glass,

throwing glints of mahogany from its deep copper core. The flavor leads with a solid alcohol punch riding over chewy crystal malt. Tom was blown away by the initial vanilla blast, but worked his way deeper to find a “warming Jamaican rum” note, with sufficient bitterness to balance. He did feel, however, the massive alcohol punch was overpowering. Pete found a “pleasant, chewy, nutty, caramelly base note” with hints of toffee and golden treacle, all balanced out by an emphatic hop bitterness and prodigious alcohol kick. Weighing in at a crushing 10 percent ABV and laced with a powerful oaky character, this is not your standard IPA – extremely tasty and surprisingly easy on the palate.

# 92

Style: Imperial IPA (Oak Aged)  
ABV: 10%  
IBUs: 70  
Serve at: 54° to 60°



### Burton Baton



# Uinta Baba Black Lager

## Highland St. Terese's Pale Ale

# 92

Style: Schwarzbier  
 ABV: 4%  
 IBUs: 32  
 Serve at: 40° to 45°



**Baba Black Lager**

### Uinta Brewing

Salt Lake City, Utah  
 www.uintabrewing.com | (801) 467-0909  
 Distribution: AZ, CA, CO, DE, DC, GA, ID, IL, ME, MD, MA, NC, NV, NH, NJ, NM, NY, OH, OR, PA, RI, UT, VA, WA and WY.

### Food Pairing Recommendations

Wild mushroom flatbread; Bourbon pecan pie  
 Cheese: Comte; Gruyere

### Judges' Notes

Now in its 20th year of providing painstakingly crafted beers with all brewery power being wind or solar-derived, Uinta is dedicated to sustainability in terms of both the environment and distinctive brews. Baba Black Lager is the Salt Lake City brewers' schwarzbier entry, one bursting with aromas of black licorice, cocoa powder, and French roast coffee. Wafting among the prominent dark malt notes, Tom picked hints of "Fuji apple and Crenshaw melons," and noted a virtual absence of hops. He likened the overall effect to a "slightly fruity cup of chocolate milk," and deemed it "not entirely lager-like." Deep, dark brown, almost verging on black, with occasional glints of ruby peeking through, this brew touches on opaque. The tan-colored head was somewhat anemic

and collapsed almost immediately. Bold flavors of cold-pressed espresso and raw cacao nibs dominate, while a restrained caramelly sweetness provides a needed counterpoint. Pete uncovered fleeting hints of dates and dried figs riding beneath the "bracing coffee and semisweet chocolate" that segued into a slightly acidic finish. The high carbonation caught Tim off guard, but he dug in and pulled out a blend of sweet milk chocolate, Ibarra Mexican chocolate and roasty malt. He also found a pleasant spiciness, comparing it to a "classic, spicy dark Czech lager." More assertive than most "dark" lagers, Baba Black Lager brings big flavors packed in a session strength beer.

# 92

Style: American Pale Ale  
 ABV: 5.1%  
 IBUs: 29  
 Serve at: 45° to 50°



**St. Terese's Pale Ale**

### Highland Brewing Company

Asheville, North Carolina  
 www.highlandbrewing.com | (828) 299-3370  
 Distribution: AL, DC, FL, GA, KY, NC, OH, SC and TN.

### Food Pairing Recommendations

Pan-fried chicken escalopes; seared sea scallops with arugula  
 Cheese: Red Leicester; Humboldt Fog

### Judges' Notes

On the very low end of bitterness for an American Pale Ale, Highland's St. Terese's Pale Ale certainly makes up for it in hop aroma. Tucked away in the scenic, beer culture rich environs of Asheville, N.C., these folks have been knocking out tasty brews for almost two decades. St. Terese's aroma is dominated by bright notes of grapefruit and tangelo, backed by resinous pine notes. Tim enjoyed the "delicate give and take of sweet caramel and sharp grapefruit tang," all interspersed with subtle floral notes of hyssop, proclaiming the nose as "decidedly American, driven by pungent Pacific Northwest hop notes." Crystal clear and pouring a burnished gold, this beer is capped by an ivory tinged,

mousse-like head that leaves beautiful lacework as it subsides. Though not as hop-driven as the nose, the flavors tend toward fruitiness supported by biscuit-like malt. Tom found the flavor "a bit too hop forward - more like an IPA," though he complimented the beer's balance between bitterness and sweet malt. He also enjoyed the clean, crisp finish. On the other hand, Pete appreciated the hop notes of "resiny, Spruce tip and tart Bergamot orange," declaring the flavor exceptionally balanced, with smooth bitterness and a "quick finish that cracks across the palate." If you can't find St. Terese's close to home, a trek to Asheville to sample it at the source is definitely in order.



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# Deschutes Inversion IPA

## Great Divide Denver Pale Ale



# 90

Style: India Pale Ale  
ABV: 6.8%  
IBUs: 80  
Serve at: 38° to 42°



### Inversion IPA

### Deschutes Brewing Company

Portland, Oregon

www.deschutesbrewery.com | (503) 296-4906

Distribution: AK, AZ, CA, CO, HI, ID, IL, KS, MN, MO, MT, NV, NM, ND, OR, SD, TX, UT, WA, and WY.

### Food Pairing Recommendations

Chicken wings with Jamaican jerk seasoning; endive salad topped by crisp duck confit

Cheese: Parmigiano-Reggiano; Shropshire blue

### Judges' Notes

A cornerstone of craft, Deschutes has been slaking thirsts of for over 25 years. Inversion IPA is one of a long line of stellar ales from this venerable producer, packing 80 IBUs from no less than six different hop varieties. Surprisingly, Inversion's aroma favors malt over hops, and throws around notes of caramel, toffee, and bread dough with abandon. Hops do make their presence known, but are subdued with hints of pine needles and grapefruit peeking through the malt. Tim felt the hop aromas lacked definition, but he did tease out some "whiffs of orange sherbet and lemon verbena" from under the sugary malt sweetness. Pouring a light copper and tinged with a faint chill haze, Inversion dons a moderately well-sustained,

off-white head. This beer's flavor, driven by boatloads of caramel and honey sweetness, belies its substantial bitterness – yet some citrus hop notes do emerge as the beer warms. Tom found a "nice balance between malt and hop flavors" with the malt coming across as "toffee-ish, almost like a Bit o' Honey." He noted the bitterness seemed a bit low for an IPA. Pete worked around prominent maltiness and picked out "sorbet-like berry fruit, resinous hops, and nutty, honey-like malt." Unlike Tom, Pete deemed the bitterness "substantial" and felt it balanced the malt sweetness. Though assertively bittered, Inversion's malt sweetness keeps everything in balance, rendering it a seriously quaffable IPA.



# 90

Style: English Style Pale Ale  
ABV: 5.4%  
IBUs: 40  
Serve at: 45°



### Denver Pale Ale

### Great Divide Brewing

Denver, Colorado

www.greatdivide.com | (303) 296-9460

Distribution: AL, AZ, CA, CO, FL, GA, IL, IN, KS, MA, MD, MN, MO, NC, NE, NJ, NY, OK, OH, OR, PA, SC, TX, VA, and WA.

### Food Pairing Recommendations

Tempura shrimp drizzled in soy dipping sauce; oyster po' boy sandwich dressed with remoulade

Cheese: mature Cheshire; double Gloucester

### Judges' Notes

Crafted in the English pale ale style, Denver Pale Ale abounds with earthy, lightly grassy hop notes and sweet fruity esters. Also identified by the letters DPA writ large on the label, this brew is one of the rock solid beers Great Divide has been knocking out for the past 20 years. Gobs of tropical fruit dominate the aroma, with notes of pineapple guava and overripe mangos skipping over the top of a crackery, biscuit-like malt base. The nose's fruity sweetness struck Pete as "too overripe, just bordering on cloying." He likened it to "syrupy fruit salad," but found some grainy and caramel malt notes. Showing just the merest trace of chill haze, this deep yellow

brew falls just shy of golden and is topped by a small, ivory-colored foam collar. The aroma's intense fruitiness doesn't appear in the flavor, allowing the crisp, saltine cracker and sugary caramel notes to shine through. Noting "a pronounced bitter, almost astringent edge," Tom found the flavors a tad out of balance, though he did pull out some "warm cookie dough and fresh hearth bread" malt flavors from under the hops. Tim, however, pushed past the overt bitterness to find "a swirl of fruity plums, apricots, and cherries," all backed by lightly toasted malt. Complex and highly drinkable, DPA is an ideal "go to" beer for the picnic or barbecue.



# Blue Point Toasted Lager

## Brooklyn Local 1



### Blue Point Brewing Company

Patchogue, New York

www.bluepointbrewing.com | (631) 475-6944

Distribution: CT, DE, FL, GA, MD, MA, MI, NC, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VA, and VT.

### Food Pairing Recommendations

Strawberry spinach salad topped with candied nuts; chicken tostadas with fresh cilantro

Cheese: Brillat Savarin triple crème brie; Asiago

### Judges' Notes

Since launching its Toasted Lager from a direct-flame fired kettle in 1998, Blue Point has grown into a regional powerhouse, producing 30,000 barrels a year of uniquely flavored beers. Direct firing produces toast and caramel notes, which are star players in the flagship Toasted Lager. Woven through the toasty malt aromas are notes of clover honey, lightly spicy hops, and hints of Anjou pears. Tom found the aroma reminiscent of "oatmeal spice cookies" with just a whiff of creamery butter wafting over the top. Brilliantly clear and filling the glass with a soft, lambent golden glow, this brew wears a velvety, pure white foam crown that lasts to the very end. As suggested by its name, Toasted Lager boasts a rich, toasted

maltiness right up front, with just enough hop bitterness to balance after the initial malt blitz. Pushing aside the overt toasty base notes, Pete pulled out some "earthy, almost woody hop" flavors hidden among grainy, graham cracker malt. As the malt receded, Pete found a "slightly harsh, bitter edge to the finish." Tim deemed the beer "exceptionally balanced for such a malt forward style," lauding the seamless integration of caramel, toast, spicy hops and fruity esters. A distinctly American tippie, Toasted Lager is just the ticket for a day at the beach, especially if that beach is on the South Shore.

# 89

Style: American Amber Lager

ABV: 5.5%

IBUs: 28

Serve at: 40° to 45°



### Toasted Lager

### Brooklyn Brewing Company

Brooklyn, New York

www.brooklynbrewery.com | (718) 486-7422

Distribution: CT, DC, DE, FL, GA, IL, IN, KY, LA, ME, MD, MA, MI, MN, NH, NJ, NY, NC, OH, PA, RI, SC, TN, TX, VT and VA.

### Food Pairing Recommendations

Spicy red Thai steamed mussels; Indian chicken curry (Murgh Kari)

Cheese: Aged gouda; Limburger

### Judges' Notes

Brimming with brash notes of cardamom, allspice, and ripe banana, Local 1 is yet another monster brew from Garrett Oliver and the folks at Brooklyn Brewery. Brewed in the Belgian strong ale style, Local 1 packs a whopping 9 percent ABV, derived from classic European malts and a judicious dose of Demerara sugar. Yeast-derived phenols are center stage in the aroma, with Tim picking up "light hints of clove, Jamaican allspice, and a whiff of fresh white pepper." Unrestrainedly hazy yellow and shot through with milky white hints, this brew is capped by a mountainous head of dense, almost custard-like pure white foam. A firm alcohol punch leads off the flavor with spicy phenols and big fruity esters coming in behind. The

initial alcohol blast struck Pete as "too hot and aggressive up front," but he found "soothing hints of green cardamom, Malabar black peppercorns, and sweet rock candy" riding behind the unrestrained booziness. Tom enjoyed the "clean breadly malt" and "slightly chewy candi sugar sweetness," and felt the alcohol "deftly camouflaged." The spiciness struck Tom as "too aggressive to be truly Belgian," with big notes of clove and black pepper overtaking the malt in the finish. A solidly crafted, straightforward American interpretation of a powerful Belgian strong ale, Local 1 is perilously drinkable despite its substantial alcohol strength. Enjoy this stunning brew in moderation and proceed with caution.

# 89

Style: Belgian-Style Golden Strong Ale

ABV: 9%

IBUs: 26

Serve at: 45° to 50°



### Local 1



# Duboisson Pêche Mel' Scaldis

## Lazy Magnolia LA 31 Biere Pale



# 87

Style: Belgian Specialty Ale  
(w/Peaches)  
ABV: 7.5%  
IBUs: NA  
Serve at: 42° to 48°



**Pêche Mel' Scaldis**

### Brasserie Dubuisson

Pipaix, Belgium  
www.br-dubuisson.com (imported by Vanbergh & DeWulf, www.belgianexperts.com)  
Distribution: Throughout the United States.

### Food Pairing Recommendations

Caramel cheesecake; white chocolate mousse with espresso bean shavings  
Cheese: Fontina; Havarti

### Judges' Notes

Generally known for the blockbuster, high-octane brews (Scaldis, Scaldis Noel), Brasserie Dubuisson entered the fruit-flavored beer market just under five years ago. Of course, the brewers stayed true to their roots, and the result, Pêche Mel' Scaldis, clocks in at an impressive 8.5 percent ABV. Not unexpectedly, the nose is completely dominated by sweet, ripe peach notes backed by an alcohol booziness. Tim proclaimed the aroma "akin to walking through a peach orchard" and "like grandma's fresh baked peach pies," with no real underlying "beer" character. After some concerted effort, he did find some brandy-like alcohol notes. This is a distinctly orange-tinted brew, showing just

a hint of cloudiness, that throws a very low head which collapses almost immediately after pouring. As with the nose, the flavor is dominated by syrupy Cling peach, guava and a complex melding of exotic flavors. There was not enough "beer character" in some views to balance the slightly cloying sweetness. The peach flavors struck Tom as "dried, rather than fresh peaches," which lent a faintly off-putting mustiness to the beer. Pete and Tom both opined that the beer would benefit from more bitterness to keep the sweetness in check, as well as some "Belgian beer" spiciness to add a bit of complexity. More like peach brandy than beer, this is the ideal base for an updated Bellini.



# 87

Style: American Pale Ale  
ABV: 6%  
IBUs: 27  
Serve at: 40°



**LA 31 Biere Pale**

### Bayou Teche Brewing

Arnaudville, Louisiana  
www.bayoutechebrewing.com | (337) 303-8000  
Distribution: AL, GA, LA, MS, and NY.

### Food Pairing Recommendations

Seafood gumbo; almond-crusted fish with beurre blanc sauce  
Cheese: Cabot's Clothbound Cheddar; Colston Bassett Stilton

### Judges' Notes

Dedicated to creating beers that honor strong Acadian roots, the brewers at Bayou Teche have created a "Louisiana Pale Ale" to pair with Cajun and Creole cuisine. A faint floral hop hint wafts over notes of freshly toasted English muffins and Tupelo honey, all commingling to form a nuanced nose. Tom dug some "frail minty and peppery" hops out from under the warm, buttered toast malt notes, finding the overall aroma "too malt-centric and lacking in definition and hop character." LA Biere 31 Pale lives up to its name. It pours crystal clear and light golden, donning a persistent, velvety, snow-white head. A firm bitterness and floral/spicy hop notes carry the flavor, with the slightly nutty Belgian malts laying down a

solid foundation underneath. "Notably bitter and slightly thin-bodied" were Pete's first impressions, yet he worked past that and found "pleasant hints of strawberries and even tangerine peel." Overall, Pete found the beer "kind of neutral and lacking a distinct character." Tim found the beer "balanced toward hops," yet he enjoyed the complexity lent by "light, toasty, crusty white bread" malt notes, deeming this a "cleanly brewed session beer for hop lovers." Straddling the line between unassuming and assertive, Bayou Teche is pushing the boundaries and expanding beer's horizons. Although not yet widely distributed, LA 31 Biere Pale is capable of gracing the tables of crawfish boils throughout Acadiana and beyond.



# Odell Double Pilsner

## Stillwater Artisanal Stateside Saison

### Odell Brewing Company

Fort Collins, Colorado  
 www.odellbrewing.com | (970) 498-9070  
 Distribution: AZ, CO, ID, KS, MN, MO, NE, NM, SD and WY.

### Food Pairing Recommendations

Spicy sushi rolls with wasabi; lump crab salad with a mustard/vinegar dressing  
 Cheese: Wensleydale; P'tit Basque

### Judges' Notes

Double Pilsner is Odell Brewing Company's strongly alcoholic riff on the venerable Bohemian pilsner, though with a surprisingly low hop bitterness. Jam packed with Pils malt and less traditional citrus hop notes, this is an iconoclastic brew. Generally not found in pilsner, sweet hints of Satsuma and Meyer lemon dominate the nose, drifting over crisp, cracker-like malt notes. Pete found some "light coriander notes floating between honeyed malt and a faintly herbaceous background," and likened the aroma to a Belgian Witbier rather than Czech pilsner. This beer radiates from the glass, a sparkling yellow brew laced with flashes of gold, and topped by a fluffy head of pure white bubbles. Supported by an

emphatic hop bitterness and grassy/herbal hop notes, the sweet Ritz Cracker like malt is squarely in the forefront, with other flavors peeking in from around the edges. The malt struck Tom as "crisp and bright up front, followed by a sticky sweetness," that he felt was out of place in a pilsner with prominent alcohol heft. Contrarily, Tim enjoyed the "bracing hop bitterness in the forefront," and felt it "tamed the overt sweetness." Hop flavors were "green and grassy," rather than the expected floral and spicy notes. Though pale yellow and effervescent, Double Pilsner carries just over 8 percent ABV and suited more for sipping, rather than quaffing, on a sultry summer afternoon.

# 87

Style: Imperial Pilsner  
 ABV: 8.1%  
 IBUs: 39  
 Serve at: 40° to 45°



Double Pilsner

### Stillwater Artisanal

Baltimore, Maryland  
 www.stillwaterales.blogspot.com | (443) 668-5255  
 Distribution: AL, AZ, CA, CO, CT, DC, FL, GA, ID, IL, IN, IA, KS, KY, LA, ME, MD, MA, NY, NC, NV, OH, OR, PA, SC, TN, VA, VT, WA and WI.

### Food Pairing Recommendations

Thai coconut chicken soup; steamed lobster with garlic drawn butter  
 Cheese: Fiscalini Farmstead Bandage-Wrapped Cheddar; Selles sur Cher

### Judges' Notes

One of a growing number of "gypsy" brewers, little is known about Brian Strumke and his Baltimore-based brewing. We do, however, know that he produces quirky, occasionally off-kilter brews in styles less daring brewers tend to shun. Stillwater's Stateside Saison is just such a beer, redolent of sweet, new mown hay and peppery phenols. Riding under the grassy, spicy baseline Tom teased out "sweet, savory lemon meringue pie," shot through with hints of kiwifruit and green bananas. Not unexpectedly, this beer pours a cloudy yet deeply saturated gold crowned by a thick, creamy white head that refuses to surrender until the very end. Flavors are a bit funkier than found in traditional saisons, yet the classic notes of leather and horse

blanket are there, all supported by a tart, acidic twang. Tim delved deeper, getting under the overriding barnyard and citrus, to find a "lush Osage honey sweetness, laced with just a hint of honeysuckle" all deftly balanced with a quenching acidity. Pete commended the brewer's deft hand in using the underlying acidity and "zingy white pepper" to "sharpen rather than blow away notes of guava and ripe kumquats." This is a credible American take on the highly revered Belgian farmhouse ales, the perfect accompaniment for any meal - from backyard barbecue to haute cuisine. Still in limited production, if you can see Stateside Saison on your purveyor's shelves, grab it while you can.

# 84

Style: American Farmhouse Ale  
 ABV: 6.8%  
 IBUs: 18  
 Serve at: 45° to 50°



Stateside Saison



# European Report

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Belgium



Germany



United Kingdom



Czech Republic

A special section of *The Beer Connoisseur*, the European Report is the place to find news and feature stories from the cradles of some of the world's best beer.

In this section, our resident experts and other authoritative journalists report on stories of interest. Since its launch, stories in the European Report have included brewery visits; interviews with key personalities; histories of some of the iconic styles found in Europe; and other notes of interest about beer history.

At home in America, we've talked to some of the top importers to get their perspectives. By bringing unique styles into the

country, the importers have long been a prime influence on the craft scene and were the first to introduce American beer lovers to the iconic styles brewed in Europe. It was the English who launched IPA, the current calling card of craft. It was the Belgians who have perfected sours, a current new frontier for America's more nimble microbrewers.

The report also covers news, festivals, cuisine and culture in ways that can help our readers plan ahead for travel in Europe. Let us take you to the source.

*We invite you to pour your favorite European ale, lager or lambic, then hoist a glass, relax and enjoy our special section.*

## CONTENTS

### *The Report:*

Belgium: New Beers Are Pouring In

Czech Republic: Rattled by Radlers

Germany: Warsteiner Gets Scare

UK: BrewDogs Invade

### *Czech Republic:*

Pilsner Urquell Celebrates

### *United Kingdom:*

A Cyder Familias

### *Featured Beers:*

Pilsner Urquell, Bockor OMER.,  
Bockor Cuvée Des Jacobins Rouge,  
St. Feuillien Saison, St. Feuillien  
Grand Cru, Aspell Cuvée Chevallier,  
Aspell Perronelle's Blush Cyder,  
Aspell English Dry Cyder



# The Report

## *BELGIUM: New Beers, Draft On Tap* – By Carl Kins

The year 2014 will mark the 100th anniversary of the start of World War I and commemorations in Belgium will abound. Brewers are anticipating this and are launching new beers such as Ypres by Struise Brouwers, plus Remembrance, a new one from Eutropius, and Passchendaele from Van Honsebrouck.

The Great War is not the only reason for launching new beers. Indeed, new products abound. To name just a few really interesting ones, Van Honsebrouck (them again) launched Kasteel Hoppy, a 6.5 percent ABV blond ale loaded with hops, and Trignac, a tripel aged in Cognac barrels. Gueuzerie Tilquin released a blue plum-based beer called Quetsche and Cantillon used rhubarb for its most recent version of Zwanze (only available at the brewery).

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The Norbertine abbey of Averbode just announced plans to launch a range of beers and cheeses. What is clear is that the monks will not brew it at first, although they aim to install a small test brewhouse in the abbey before moving on to contract brewing.

Important news from the Chimay trappists about the Chimay Dorée, their table beer at 4.8 percent ABV. Until recently, you could only taste it at their bar Poteaupré. Recently, however, they decided to serve it on draft in a limited number of Belgian beer bars. This is the third trappist beer on draft, next to Westmalle Dubbel and Chimay Tripel.

A fight is ongoing about the water Rochefort trappist brewery uses for brewing. Their industrial neighbour Lhois wants to expand the limestone

quarry another 60 meters below the approved level of 220 meters below sea level, and this is expected to dry up the source which provides the Fathers water for their beer.

In the Netherlands, the De Kievit trappist brewery at Zundert is expected to release its first beers at the end of this year.

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The former Brussels Stock Exchange building will be converted into the Belgian Beer Temple by 2018, a museum dedicated to the beers of Belgium. You cannot get more symbolic than this, right?

The building is a 19th Century standard near the capitol's famed Grand Palace and presents the Corinthian columns of a classic temple.

*Here are some more items from Belgium.*

- Poperinge's Hop Museum recently installed a beer wall, showcasing all currently existing Belgian beers. There are approximately 1,400 of them.

- Two noteworthy culinary novelties popped up recently. The first one is a collaboration between Bockor and chocolate maker Choc Carré, They have created pralines with liquid beer filling. Beer such as Kriek Max and Omer really is at the core of the praline, which they call Chocobeer.

- The second crazy initiative consists of "tattooing" fish and meat such as steaks with "beer ink." Basically Vincent Florizoone, who runs the restaurant Grand Cabaret at Nieuwpoort, and Nicholas Harmon of Maine cook beer into a syrup, or about a tenth of its original volume. They use Boon Oude Kriek and some added beetroot sap for the red ink and Westmalle Tripel and squid ink for black ink.

Enjoy!

## *CZECH REPUBLIC: Cider and Radlers Rise*

– By Max Bahnson

The Czech Brewer and Maltsters Association have released official industry figures for 2012. The overall output grew by 2.75 percent. Much of that growth was driven by a sharp rise in exports (nine percent) and radlers. In fact, in their press release the Association points out that the production of traditional beers had continued to fall.

Although many in the Czech beer industry seem to believe that beer and soda mixes still have potential for growth, and new flavours were introduced this year. There were some signs, however, that point to two emerging trends.

Last April the Czech subsidiary of Heineken presented Krušovice Pšenice, a very much by the numbers German style weizen that has received solid advertising support and has been deployed at most bars tied to the brand. Although weizens aren't a rarity, this is the first of its kind from a major brewery since Gambrinus Bilé was discontinued more than a decade ago.

Meanwhile, Plzeňský Prazdroj, which has decided to give more marketing support to Fénix, their Belgian style wheat beer launched last year, presented Kingswood, an apple cider very much modelled after the likes of Magners or Strongbow. The juice of freshly pressed apples is a popular beverage among Czechs in the late summer and early autumn, but cider has always been a rarity. In the last years some small producers have popped up, mostly making Austrian or Breton style ciders. The small producers have mixed feelings about Kingswood. On the one hand, they welcome the attention it will bring to the drink. On the other, they

# The Report



fear Prazdroj will throw its considerable corporate weight around and push them out of the market.

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In the so-called mycotoxin affair, Dtest, the Czech version of Consumer Reports, published the results of a series of test they carried out on beers from regional and big breweries. According to these tests, beers from Primátor, Svijany, Vyškov and Žatec were found to have dangerous levels of mycotoxins. Both the affected breweries and the trade association were quick to respond, and to commission their own tests, which produced completely different results. The breweries have announced they would take legal action against Dtest, which has refused to make public the name of the laboratory that did the test and the methodology that was used.

## *GERMANY: Oktoberfest Beer Tents Falling Short?*

– By Jonathan Ingram

**A** Munich newspaper reported that authorities warned brewers and their bartenders about short pours prior to this year's Oktoberfest, the annual gathering that draws an estimated 7 million beer drinkers over the course of 15 days.

The official responsible for order in the city of Munich said bartenders who failed to pour full liters in the traditional beer steins by including too much foam risked being banished. In a story appearing in the *Münchner Merkur*, Wilfried Blume-Beyerle also stated that tent operators could face sanctions, especially if as many as three bartenders in one tent were found to be lacking on their pours.

According to other media sources, some tents at the Oktoberfest consistently have poured only 0.8 liters of beer to patrons paying as much as \$13 for a full 1.0 liter. The Kafer's Oktoberfest Tent was reported to be the worst offender. Löwenbräu was rated as the best

place for a full stein, regularly filling 0.94 liters.

As has been typical, the average cost of beer went up by over three percent again this year. The price of beer at the festival has continued to climb each year since 1995.

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Warsteiner suffered a setback in September when wastewater discharged from the brewery was discovered to have Legionnaire's Disease bacteria. The largest privately owned brewery in Germany was not considered the source of an outbreak of the disease in the town of Warstein, where the illness infected more than 160 people.

Since brewing temperatures are more than high enough to kill the legionella bacteria responsible for the disease, the Warsteiner beer was regarded as safe to drink. Nevertheless, tourists were temporarily warned to stay away from the area of the brewery located in the North Rhine Westphalia region.

The Environment Ministry said the brewery was not regarded as the original source of the outbreak. It was believed the bacteria entered the Warsteiner sewage system through either airborne means or via water coming into the brewery.

Within 10 days of the wastewater discovery, authorities tested samples of Warsteiner beer and water, declaring both to be safe.

## *UNITED KINGDOM: BrewDogs Visit America*

– by Carolyn Smagalski

**F**or quite a few years, Martin Dickie and James Watt, founders of BrewDog in Scotland, have been getting in their licks during a plethora of wild antics designed for publicity. The duo has been wild enough, it seems, for reality TV. Their attention-getting schemes have been rewarded with a contract for six episodes on the Esquire Network by Custom Productions and Redtail Media.

In one episode about American independence, the BrewDogs targeted a small town just outside Philadelphia for some steamy filming. During the Pottstown Fourth of July Parade, the extremists made their U.S. video debut on a float, mashing in a new beer for the patriots among us. They declared that strands of the yeast's DNA were digitally encoded with the preamble to the Declaration of Independence, which they claimed meant each batch contained 328 million copies of the preamble.

While Executive Producers Steve Stockman, Jared Cotton and Chris Burke were busy filming, the Advertising Standards Authority in the UK focused their evil eye-piece on BrewDog's website. They cited Dickie and Watt for offensive language over such phrases as "corporate beer whores," "rip you straight to the tit," and, their own self-descriptive phrase, "apocalyptic mother fu\*ker of a craft brewery."

Social networking fans of the brewery struck back against the Advertising Standards Authority with Twitter and Facebook posts of #KissMyASA. BrewDog, which recently opened 42,000 shares of stock to the public, was grateful for the publicity.

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Perspective is everything. In a surprise action, tiny Belleville Brewery was issued a cease-and-desist letter by the legal team of Anheuser-Busch InBev for trademark infringement in the UK. It seems that the title of Belleville Brewery, named after Belleville Primary School where children of the founders attended school, was too "visually and aurally similar" to AB InBev's Belle-Vue brand of fruit beer. Their complaint argued the similarity was "bound to lead to deception and confusion," despite the fact that Belleville, a brewery that serves 30 local establishments, had been in operation for just three months.

With no funds to fight the giant, it is likely Belleville will change its name to Northcote, a name of a former local brewery now defunct and a name currently used on the Belleville's Northcote Blonde. 🍷





## *Pilsner Urquell Celebrates 150 Years in America*

# *The Beer From Pilsen That Changed Beer*

*By Max Bahnson*

This is a story that started in a Western Bohemian town in the late 1830's, when a group of burghers, who were also brewing rights holders, decided to fight fire with fire. The town had been flooded with cold fermented beers from nearby Bavaria that were superior in quality (and sold at a better price) than the warm fermented brews that had been the norm since the 13th Century.

In 1838 these burghers/brewers started to draw plans to set up their own brewery, purpose built for this new and increasingly popular style. Their goal, legend says, was to make the best beer. To achieve that, they introduced what was then called "the English way of malting" that dried the grain in kilns with indirect heat, which was more efficient than the traditional direct coal or wood fired method. This approach could produce pale malts, which were becoming a favourite among brewers in many countries.

The most important thing, however, was to find a good brewmaster, one who would know his way around this kind of beer. They found him, logically, in Bavaria; a brewer was recommended who had worked with Anton Dreher and Gabriel Sedlmayr, two of the most important figures in the history of brewing. His name was Josef Groll. The name of the town was, and still is, Pilsen, and the name of the beer today is Pilsner Urquell.

Once the brewery had been built, Groll, who had brought with him a culture of lager yeast, was able to put his skills into practice, and in November 1842, the first batch of the Pilsner beer was presented to the world. It was different to pretty much any other beer at



Head brewer Berka leads a tour through the original wooden casks in the cellar at Pilsen.

the time, rich gold in colour, aromatic, truly innovative. In a way, it was also a global beer from the start. Brewed by a Bavarian, using Czech barley malted the "English way", and spiced, of course, with local hops, the Pilsner was more similar to the pale ales that were already very popular among the British.

The English link might be a bit of a stretch. (One of the founders of the brewery went to England in the late 1830's to gather information on new brewing and malting techniques, but there is no documentary evidence that he wanted to emulate a pale ale.) The fact is that the new beer was an almost immediate success, and not only in its home town. A year later it would show up in Prague, and soon it would start being

exported to Vienna and all over the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and still further, reaching American shores, and drinkers, by 1873. By 1913, Pilsner Urquell was producing 850,000 barrels a year, which made it the biggest brewery in the Empire.

Once full-scale production began, Pilsner Urquell started distribution in the U.S., where this year the brand celebrates the 150th anniversary of its arrival. Since full-scale production began, Pilsner Urquell is still being brewed in exactly the same place, using the same prized source of underground water, characterised by its almost distilled-like softness, and following the same recipe designed in 1842 and, with a few concessions to modernity, the same processes.



Czech Republic

## Feature Story

*"But then it was time to go to the now legendary cellars of the brewery, where the interview would take the shape of a friendly chat over a few beers at the pub."*

Today, Josef Groll's cap is worn by Václav Berka. Like Groll, he comes from a brewing family. "My dad was a brewer here," he said when I met him on a rainy afternoon in late May. "When I was a child I used to run around the brewery all the time. I loved it here". His career choice was very easy – he studied Fermentation Technology at the almost legendary Industrial High School in Prague, the alma mater of most Czech brewmasters since 1868. He would later continue at the city's Institute of Chemical Technology.

After graduating, he returned to where he started working for Plzeňský Pivovar n.p., the state company the Communist regime had set up to run several breweries in West Bohemia. He was in charge of inventory of raw materials, later he would work as sklep mistr (the person in charge of the lagering cellars) and a few years later he would become Pilsner Urquell's head brewer.

Being the face of the country's favourite beer, Berka is rather well known in the Czech Republic, an almost larger than life figure. In reality, he is a really friendly guy, easy on the smile, the sort you can end up establishing a casual friendship with while sharing a table at a traditional Czech pub. He showed me around the brewery, starting with the malting operations.

Although it's still common for some Czech breweries to produce their own malts, there was a time when that was the rule. It was believed that only by having control over the quality of the malts could a brewer guarantee the quality of his beers. That is the reason why Pilsner Urquell still produces its own malts.

Following the production process, we visited the heart of the brewery, the brewhouse. One of the things that characterises Czech brewing tradition is

its stubborn refusal to abandon decoction mashing. Even in Germany, there are many voices who consider this an unnecessary process. It consists of taking part of the wort, boiling it in a separate kettle and returning it to the mash tun. Its detractors claim that decoction only means more time and higher consumption of energy only to get the same results they can get with an infusion mash. Berka would have none of it. "A triple decoction mash," he explains with conviction, "is as much a part of the character of Pilsner Urquell as Saaz hops. It gives the beer not only its signature mouthfeel, but also its colour." At Pilsner Urquell in particular, they still decoct in copper kettles that are heated with an open fire. Temperatures at the bottom of the kettle can reach up to 600 °C, and, despite a system of copper chains that swirl the wort to prevent it from burning, some of the sugars caramelize.

Up until this point in the tour, Berka had been very businesslike, almost like a top manager in a big company, happy to talk about what he and his company do. Up until then, I felt pretty much like another one of the many journalists, surely, who interview him every year. He was doing his job as the face of one of the most iconic beers in the world and I was doing my job asking questions and getting the information I needed for an article. But then it was time to go to the now legendary cellars of the brewery, where the interview would take the shape of a friendly chat over a few beers at a pub.

Lager beers (or Bavarian-style beers, as they were referred to in Bohemia in the mid-19th Century) require low temperatures for both fermenting and maturing. Aware of this, the founders of Pilsner Urquell had a network of deep cellars dug below the brewery. As

demand grew, new sections were added until the cellars became an almost maze-like complex nine kilometers long that housed thousands of wooden casks for fermenting and lagering.

In 1992 the barrels became history and Pilsner Urquell adopted modern stainless steel, cylindro-conical tanks. Berka says that it was a necessary step in order to improve quality management, something that, due to the scale of the brewery, had become extremely difficult.

Not all of the casks would be dismantled and taken away; one section was kept working. Today, this part of the cellars is the culminating point of every brewery tour, the moment when visitors who come from all over the world can taste the legendary beer drawn right from one of the lagering casks. But PR or nostalgia weren't the reasons behind the decision to keep that bit of history alive. According to Berka, it was the only way to make sure that the technological changes would not mean a change in the character of the beer. They needed those barrels to see that the beer stayed the same.

The Pilsner Urquell historical cellars are an amazing place, indeed. It's literally like travelling back in time. The temperature is kept constant and naturally low all year round. I followed Václav until we reached a wing with open fermenters with dates and temperatures chalked on the front, and then we went to a neighboring wing, walking along the narrow corridor left between the rows of massive lagering barrels. Beers were drawn from one of them and we found a barrel-cum stool table where we would spend the next hour or so talking about beer, pubs, brewing and tradition.

There's a pearl of Czech beer wisdom that goes "A beer is brewed at the brewery,



A second generation brewer, Berka believes the triple decoction mash is what distinguishes Pilsner Urquell.

but made at the pub.” Like the proper beer lover he is, Václav understands the meaning of this very well; it’s all part of a chain that ends when a beer gets to the consumer. For him, how the beer is taken care of at a pub, and how it’s tapped, is a critical part of the whole process, if not the most important. All the work a brewer has done will mean nothing if the drinker gets a beer in bad condition, and that’s why he has made it a personal mission to institute the figure of the Tapster Legends.

Every year, Pilsner Urquell holds the Master Bartender competition, which chooses the world’s best tapster. Berka’s vision, however, goes beyond that. He explained to me that he got this idea after seeing historical records that mentioned by name legendary tapsters of the past, people whose skills at pouring beers were admired by drinkers. In his opinion, just like the kitchen of a restaurant is the responsibility of

one person, the head Chef, the taps at a pub should be the responsibility of one person, whose job should be to see that the beer is given the care it requires and train the staff to serve it the best possible way. He also told me how he’s been working with the Pilsner Urquell ambassadors in America to spread his concept, introducing the dispensing system typically used by Pilsner Urquell pubs in the Czech Republic along with the proper half litre mugs to serve the beer – at the right temperature, of course.

We spoke some more about different pubs we both know and he gave me a quick lesson on how to draw a beer from the lagering barrel, something that is much harder than it looks, which is the reason why it is seen almost as an art form in the Czech Republic. At this time, I asked him what would Josef Groll think if he visited the brewery today. “He would be surprised”, Václav said. “Very surprised, but happy.” “Would he recognise

the beer, would he like it?” I asked. “Of course!” he said with a huge smile, before suggesting we have yet another beer.

Pilsner Urquell claims that its beer hasn’t changed in its 170 year history and they have lab analyses to back that up. There are people who might claim to have reasons to doubt that, but even the staunchest among them would agree that Pilsner Urquell is an icon of Czech brewing and the benchmark for pale lagers the world over.

A visit to the brewery itself, with its history, stories and personalities like Václav Berka, should be on the list of every beer lover in the world, regardless of what their opinion of the beer might be. Pilsner Urquell, after all, not only gave birth to the defining Czech beer style, but also to, arguably, the most influential beer in modern history, the one that would eventually become the archetype of beer for most people around the world. 🍷



# Aspall Cyder Reunites States, Britain

*“It burns in your throat, boils in your stomach... and tastes almost exactly like pure, melted gold.”*

- Comment in Roald Dahl’s “Fantastic Mr. Fox” after the first taste of the cider stolen from one of the farmers.

By Seth Levy

For two nations that share a language and history, America and England’s cultures differ in surprising ways. Unlike the Brits, we like our lager cold and our cars on the right. But until recently, both nations had reached a tipsy, unfortunate consensus that cider is a low quality beverage.

It wasn’t always this way. American forefathers such as John Adams quaffed bracing drafts of hard cider for breakfast, and the burning apple elixir played a role in the nation’s westward expansion. (Did you think Johnny Appleseed was planting those trees for pie?) In Britain, cider was the drink of nobility, who rejected imported wine and drank refined, bottle-fermented ciders as a matter of national pride.

But during my brief stint at Oxford, I have fuzzy, terrible memories of drinking three-liter plastic bottles of “Fortified” Cider, which had a foul acetone aroma. Ordering draft cider at the pub earned a raised eyebrow from the barkeep, who asked if it was for my girlfriend. My girlfriend, who knew better, drank Young’s Bitter.



A classic Suffolk entrance leads to modern cider-making methods.

Things were worse in America. Cider had a brief, heavily sweetened resurgence in the 1990’s, but was a challenge to locate for those willing to endure such a poor product. Cider in the U.S. has also experienced an identity crisis, frequently mistaken for its soft, sweet cousin – the apple cider drink traditionally served with donuts in the fall.

From the esteemed drink of revolutionaries and kings, to a mere catalyst for high fructose hangovers: cider has certainly fallen from grace. What happened to cider, and will it rise again?

To get to the core of the cider story, I called Henry Chevallier Guild. Henry and his brother, Barry, are the ninth generation of Chevalliers to operate Aspall Cyder of Suffolk, the oldest continuously operating cider makers in England. The brothers’ great, great, great, great, great grandfather, Clement Benjamin Chevallier, inherited the family estate from his great uncle and, missing the beverage of his homeland, imported the needed apple trees

from the Channel Island of Jersey, plus a stone wheel and trough from a French island off the coast of Normandy, and established Aspall Cyder in 1728.

The cider-soaked lineage of his family qualifies Henry Chevallier, who generally represents the family business when it comes to the media, as an expert. The Chevalliers of Aspall Hall, as the family compound is known, are a well known clan who emigrated to England from the Channel Island of Jersey. Their genealogic prowess doesn’t stop there – the family is related to both William the Conqueror and King Henry I, though Chevallier said he’s “about as closely related to the Crown as you are, Seth!”

Times have changed since apples were grounded to a pulp by the Aspall ancestors with the stone wheel and trough. Aspall’s modern operation grinds more than 11,000 tons of apples a year into cider. But, selecting the varieties of apples is as important today as it was

PHOTO COURTESY THE CYDER HOUSE, ASPALL HALL



eight generations ago. According to Chevallier, “There are three primary types of apples: sweet apples, sour apples, and bittersweet apples.”

Each variety has a different virtue, and an unblended cider would either be “too sweet, too thin and sour, or without any body or structure.” Aspall blends all three varieties, paying special attention to the bittersweet apples, which he describes as “rather like the red grape of apples, with loads of tannins, no acidity, but a lovely body and structure.”

The apples are hand-graded, undergo several washes, are ground to a pulp, and are crushed under enormous pressure in hydraulic presses. At this point, the product is a sweet apple juice, of which Aspall sells a small quantity. In the U.S., some orchards allow natural yeasts and bacteria a brief reign, which converts some of the juice’s abundant sugars into acids and adds faint carbonation. The juice becomes the more complex, but still non-alcoholic cider we enjoy on hayrides. While most “sweet” U.S. ciders are pasteurized at this point, Aspall doesn’t pasteurize its juice at all.

The Chevalliers’ cider follows a different trajectory entirely from its unpasteurized sweet apple juice stage. With the addition of a champagne yeast, the cider ferments for several weeks in stainless steel vats. But what about doing wild fermentations, in wooden casks, with ambient yeasts? “We gave it a try,” said Chevallier. “Most of them were fair-to-middling, some of them were absolutely disgusting, and one was the best cider I’ve ever had in my life. It’s simply too risky. We do some limited-editions, cask-aged and all, but we wouldn’t make a go of it on a large scale.”

After the initial fermentation, Aspall’s racks the cider off the lees and ages it for up to four months, which, according to Henry, “is quite important if it’s got a lot of bittersweet apples in it. The aging mellows out the phenolic compounds, which can be quite unpleasant otherwise, and really stick to one’s taste-buds.” Some of Henry’s bottled ciders receive a “dosage” of sweet apple juice or sugar to stimulate bottle fermentation, adding delicate carbonation and more complex flavors.

To make beer, brewers skillfully manipulate at least four ingredients, converting complex starches into simple sugars, and adjusting thousands of variables. Cider operates under

a different paradigm: the direct conversion of fruit to beverage, a process much closer to wine-making. The blending, the dosage, the talk of “terroir,” it all sounds like wine to me.

Regardless of how it’s made, the truth of the liquid is in the drinking. So what exactly is cider? Something you quaff by the pint, like beer, or something fussy that you “swirl, sip and spit,” like wine? Chevallier suggests that cider occupies a unique position between wine and beer: too refreshing to be *hauteur*, yet too refined to be *blue-collar*.

He describes the whole process as “emulating the German wine-making traditions of the Moselle valley. We market our ciders as a wine. All English ciders were traditionally consumed as a wine. But, our biggest selling product is sold by the pint in pubs! We don’t see beer as a competitor at all. People might start off on our cider, but they are moving on to something else as the evening progresses. At five percent alcohol, it’s a bit strong for the British consumer to have more than a few. After four, perhaps you’d be having a bit too much fun!” So what does Henry, cider enthusiasts that he is, move on to after a few ciders? “When I’m in America, I’m drawn to Dogfish Head 60 Minute in a nearly instinctive way. If it’s on tap, I know that it’s good and that’s what I’m ordering!”

Quaffing five percent pints of cider in the pub sounds a lot like beer! Henry muddles the waters further as he delves deeply into the history of cider, where strong, nine percent ABV bottled “Cyder” was sipped by Nobility, and two percent “ciderkin,” made from the second pressing of the apples, was consumed by working men who found it “cheap, refreshing, and safer than water.”

I was able to locate an attractive bottle of Aspall’s Perronelle’s Blush in the U.S., brewed in honor of Henry’s grandmother, Perronelle Chevallier. He explained that it was inspired by Kir Royale, but American laws required the use of blackberry juice, rather than the liqueur, for the export version.

I was apprehensive, as I find some ciders cloying even without the berry, but I dove in nonetheless. The Blush appears to be light amber with a hint of purple and topped with a thin lacing of foam. The initial aroma is of

sour-apple candy with a touch of vinegar, but as it warms, a faint, flowery, berry aroma edges in. There’s a prickle of carbonation on the tongue, and an opening salvo of sharp, malic apple. The berry waits until the aftertaste, where its warm, jammy flavor muscles in and wipes away the acidity. The berry is so rich, it’s almost “meaty,” but a drying tannic finish leaves me thirsty for more.

It’s complex enough to enjoy alone, as I did, but it would also be a provocative and ideal pairing with a fresh summer desert like cheesecake or a granita. This is no hayride cider, and certainly nothing I’d be embarrassed to order in a pub or serve to guests.

If cider can be this good, then why the terrible reputation? According to Chevallier, a complex chain of events drove cider into disrepute. First, a tax on cider in the late 1700’s reduced consumption. Second, a growing horror of the effects of excess gin consumption led to Hogarth’s famous painting “Gin Lane,” and spurred Parliament to encourage the consumption of beer— but not cider. Henry suggests that in the U.S., increased grain production gave brewers an edge over cider-makers before Prohibition set back consumption of all artisan alcoholic beverages 40 years! When Chevallier’s father took over the business in 1970, Aspall had strongly diversified, also making apple juice and apple cider vinegar. The emphasis by Henry and Barry on cider as a mainstay came later, during an era when small producers of craft beverages started re-making the drinkable world.

Since Henry’s family first planted its orchards, the fortunes of nations rose and fell, and cider, once the beverage of nobility, became a shadow of itself. Aspall Cyder is inextricably intertwined with the history of cider making and cider drinking: there at the dawn of the cider age, mourning its decline, and playing a role in its resurgence. As my cider warms in the glass, I reflect on the paradoxes of this simple drink. Quenching yet complex, sweet but also sour, fallen yet rising again, cider unifies the past with the future in both America and Britain. 🌿



Belgium



Germany



United Kingdom



Czech Republic

## Featured European Beers



### Pilsner Urquell

#### **Pilsner Urquell Brewery**

Plzeň, Czech Republic  
[www.pilsnerurquell.com](http://www.pilsnerurquell.com)

One of the first beers brewed with light roasted malt, triple decoction gives this, the original pilsner, its golden color and a distinct series of taste notes.

---



### Bockor OMER.

#### **Bockor Brouwerij**

Bellegem, Belgium  
[www.bockor.be](http://www.bockor.be)

Pale golden, Omer has a firm malt character with pleasant hop bitterness and warm, bready aroma. Tasted from a signature glass, it pleases the eye, nose and palate.

---



### Bockor Cuvée Des Jacobins Rouge

#### **Bockor Brouwerij**

Bellegem, Belgium  
[www.bockor.be](http://www.bockor.be)

This is a complex, beautiful sour beer. It has a robust character but is sophisticated with a full body and overtones of vanilla, dried cherry, stone fruit and cocoa.

---



### St. Feuillien Saison

#### **Brasserie St. Feuillien**

Le Roeulx, Belgium  
[www.st-feuillien.com](http://www.st-feuillien.com)

A golden blonde ale, this saison is a top-fermented classique. Thanks to secondary fermentation in the bottle, it has an unmistakable flavor full of nuance and a slight tang.

---



### St. Feuillien Grand Cru

#### **Brasserie St. Feuillien**

Le Roeulx, Belgium.

[www.st-feuillien.com](http://www.st-feuillien.com)

Pale in color, Grand Cru has brilliant clarity. The nose is a cascade of hoppy aromas and rich fruitiness. A second fermentation leads to lingering hoppiness followed by an intense, pleasant bitterness.

---



### Aspall Cuvée Chevallier English Cyder

#### **The Cyder House, Aspall Hall**

Suffolk, England  
[www.aspall.co.uk](http://www.aspall.co.uk)

An elegant double-fermented cider (11% ABV) made with higher acidity apples, it mirrors classic champagne. A slight earthiness joins hints of pineapple.

---



### Aspall Perronelle's Blush English Draft Cider

#### **The Cyder House, Aspall Hall**

Suffolk, England  
[www.aspall.co.uk](http://www.aspall.co.uk)

There is a subtle blackberry aroma and aftertaste with a hint of traditional cider apple in this blush. A silky palate balances sweetness and acidity.

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### Aspall English Dry Draft Cider

#### **The Cyder House, Aspall Hall**

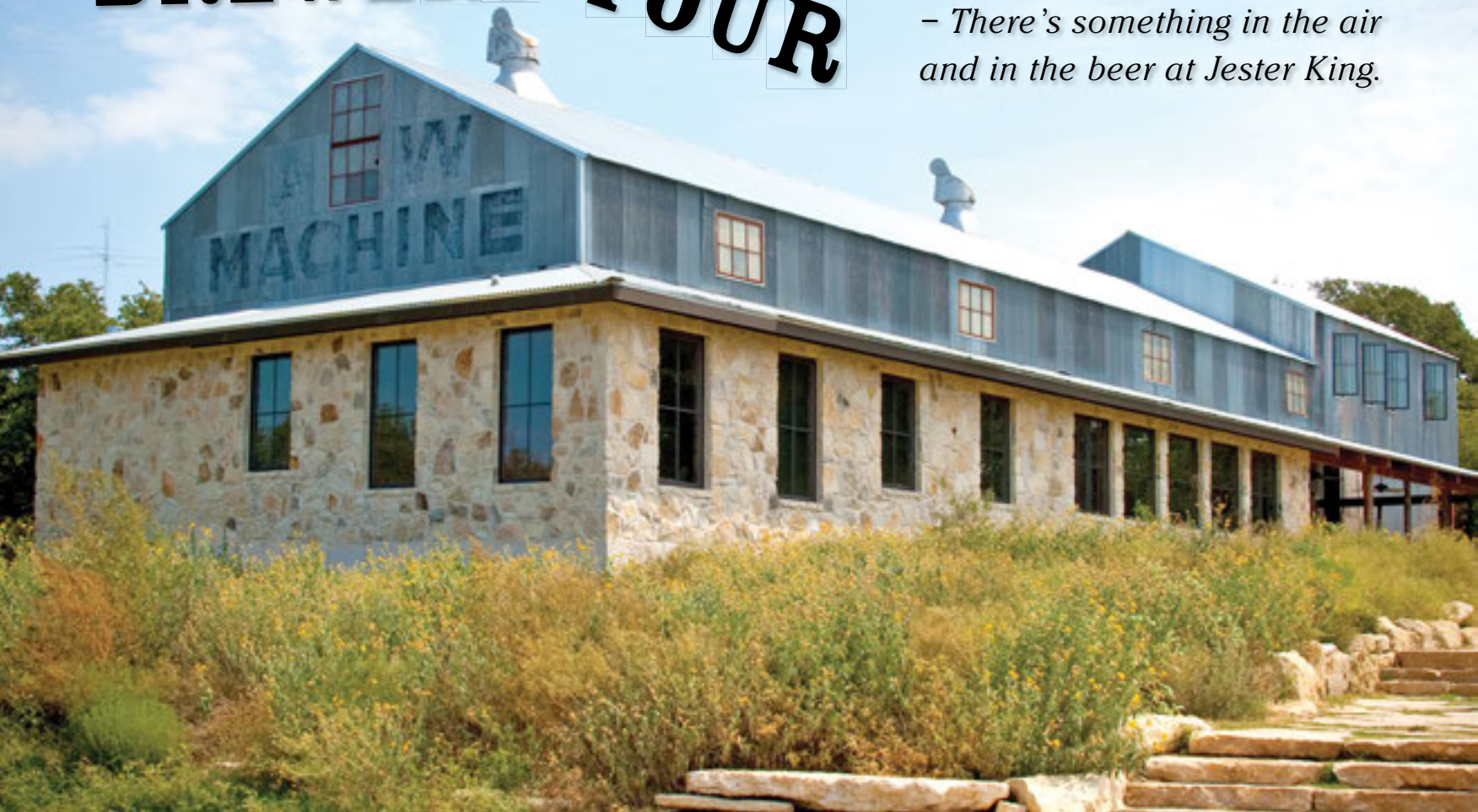
Suffolk, England  
[www.aspall.co.uk](http://www.aspall.co.uk)

Pale golden in color, with a delicate apple aroma, this dry and refreshing cider is reminiscent of brut champagne and makes an excellent aperitif.

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# BREWERY TOUR

– *There’s something in the air and in the beer at Jester King.*



*By Jonathan Ingram*

**T**he heaves and limestone outcroppings of the Texas Hill Country on the west side of Austin produce a dramatic landscape traversed by waterways big and small. In the midst of this geographical wonder, where scrub oak and mesquite add greenery and shade to the chalky terrain, resides the Jester King brewhouse, a re-located Victorian farmhouse.

Jester King produces some of the most unique hand-crafted beers in America in such limited editions that the best bet for finding one may be the brewery itself. Jeff Stuffings, who gave up a legal career, and his brother Michael Steffing, who left behind a career in finance, co-founded Jester King in 2010 and have since been joined by partner Ron Extract, who previously worked at U.S. importer Shelton Brothers.

On this Texas ranch, the owners are dedicated to the traditional farmhouse methods. Additionally, their development of barrel-fermented beers fueled by yeast from French Flanders and local wild Hill Country yeast requires a good deal of time and hands-on care. The finished products are hand-bottled and packaged, a process that takes up all the available room in the relatively small 30-barrel brewhouse. Given these demands, which can include bottle conditioning, tours and tastings are limited to Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays.

Generally, it’s Stuffings who hosts the tours. When standing on a short ladder in the barrel house surrounded by a crowd of



connoisseurs, his presentation was reminiscent of a political stump speech or revival meeting – except for its dedication to beer and Jester King’s unique processes. There was also the acknowledgement that even farmhouse brewing, where the fruit, for example, is added to barrels by hand, needs a little modern help. Keeping up with all the variations in the racks of barrels surrounding him, said Stuffings, requires “a computer and a spread sheet.”

The Jester King list includes traditional saison creations plus beers like those made with cedar chips (El Cedro), and barrel-aged brews made with pecan-smoked malt (Salt Lick) or raspberries (Atrial Rubicite). There’s also a couple of “Viking beers” based on traditional Swedish brews. “We really try to keep a strong focus on the creative side,” said Extract. “It’s not about spices. It’s letting the yeast drive the train and see what we can do to coax flavor out of it. We really want to show some creativity.”

What is driving the creative pursuit over the long haul, beyond the constant experimenting with blending beers and using fresh fruit or wood influences, are beers using strains of wild Hill Country yeast. Currently, the limited editions of beers using this wild yeast are blended together with beers fermented by traditional farmhouse yeast sourced in France from Brasserie Thiriez.

It’s not always a precise process, especially when it comes to blending or secondary yeast inoculations. Last year, 2,000 of

PHOTOS COURTESY JESTER KING BREWERY

the wooden barrels were produced and the beers in only 1,200 of those barrels were sent to market.

The barrel house roof is where coolships with wort are placed during winter months to gather wild yeast strains, which are then isolated and propagated by contemporary lab processes. The goal is eventually to produce beers that are made with 100 percent wild Hill Country yeast.

"It requires a lot of the right conditions to work properly," said Extract. "One strain took off within a week. One took more than two months for the fermentation process to begin. This is an example of enhancing nature. We're focused on the essence of fermentation and were using batches of organisms that only exist here."

It may be a long and complicated undertaking, but not one made solely by the small staff at Jester King. "We stay in touch with a lot of members of the craft beer community who already have the knowledge about how to do this," said Extract. That list includes brewers from Cantillon in Belgium, and brewers from some well known U.S. brands such as Russian River, Jolly Pumpkin and Allagash.

Jester King has a line-up of six year-round brews made with the farmhouse yeast of Thiriez, the brewery's own well water and mostly with organic ingredients. Thus far the brewery has introduced 19 limited edition brews, including several collaborations with Mikkeller and the blends using wild Hill Country yeast and occasionally brettanomyces. The goal is to produce clear, fruity ales with a dry finish. This includes the distinct sour beers, which are not of the sugary and vinegary variety.

Those visiting for the tour and tastings can order wood-fired pizza at Stanley's Farmhouse Pizza, which shares some of the rustic ranchland at Jester King. Since the beer often reflects the

Hill Country, a visit to the brewery, located on a relatively obscure unpaved entrance road, is an infusion of sorts. The magic of the land mixed with a brief brewery tour plus tastings of artisanal brews at open air serving tables – the same open air that produces some of the wild yeast – makes for a remarkable afternoon or evening. 🍷

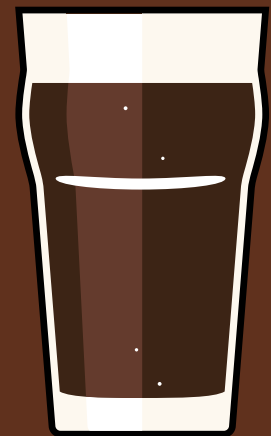


## Jester King Brewery

13005 Fitzhugh Rd., Bldg. B  
Austin, TX 78736  
(512) 537-5100  
[www.jesterkingbrewery.com](http://www.jesterkingbrewery.com)

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# ST. LOUIS BREWING

By Phil Farrell

St. Louis may have a long, rich brewing history, but in the first 75 years of the 20th Century most of it disappeared as more than 300 breweries closed their doors.

By the time Thomas Schlafly was a practicing estate attorney in 1977, there were only two remaining breweries in the St. Louis metro area, including, of course, the Anheuser-Busch Brewing Company. Considering no brewpub had opened in the state since before Prohibition, when Tom and business partner Dan Kopman opened the Schlafly Tap Room in 1991, they were rewriting the book.

The Schlafly Tap Room opened in a century-old building where the John S. Swift Printing Company had operated until 1969. Business failures and neglect in this vicinity during the 1970's led to the abandonment of entire city blocks. A huge fire consumed most of the neighborhood in 1976. Flames stopped just short of the Swift building, however, but there was extensive smoke and water damage.

Although spared direct destruction by fire, the Swift building was slated for demolition in the 1980's prior to Schlafly and Kopman buying it. Thankfully the city ran out of money before the wrecking ball finished what smoke and water had not destroyed. Once installed, the brewery flourished and a second complementary property was re-purposed and opened in 2003 as the Schlafly Bottleworks. When visiting St. Louis, both locations may be visited in a single day with a little planning, but there is more than enough to enjoy over a long weekend.

The St. Louis Brewery is the name of the company that brews and distributes Schlafly beer just as the Boston Beer Company brews Samuel Adams. There is only one proper pronunciation of the eponymous brand name. The "Sch" has the sound of universal silence - shhh. The "laf" is pronounced the same as the word laugh and the "ly" has a long e pronunciation - the same as the proper name Lee. You end up with three syllables and the emphasis on the middle one: Shh-LAF-lee.

Both Schlafly breweries are restaurants with a full slate of specials and monthly festivals. The Schlafly Tap Room is a large multi-level brewpub with only the brewery cellar not routinely open to the public. While tours do occur at the Tap Room they are usually associated with festivals and special events. The Schlafly Bottleworks is a 20-minute ride to the west in Maplewood, Missouri. There you will find a production brewery and restaurant with a gift shop, ample indoor and outdoor seating and multiple bars as well as brewery tours on weekends. The tour takes about an hour and free tickets are available at the gift shop counter.

The neighborhood is an eclectic mix of residential and commercial buildings, with the type of stores and cafes that invite walk-in shoppers. The Schlafly Bottleworks continued the Tap Room's good neighbor tradition of hosting community events and featuring local entertainers. The Wednesday Farmer's Market, a

# BREWERY TOUR

tribute to the building's roots as a grocery store, will sometimes interrupt the tour schedule with a weekend market.

The tour starts in a well appointed room called the "Brewseum", with memorabilia chronicling the long, rich history of brewing in St. Louis. The tour follows the brewing process covering the grain mill, mash, lauder, boil and whirlpool kettles as well as the fermenters and packaging equipment. The vessels are larger and optimized as a production brewery, unlike the Schlafly Tap Room, which utilizes a smaller, more hands on brewpub system.

The Bottleworks lives up to its name with a fully automated bottling line for all of Schlafly 12-ounce offerings. The tour ends in a quieter private tasting room complete with bar, tables, and the brewery visible through large windows. Unlike many American craft brewers, Schlafly went with an English-style Pale Ale as its flagship beer. It still accounts for roughly 40 percent of sales.

The American Hefeweizen was the other initial beer offered on opening day. Both are still among the six Schlafly beers available year round. There are numerous seasonal beers as well as dozens of styles that routinely rotate. The day I visited, there were two different American IPA's on tap as well as several German and Belgian styles to go with the year-round brews and seasonals.

The Schlafly Bottleworks will consistently serve 12 to 15 styles on draft as well as offer several other bottled beers. The eastern half of the building is a full service pub, restaurant and bier garden. Both brewery restaurants use fresh local ingredients. The menus are tuned to the seasons as well as synchronized with brewery events. Each location has its own chef, ensuring a fresh menu even for frequent visitors. 🍷



## Schlafly Bottleworks

7260 Southwest Ave.  
Maplewood, Missouri 63143  
(314) 241-2337

Free tours noon to 5 p.m on Fridays,  
Saturdays and Sundays.  
Call to confirm tours are active.

## The Schlafly Tap Room

2100 Locust Ave. (at 21<sup>st</sup>.)  
St. Louis, Missouri 63103  
(314) 241-2337

Tours of the Tap Room are only offered  
during festivals and special events.

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



## A League of Their Own

By Carol Smagalski

**W**ould you want to have a drink with your attorney? Do you enjoy the time you spend with him? How willing is she to talk with you while making strategic decisions?

Adrian Dayton sums up this type of attorney as “beer-worthy.”

In his book *Social Media for Lawyers*, Dayton says being beer-worthy is a key to attracting clients engaged in all types of businesses. But with 2,483 craft breweries in the United States and 1,500 more in planning, the need for attorneys who are well-versed in the alcohol business – beyond willingness to meet at the bar – is expanding.

Those among the growing community of brewers, brewery owners, or wholesalers gravitating to the niche market of craft beer would be well-advised to seek out a lawyer who fits Dayton’s criteria of beer-worthy and who understands the beer business.

Craft beer grew out of a grass-roots movement, one that initially encompassed a very small network of free thinkers involved in the “illegal activity” of homebrewing. Brewing for personal use did not become legal on the federal level until 1978 when President Jimmy Carter signed into law H.R. 1337. According to the Brewers Association, Charlie Papazian and Charlie Matzen launched the American Homebrewers Association just seven weeks later.

Homebrewers existed as an alternative to the corporate giants who were at the heart of consolidation in the American beer world. In 1980, only 50 breweries still operated in the United States. Industry experts predicted that number would drop to five, but homebrewers had a different vision.

These days, the mindset to combat corporate consolidation still exists in much of the craft beer world. Law firms, particularly big ones, may be viewed as part of that oppressive corporate world, in disguise. Many small brewery

owners hesitate to approach a lawyer for their business needs because of this traditional perception.

Alva Mather of Hangley, Aronchick, Segal, Pudlin & Schiller in Philadelphia represents beer wholesalers and craft brewers in Pennsylvania and New Jersey and can be described as beer-worthy. She understands that all-important difference between representing mega-brewers and craft brewers. “It’s a different practice,” she explains. “A-B InBev is brand driven. Craft brewers are about: ‘What can we put together that will give the customer a great experience?’”

The need for counsel in the beer world is dictated by the complexity of laws regulating business formation, licensing and permits. Then, there are the circuitous issues of trademark infringement, distribution and franchise law, environmental concerns, advertising, marketing and employment law.

In the December 2012 issue of *The Growler*, attorneys Gregory B. Perleberg and Jeffrey C. O’Brien advised, “Based on our experience, if you integrate your lawyers into your brewery team early, you will hopefully avoid monster issues down the road.”

Beer lawyers are cropping up in all areas of the country. The most successful create a web presence, sharing tidbits about themselves and their hobbies. They create easy access to relevant articles and websites through their own sites and may even set up a professional dialogue with beer attorneys serving other regions of the country. Although some beer attorneys operate from firms with hundreds of lawyers, most who serve the niche beer market are doing it from mid-sized to small law firms.

Candace L. Moon of San Diego, California, is known as “The Craft Beer Attorney.” In addition to her everyday duties of providing counsel for start-ups and brewery operations, she regularly teaches classes on trademark law. As a member of the California Craft Brewers Association, she presents seminars on various topics for the Association, as well.

Ashley Brandt of Freeborn & Peters in Chicago entered the craft beer niche after an analysis of the firm’s client base. When the firm realized this base represented a huge number of food and beverage companies, it was time to focus on the iceberg itself.

Laws fluctuate from state-to-state, so a regional mindset among beer attorneys makes for more effective representation. The standouts sponsor highly visible beer events, or list memberships in the Brewers Association, Craft Brewers Association, or National Association of Alcoholic Beverage Licensing Attorneys. They keep their eyes focused on industry concerns and oppressive legal regulations, too, and may even go to bat on behalf of the local brewers’ coalition. And if they’re truly beer-worthy, word of mouth puts them in a league of their own. 🍷



# Go **Beyond** Pretzels

{ Beer & food pairings that are far from ordinary. }



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# MASTHEAD

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**- End of Article**

# CONTENTS

## FIRST RUNNINGS

### Innovators Series

We talk with John McDonald about the roads he followed whenever he asked what could be done to make a better beer? The former cabinet maker is a true craftsman who combined with Belgian Stephen Pauwels to create a distinctive wheat beer newly emblematic of the Midwest.

### Traveling Connoisseur

A change in the laws of Japan made craft beer a new possibility. The various locales of the islands provide a rich tapestry when it comes to ingredients for hand-made brews, including cherry blossoms.

### Cuisine: The Allure of Pizza and Beer

Looking for some aroma therapy? Try matching your favorite pizza with a transcendently delicious beer. We have some surprising pie combinations and the beers to match. Our guide Owen Ogletree leads the way.

## FEATURES

**News:** Brewers aid Colorado flood victims.

**Style Studies:** Bottoms up for Münchner Dunkel and Leipziger Gose.

**Connoisseur's Corner:** Is your attorney beer-worthy?

## FOOD & TRAVEL

### Restaurant Spotlight:

#### The Pub at Monte Carlo

Check out the longest beer list on the Las Vegas Strip.

### Brewery Tour: Jester King Brewing

The best little brew house in Texas goes wild – with yeast.

## REVIEWS

### The Road to Hoppiness...

...is often paved with a variety of beers.

## EUROPEAN REPORT

In addition to the news from Belgium, the Czech Republic, Germany and the U.K., there's a look at the beer from Pilsen that changed

beer. We also meet the Aspalls, the 'cyder' family of England.

- End of Article

## FROM THE EDITOR

There are occasions when a journalist's job is not complicated. You ask a lot of people the same question – and then sort the answers.

Here's a question that's been asked a lot recently – by business magazines, major newspapers and even National Public Radio. How big can craft beer get?

A significant follow-up question comes from Peter Bouckaert, head brewer at New Belgium Brewing Company. "What is craft?" he replied when I asked him about how big the flavorful beer segment can become.

The Ft. Collins brewery where Bouckaert works may be the third biggest craft beer maker on the Brewers Association list, but it's not necessarily the largest in the state of Colorado. The biggest would be Tenth and Blake Beer Company, brewers of the Blue Moon brand.

A Belgian and the former head brewer at Rodenbach, Bouckaert knows that Blue Moon is a flavorful beer well executed in the Belgian witbier style. Hence his question – what is craft? Is it about volume of beer made, who produced it, or taste? Bouckaert poses the not-so-rhetorical question because he believes the craft brewers on the BA's list cannot take market share for granted.

If the answer to his question is flavorful beer, then there's a good chance that craft can eventually get to a 30 percent share of the American beer market over the coming years, especially if the up-and-coming millennial generation embraces it. And it also seems certain to happen if the number of new breweries, most of which are on the scale of brewpubs, continues to climb.

It really becomes a no brainer that the flavorful beer market share will reach 30 percent of the overall market if major brewers like MillerCoors, which owns the Blue Moon brand, and A-B InBev, now producing the Kona and Goose Island brand of beers among others, continue to make inroads. These brands, of course, are excluded from the Brewers Association's self-described list of craft beers, because owners MillerCoors and A-B InBev produce large volumes of beer. The BA, by contrast, represents small and independent brewers.

One of the more intriguing answers we got to the question of how big craft beer can get came from Ron Extract, one of the partners at Jester King, a small brewer by any standard, but especially in its home state of Texas. He summed up the dichotomy of big and small in the craft beer market.

"I don't see why craft beer can't reach 15 to 20 to 30 percent of the beer market," said Extract. "Here's the question. Will that market share be controlled by industrial brewers? Yes, it probably will."

"The key stats with craft beer," he continued, "is how much of it is produced by brewers making less than five thousand barrels a year. And how much is sold within 300 miles of where it's made."

If you want to see flavorful beer continue to evolve, there you have an answer that goes down easy. Think and drink local, because the brewery nearest your home is most likely nimble enough to constantly introduce fresh and creative beers.

Judging by the number of smaller brewers who were medal winners at the Great American Beer Festival, that process continues to go well. But make no mistake when it comes to size. It's what's in the glass that really counts.

\*\*\*\*\*

In our effort to craft content in our Atlanta offices that will keep even the most experienced beer drinker engaged, in this issue we have reached out to local, national and international sources.

Owen Ogletree, who hails from nearby Athens, Georgia, lends his expertise in food and beer to the question of what makes pizza a perfect match for flavorful brews? Writer Jim Pedley traveled across town – his place of residence being Kansas City – to get the lowdown on why people in the Midwest and now other regions are so keen on the beers of Boulevard.

We then went across our northern border to Montreal-based Martin Thibault, a connoisseur who believes in getting down to the last ingredient whenever he visits a country with intriguing beer makers. In this issue, the readers can travel with him as he discovers a whole new concept of farm to table in Japan.

In addition to a brewery tour in Texas at Jester King, yours truly went down the road and across the street to 5 Seasons Brewing at the Prado to chat with head brewer Kevin McNerney about recent developments in craft brewing. Not surprisingly, his place of work was recently listed among Atlanta's best beer bars by Atlanta Magazine, because Kevin's small batch creations are unsurpassed for body, structure, mouthfeel and flavor.

As we said, thinking and drinking local is often a rewarding experience for beer connoisseurs – wherever your travels may take you. 🍷

- Jonathan Ingram

**ABOUT...** A longtime beer enthusiast from the Washington, D.C. area, Jonathan's writing career began in newspapers before Ingram Publishing was established in Atlanta in 1983.

He moved from publishing specialty magazines into freelance writing full time 20 years ago and since then has written six books, including biographies of Dale Earnhardt and Danica Patrick. Jonathan's by-line has appeared in Sports Illustrated, The New York Times and The Washington Post among over 100 other publications and websites worldwide.

- End of Article

# CONTRIBUTORS

## **Bob Barnes**

A native Las Vegas, Bob is the editorial director of The Las Vegas Food & Beverage Professional and has been a regional correspondent for Celebrator Beer News since 1998. He also covers the Vegas restaurant scene for Gayot.com and has been published numerous times in Nevada Magazine. He can be reached at Bob@lvfnb.com.

## **Shawn Connelly**

Shawn lives in southern Illinois, is the founder of both BeerPhilosopher.com and Aleuminati.com – a beer social networking site – and serves as a retail consultant and host for craft beer events.

## **Phil Farrell**

Phil has circled the globe many times educating his beer palate over the last 35 years. A resident of Atlanta, he is one of only a few dozen BJCP Grand Master beer judges in the world and serves as the BJCP's South region representative.

## **Charlie Gow**

Charlie is a Beer Judge Certification Program Associate Exam Director and a National Judge. Charlie has been brewing for close to two decades and now calls Fairfax, Virginia home.

## **Owen Ogletree**

The founder of the popular Classic City Brew Fest held in Athens, Georgia each spring, Owen runs ClassicCityBrew.com and writes often for Athens Magazine and the bimonthly Southern Brew News.

## **Jim Pedley**

A Wisconsin native, Jim once lived within walking distance of the Miller, Pabst and Schlitz breweries in Milwaukee. A veteran journalist, he has worked at the Boston Globe, Fort Worth Star-Telegram and the Kansas City Star. He is the founder and managing editor of RacinToday.com.

## **Carolyn Smagalski**

A frequent contributor, Carolyn won the Brewers Association's Beer Journalism Award in 2006 for her work on the website BellaOnline, where she is known as "the Beer Fox."

## **Martin Thibault**

A world traveler in pursuit of food and beer, Martin co-authored La Route des Grands Crus de la Bière, a gold medal winner at the Canadian Culinary Book Awards. A second book is under way and will showcase beer's vast flavor spectrum and pairing these flavors to different foods.

**– End of Article**

# NEWS & CALENDAR

- By Jonathan Ingram

## BREWERS RESPOND WITH FLOOD RELIEF

The deadly flooding along the South Platte River in September temporarily slowed down some of the multitude of craft brewers along the Front Range of the Colorado Rockies. But soon after the flood waters resided, many of these same brewers were hosting or promoting fund raisers to help those among the more than 16,000 whose homes were damaged, including more than 1,800 homes that were destroyed.

Much of the slowdown in the brewing business resulted from 200 miles of roadways and 50 bridges destroyed in the 17 counties affected, a count reported by the state's Office of Emergency Management. Those conditions discouraged brewers from bringing in workers or from opening tasting rooms.

"One thing about craft brewers, as we know, is they help each other out in good times and times of hardship," said Paul Gatza, director of the Brewers Association headquartered in Denver, which experienced some of the flooding. "So I think we'll see some creative, collaborative solutions to individual difficulties."

Among those that avoided damage despite being near the flooding was Left Hand Brewing Company in Longmont, Colorado, where employees used bags of malt to help block water at entranceways. The neighborhoods around the brewery were evacuated from Sept. 12 to Sept. 16, but ultimately the brewery stayed dry even though it was surrounded by mud, in part because it was built according to flood plain maps.

On higher ground in Longmont, the Oskar Blues Brewery's production facility also avoided damage. The same was true for its brewpub in Lyons.

Families of brewery workers, however, were among those who experienced some of the massive devastation that literally wiped out some towns and homes, particularly in the hard hit cities of Longmont, Boulder and Loveland. Left Hand turned its Longmont Oktoberfest into a relief effort. The "Oskar Blues CAN'd Aid Foundation" launched by

Oskar Blues founder Dale Katechis last year, also joined the relief effort.

In Loveland, Grimm Brothers Brewhouse & Tap Room hosted a re-located Oktoberfest where four other local breweries contributed to the relief effort along with support from four of Colorado's best known beer brands – Great Divide, Breckenridge, Odell and Epic.

Avery Brewing Company hosted The Great Rumpkin Raffle benefitting the Foothills Flood Relief Fund to help those in Boulder and Broomfield Counties. Another effort typical of the response from brewers was made by Star Bar in Denver, where the majority of Front Range brewers contributed to the fund raiser for flood relief.

## CRAFT CONTINUES UPWARD GROWTH

The mid-year report of the Brewer's Association showed that craft beer continued to grow in terms of dollar sales and volume in the first half of 2013. The report showed that sales and volume increased by 15 percent. During the same period last year the growth reported was 14 percent in dollar sales and 12 percent for volume.

The increase comes at a time when the over-all consumption of beer is decreasing, indicating that the craft category is gaining market share over traditional style American beers, primarily lagers.

Approximately 7.3 million barrels of beer were sold by small and independent craft brewers, up from 6.4 million barrels over the first half of 2012. The BA defines craft brewers as being independent and small with less than 25 percent ownership by a brewer producing more than six million barrels of beer per year.

Though the growth figures exclude beers such as ales produced by major brewers, the report confirms the trend away from standard lagers. That growth is coupled with a boom in the number of small breweries.

"Demand for beer produced by small and independent brewers has never been higher, as evidenced by increased production and the hundreds of new breweries joining the playing field each year," said Paul Gatza, director of the Brewers Association. "Beer drinkers nationwide are responding positively to high-quality, full-flavored, diverse offerings

from American craft brewing companies that continue to innovate and push the envelope."

There are 2,538 breweries operating in the U.S. as of June 30, 2013, an increase of 446 breweries since June 2012. The BA also lists an additional 1,605 breweries in planning at midyear, compared to 1,252 a year ago.

As of June 30, 2013, the count of small and independent breweries was at 2,483, showing that 98 percent of U.S. brewers produce less than six million barrels annually. Small brewers currently employ an estimated 108,440 full-time and part-time workers, many of which are manufacturing jobs, contributing significantly to the U.S. economy.

"More breweries are currently operating in the U.S. than at any time since the 1870s." Gatza added. "With each new brewery opening, American craft brewers are reinforcing the U.S.'s position as the world's most diverse brewing nation. It's a very good time to be an American beer lover."

## CALENDAR

Visit [www.beerconnoisseur.com/calendar](http://www.beerconnoisseur.com/calendar) for a complete listing of events!

### NOVEMBER

**8-10:** International Beer Fest, Cleveland, OH  
[www.ixbeerfest.com](http://www.ixbeerfest.com)

**9:** Brew Your Cask Off, Atlanta, GA  
[www.brewyourcaskoff.com](http://www.brewyourcaskoff.com)

**9:** Boulder IPA Fest, Boulder, CO  
[www.boulderipafest.eventbrite.com](http://www.boulderipafest.eventbrite.com)

**9-16:** Houston Beer Week, Houston, TX  
[www.houstonbeerweek.com](http://www.houstonbeerweek.com)

**16:** Festival of Wood and Barrel Aged Beer, Chicago, IL  
[www.illinoisbeer.com/fobab](http://www.illinoisbeer.com/fobab)

**16:** Treasure Coast Beer Fest, Port St. Lucie, FL  
[www.treasurecoastbeerfest.com](http://www.treasurecoastbeerfest.com)

**16:** Inaugural Bayou Beer Fest, Houma, LA  
[www.bayoubeerfest.com](http://www.bayoubeerfest.com)

**16:** The Ponce De Leon Beer Fest, Atlanta, GA  
[www.theponcedeleonbeerfestival.com](http://www.theponcedeleonbeerfestival.com)

**21-23:** Grand Rapids International Wine, Beer & Food Festival, Grand Rapids, MI  
[www.showspan.com/GRW/Home.aspx](http://www.showspan.com/GRW/Home.aspx)

**23:** Philadelphia Winter Beer Festival, Philadelphia, PA  
[www.winterbeerfest.com](http://www.winterbeerfest.com)

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**DECEMBER**

**4:** Holiday Ale Festival, Portland, OR

[www.2holidayale.com](http://www.2holidayale.com)

**7:** Valley Forge Beer Festival, Oaks, PA

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

**7:** Smugglers' Notch Brewfest, Part 1,

Jeffersonville, VT

[www.smuggs.com/pages/winter/skiride/](http://www.smuggs.com/pages/winter/skiride/)

[winter-events.php.com](http://winter-events.php.com)

**13:** Friday the Firkinteenth, Philadelphia, PA

[www.greylodge.com/fri13th.html](http://www.greylodge.com/fri13th.html)

**- End of Article**

# STYLE STUDIES

- By Shawn Connelly

In this issue, Shawn uncovers the story behind Münchner Dunkel and Leipzig-style Gose, two German beers deep in history. Although one tends to think of a dark beer as more suited to fall and winter or a tart beer rife with wheat as summer fare, these two styles remain popular in part because they are so portable across different seasons.

When it comes to Dunkel, it's nice to have something dark that's not a brown, a porter or a stout, yet is predictably rich and flavorful. As for Leipzig-style Gose, there's nothing quite like a very distinctive and flavorful brew that's so different yet still very beer-like. Gose has long been one of our favorite styles to write about and is increasingly available – such as the excellent example from Westbrook Brewing Company out of South Carolina.

Interestingly, the Dunkel style in Germany adheres fiercely to the Bavarian-born Reinheitsgebot in its most pure form while the Leipzig-style Gose manages to include additions of salt, coriander and lactobacillus. Read on to find out more about how these two classics differ – and reflect the locales from whence they came.

**Cheers!**

## MÜNCHNER DUNKEL

When the beer purity law, which would come to be known as the Reinheitsgebot, was adopted in Bavaria in 1516, the intent was to preserve the use of traditional ingredients in beer-making and protect Bavarian brewing heritage from the use of adjuncts. This decree established barley, hops, water and, later, yeast, as the constituents in beer. Beer classification, in terms of styles, wasn't an issue. Lagering had become common practice in Bavaria and conditioning beer in ice-filled caves for long periods produced smooth, clean beer and avoided the spoilage that often occurred during the hottest months of the year. Although the bottom-fermenting *Saccharomyces pastorianus* yeast strain wouldn't be formally identified for another 300 years or so, the famous Bavarian "lager" yeast, capable of fermenting beer at cold temperatures, gave birth to

dunkel, the formative beer style under the Reinheitsgebot.

The word dunkel simply means "dark" and these dark beers of Bavaria were pervasive at the time, particularly around Munich. Until the late 19th century, when advanced kilning technologies allowed pale malts to be produced and used in brewing, all beers were somewhat dark and smoky in character. Because of this, early "dunkel" beers were more of a broad categorization than a narrowly-defined style, which wouldn't be necessitated until after the onset of the helles ("pale") lager. Originally, dunkel was brewed using exclusively dark well-kilned malts, but most modern iterations employ the use of both Munich malt and some pale malts in the grist. Occasionally, small amounts of specialty malts, like caramel or chocolate, are used to further enhance body and color, but are not traditional. Noble hops, such as Hallertau, and classic Bavarian lager yeast are obligatory to the style.

Probably the most distinctive characteristic of the dunkel style isn't an ingredient at all, but rather a traditional mashing technique called decoction mashing. In a nutshell, decoction mashing involves the removal and boiling of a portion of the wort (pre-fermented beer) from the mash tun in order to concentrate color and flavor. Traditionally this was repeated at three intervals to increase the mash to very specific temperatures, or rests, to facilitate enzymatic conversion of the malt. The result is intensely rich, malty wort with complexity of flavor that, it is believed, cannot be achieved through simpler, less labor-intensive mashing techniques. Since the development of a myriad of well-converted specialty malts, however, much of the same result can be achieved without this difficult process and it is becoming much less common.

The classic Münchner lager ranges from medium copper to deep brown in color and often exemplifies a ruddy hue in the light. The head is soft tan and not overly voluminous. Generally, dunkel will have very good clarity, although some unfiltered examples exist. On the nose, expect a bready malt character accentuated by notes of sweet caramel and nutty toffee. Noble hops play only a supporting role in this style and should never be a prominent aroma component.

A clean, lager fermentation leaves no fruit esters in the nose. The palate is all about rich caramel-like flavors from the Munich malt and melanoidin compounds produced by the traditional decoction mash and/or use of specially-modified malts. Over all, this lager favors a sweet character, but should never come across as cloying. Despite its deep color, the style should never present roasted or burnt characteristics, although some subtle toasty notes are common. In the mouth, dunkel should possess a substantial body, without being thick, and finish cleanly with lingering maltiness and just enough hop bitterness to offset the sweet malt. Being a lager beer, dunkel is smooth, clean and even refreshing despite its dark demeanor, making it a year-round favorite with a wide appeal and versatility that is second to none.

As far as food pairings are concerned, dunkel naturally fits exceptionally well with Bavarian fare such as wurst, kraut and knödel, but the mild sweetness of the beer is also a terrific counterbalance to spicy Asian or Mexican food, roasted meats or even a good old American burger.

## LEIPZIG-STYLE GOSE

I have a good friend who is a light beer drinker by default. He is known to imbibe in the occasional craft beer or two, but inevitably goes back to the pale, fizzy lager in a can. Funny thing is, he decants (or decans?) the beer into a glass and methodically adds a dash or two of table salt. I've long decried this practice, but on one fateful occasion he persuaded me to give his salt-infused lager a try. I had to admit the salt actually made the notoriously insipid, flavor-challenged beer somewhat more palatable and, dare I say, complex. Who knew?

And who knew that the practice of adding salt to beer isn't so novel after all. The Germans, apparently. Goslar, in Lower Saxony, is the original birthplace of a unique beer that dates back to the 16th century and shares some commonalities with another German original, the Berliner Weisse, as well as several of the wheat-based ales of Belgium. Gose (pronounced "goes-uh") is traditionally brewed with a grist of sixty-percent unmalted wheat and forty-percent barley with the occasional modicum of oats

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thrown in for good measure. Noble hops and German ale yeast are requisite. Nothing out of the ordinary there and, if I were to go on to explain the ale was traditionally fermented with yeast and lactobacillus bacteria, via spontaneous fermentation, one might think the difference between gose and Berlin's Weisse is merely one of geography.

The same might be said for a comparison of gose to the witbier of the Flemish region of Belgium since gose is also spiced with coriander. So what makes this ale unique and why does the Brewers Association call the beer "Leipzig-style" if it was conceived in Goslar? Good questions, all, and the answer to both are interrelated. The unique ingredient in gose, which I have already alluded to, is salt, and the groundwater supply in Goslar possessed a natural salinity from the ore and mineral-rich mountains of Harz, creating a unique flavor profile. As the popularity of the beer spread to the nearby city of Leipzig, and the mines were eventually depleted, the practice of brewing gose gradually centered in Leipzig and ceased altogether in Goslar. In time, gose would be brewed in the "traditional style" in Leipzig but additions of salt, cultured yeast strains and lactic acid or acidulated malt would replace the naturally-derived sources. By the mid-1700s, and through the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Gose production was thriving.

The beer style was practically lost to history, however, after the physical and political impact of World War II and the subsequent Cold War era in East Germany. Only after the reunification in 1989 did brewers once again have the freedom to produce this long-loved and long-lost ale style. One of the first breweries to produce a traditional gose in Leipzig, in the modern era, was Gosebrauerei Bayerischer Bahnhof – a small brewery opened in 1990 that is housed in a train station that dates back to 1842. Their Leipziger Gose is one of the few German-made examples available in the U.S. and bottled in a traditional long-neck, round bottle which is easy to spot but still rather hard to find outside of the occasional specialty beer retailer. Several American craft brewers have tried their hand at reproducing this rare style in recent years as well, with The Boston Beer Company (Samuel Adams) being the most ubiquitous with their small batch gose, Verloren ("lost").

In the glass, which is traditionally a stange (German for "stick," a narrow, cylindrical glass

which is commonly associated with Kölsch), expect gose to pour a medium gold to pale amber color and produce a billowy, tan-white head with plenty of staying power from the high protein content of the unmalted wheat. The beer is typically cloudy and displays very active carbonation in the glass. On the nose, little to no hop aromas should be evident and subtle grainy notes, along with spicy coriander, should be the most prominent elements. Unlike Bavarian ales, don't expect pronounced fruit esters, but rather a clean, slightly spicy nose. The flavor profile is where gose really distinguishes itself as a unique world beer style. Look for a very crisp, clean wheat ale with no perceptible hop bitterness or flavor, but rather a mild lactic tartness, lingering spiciness, restrained citrus flavors and surprising saltiness that is quenching more than off-putting. The salt also adds to the perception of a fuller body and lingers long into the finish. Gose is effervescent and lively, yet substantial and imminently drinkable. The addition of salt encourages the next sip and, thankfully, at a moderate ABV, why not?

For food pairings, gose can be treated much like its cousins, the weissbier or wit, but its residual saltiness and full body can stand up to a somewhat wider range of foods than either of these. Try one with goat's milk cheeses, mixed green salad, white fish or herbed chicken or a classic cheesecake for a sweet and salty treat.

## **MÜNCHNER DUNKEL**

### **Stats:**

O.G: 1.044 to 1.050, IBUs: 18 to 25, SRM: 4 to 5.5, ABV: 4.5-5.5%

### **Commercial Examples:**

Ayinger Altbairisch Dunkel, König Ludwig Dunkel, Harpoon Dark, Lakefront Eastside Dark.

## **LEIPZIG-STYLE GOSE**

### **Stats:**

O.G: 1.036 to 1.056, IBUs: 10 to 15, SRM: 3 to 9, ABV: 4.4 - 5.4%

### **Commercial Examples:**

Gasthaus & Gosebrauerei Bayerischer Bahnhof Leipziger Gose, Brauhaus Hartmannsdorf GmbH Döllnitzer Ritterguts Gose, Boston Beer Company (Samuel Adams) Verloren, Upright Brewing Gose, Westbrook Brewing Company Gose.

**- End of Article**

## INNOVATORS SERIES

### JOHN MCDONALD On a Boulevard of Bottle-Conditioned Dreams

- By Jim Pedley

John McDonald seemed kind of amused and bewildered when informed that an interview with *The Beer Connoisseur* was going to focus on innovation in craft brewing at the regional level. “Well, um, OK... sure,” said the founder and president of Boulevard Brewing Company.

But when questions started flying at him from right, left and center field about his brewery, the thin, elegantly graying owner of the Kansas City beer maker dispensed answers that proved he was the perfect authority to talk about innovation in medium-scale brewing.

Somewhere about the midpoint of the hour-long chat, McDonald – seemingly without realizing it – encapsulated the entire subject of innovation at Boulevard with one short sentence. “Our aim has always been to make absolutely world class beer,” he said. “So anything that would make our beer better, we would go down that road.”

Twenty-five years ago, McDonald set up in downtown Kansas City in an old brick factory that had been converted into a warehouse and then a carpentry shop. Since then, a gigantic maze of roads have weaved their way in, out and around what has become the heartland’s largest specialty brewery, one whose beers are wildly popular locally.

There are roads that have taken Boulevard across watery oceans and into the less tangible ionosphere of original thinking. All along those roads, McDonald’s beers have caught on with consistently happy brewing competition judges and a legion of ardently loyal customers, especially in Kansas City, which consumes 40 percent of the brewery’s output.

#### Midwestern Philosophy

McDonald’s philosophy on the topic of brewing was developed years before the brewery opened. And a non-traditional brewing philosophy it was.

“My background was in fine arts and then I was a cabinet maker for 15 years and I loved beer and home brewing and started the brewery. The brewing is a result, I think, of being curious. The more I learned about beer, the more I applied all the other things I’ve learned in my life to making beer.”

Early on, it was that curiosity which led McDonald to a couple of discoveries in his personal journey through the beer universe that have become Boulevard signatures.

The first of those was bottle conditioning – where instead of artificially carbonating the beer, yeast is allowed to naturally carbonate the beer in the bottle after fermentation is complete. The process is anything but new. But it is also anything but standard in the brewing industry, especially the Midwest. And it is also anything but the easiest or most economical way to brew beer.

“I really became a fan of bottle conditioning early on,” said McDonald. “I still believe it’s a really value added process. I can’t say I innovated because historically, it was a process that all breweries used to do at one time. Then a few of them either stopped doing it or kept doing it. I’m a big fan of Sierra Nevada. Ken Grossman and I are good friends and at Sierra they were bottle-conditioners before we were and I just saw the value in better flavor stability and shelf life. So that’s why we still do it. It costs a lot of money and sometimes I think it would be a lot easier not to do it, but I also believe that it makes the beer better.”

The bottle conditioning road was one which Boulevard headed down cautiously.

“When we started out, we were not a bottle conditioner,” McDonald said. “There are a lot of ways to do it. There’s what’s called complete bottle conditioning, and I think it wasn’t long after we started, three or four years, that I understood the principle benefit of it, which is basically you go through either a total or partial re-fermentation in the bottle to create more carbon dioxide. Of course I knew that yeast is an antioxidant. It helps eat up some of the oxygen in the bottle during packaging. So it just had these benefits.”

“But not all of our beers are bottle conditioned; just all those that are a style where it’s appropriate. Our Smokestack (wooden-barrel aged) beers are even more bottle conditioned than the regular line of beers that we make. It’s a very costly thing.

If you see our warehouse, it’s jaw dropping. For most small brewers, to hold all that beer for two weeks in consistent temperatures as it goes through the conditioning process, it’s quite a space hog and challenging. But we do it and are quite glad we do.”

#### Left Turn

The bottle conditioning road soon led to another important intersection – and then a left turn – on the Boulevard map. That would be the production of what is viewed by McDonald and fans of the brewery – which has become a very proud landmark in Kansas City – as its signature product – Unfiltered Wheat Beer.

Again, wheat beer was not invented at Boulevard. But Boulevard’s version of it comes with a significant twist.

It was the third beer the company produced after a pale ale and a porter.

“The Wheat Beer,” said McDonald, “is what we call an American style wheat beer. It has an English ale yeast strain and uses un-malted wheat grown in Missouri. It was a wheat beer that I think an immigrant would have made in the 1800’s in the central Midwest.”

“And we didn’t call it a Hefeweizen because we didn’t feel it was true to style. Hefeweizen, to me, has a peppery, clovey taste and is typical of Germany or parts of Belgium, with coriander a lot of times, and that spicy taste. Our beer was not really that. It was just a very approachable refreshing cloudy beer.

“So we call it American style wheat beer. And I really think that was an innovation that we really kind of did. I don’t know of any other. It’s been copied by other people over the years but I think we were one of the first brewers to actually do what I would call an American style wheat beer. It was a little bit of a different animal.”

#### Smokestacks Rising

The flavor-loaded Smokestack beers are very different animals from the bottle-conditioned wheat beer. The specialty Smokestack beers are aged in old bourbon barrels. The process, which allows for a wide range of experimentation, are offered in corked champagne bottles and distinctive four-packs.

“We were not the first, but we were early on in embracing the idea of wood aging,” McDonald said. “I think some of the complexities you get from that through a little

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bit of oxygen egress and also just the aging of beer with yeast present, just a bit like bottle conditioning, is a real interesting thing. And then the ability to make sour beers and to blend beer to make a very interesting product out of two or three different types of beer you've produced is really exciting."

McDonald again bowed to history as he further explained the Smokestack Series, which is named after the brewery's prominent, century-old brick chimney which has become a Boulevard touch point.

"I think if you go back 100 years, all brewers – before the invention of aluminum or stainless steel – they would have put beer in a wooden barrel at some point in its life. But they didn't really understand the microbiology and science of that and so I think you probably had a fair amount of spoiled beer and bad beer. What's interesting now is the approach we take is we take this ancient practice and apply a lot of science to it and really try to recreate – and create – beers that can be reproduced. It's really an interesting time in brewing where there's access to the history of brewing. But you can really adapt some smart science to it and that's really exciting to me."

### Home Cooking

Boulevard prides itself in being an American brewery. All of its 30 or so varieties of brew are infused with American brewing sensibilities. The American Heartland has had a big influence on production, which has soared past 600,000 barrels a year.

Boulevard considers involvement in central Midwestern culture and being a good corporate citizen essential to its mission. It proudly provides jobs and income to over 120 Kansas City employees. The brewery supports local sports teams and community programs. It is a leader in glass recycling in the community. And it has entered into innovative collaborations with other like-minded local companies.

"One of the things we've done, and we've done maybe half dozen of them now in the last three or four years, is collaborative brews, like the chocolate ale with (famed Kansas City chocolatier) Christopher Elbow that was just a huge success for us."

One of the latest collaborations was with semi-iconic Kansas City coffee producer, The Roasterie. "Danny O'Neill with the Roasterie,

who started in business about the same time and has always been a couple blocks away," said McDonald. "He'd been bugging me for years to do a collaboration and I felt we needed to. To be honest, coffee beers are not one of my favorite categories but finally I just said, 'Yes, we're going to do this.'"

The two companies came up with an elegant solution to how to make a unique coffee beer. "Typically, coffee beers are always going to be like a stout or dark beer with coffee flavor," said McDonald. "We did an amber beer with a very light flavor. It turned out great. The challenge is always how do you make them work together to where they're not competing, the beer flavor versus the coffee. I think Danny and our head brewer Stephen Pauwels did a great job with that beer."

Customers obviously thought so, too. The run on the specialty coffee beer forced some local liquor stores to put a limit of two of the bomber bottles per customer on it.

### Hitch Hiking

Boulevard's unique collaborative efforts are not confined to Kansas City or even the Midwest. Last year, Boulevard got together with Grossman and California's Sierra Nevada Brewing Company to form a highly innovative alliance.

"Sierra Nevada made part of the beer in Chino and we made part of the beer," McDonald explained. "They shipped it to Kansas City, we barrel-aged it and we put together a blend and we made it for SAVOR last year." The two breweries decided to call the brew Terra Incognita, an archaic name for the old Oregon Trail which started in Kansas City and ended in Northern California. The result, McDonald said, was terrific.

"Such a cool package and just a fantastic beer," he said. "One of my favorite beers that we've made." Terra Incognita was an extremely limited run. It never hit the shelves. But, the process has resulted in plans for more collaboration between Boulevard and Sierra Nevada.

Back on the home front, Boulevard has plunged headlong into producing unique seasonal beers. No, producing beers to fit the season is not new. "In the Old World they used to brew based on temperatures and times of year and according to the harvest," said McDonald.

Boulevard's twist is regional and specific to the unique seasons of the America's heartland.

"I think beer makers have done a great job as an industry in coming out with the idea you do things in a seasonal way. You know, making lighter beers for the summertime, making big heavy beers like Nutcracker (in the winter). Our Nutcracker is kind of a winter warmer. It's great in the winter to get a big, robust, flavorful, viscous fantastic tasting beer. So yes, we've embraced it."

While some innovations at Boulevard are the result of careful planning – like the decision eight years ago to hire young Belgian brewmaster Pauwels to come in and add experience and interesting ideas to the operation – some are the result of pure chance. Like the recent opportunity to begin storing and aging Smokestack brews in limestone caves.

Such caves dot the landscape in and around Kansas City. Massive and plentiful, the caves are leftovers from the mining industry. The largest of the caves, dubbed SubTropolis, contains 55,000,000 square feet of storage and is billed as the world's largest underground business complex. In addition to storage space, offices and production facilities are located in SubTropolis.

The cave being used by Boulevard is in the suburb of Independence, Missouri – the hometown of former U.S. President Harry S. Truman. "We've got over 2,000 barrels right now in our storage," McDonald said. "In fact, we just rented some space in caves to store all the barrels. I think that's really cool because hundreds of years ago, caves would have been the places where they would have done this kind of aging of beer."

Asked if cave-aging adds character to the brew, McDonald said, "Probably a little bit. One of the things is the caves have a little bit higher level of humidity than we have in most above-ground buildings. Therefore I think we have less evaporation out of barrels. What the wood barrel does is breath a little bit and that's what creates some of the flavor maturation in a barrel. So the fact that they're in a little higher humidity level keeps some of that evaporation from happening."

*'It's been copied by other people over the years, but I think we were one of the first brewers to actually do what I would call an American style wheat beer. It was a bit of a different animal.'*

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## Oceans Away

Beer from those caves will soon be making its way to Scandinavia. According to McDonald, Boulevard is selling quite a bit of beer in Sweden and Norway right now – mostly in the Smokestack category.

“There is an incredible market for American-made craft beer,” said McDonald. “Brooklyn (Brewery), for example, their second largest market next to New York City is Sweden. That’s pretty amazing I think.

“We had a connection with a guy in England who approached us. He was a friend of Bob Sullivan, our former vice president of sales and marketing. We started looking into it. We ship it in refrigerated containers. It doesn’t take that long to get there. And it was very profitable for us and we thought why not? We jumped into that a year and a half ago and it’s going very well.”

Where to from here for Boulevard? Well, down actual roads for one thing. The company has been expanding its geographical market boundaries for a couple of years now. It’s distributing to places like Georgia to the east, California to the west and Alaska to the north. McDonald is also looking into expanding into other areas of consumables.

“We’re working on a vinegar project,” he said. “We’re making balsamic type vinegar right now. I’m interested in dry-cured sausages, which also incorporate a type of fermentation.”

Fermentation and brewing have shaped McDonald much as he has shaped brewing. “I think the beer business has made me see the world in a different type way. A lot of historical stuff had to do with fermentation because it was really a form of preservative. So I’m fascinated with all that stuff right now.”

As McDonald steps back and takes a look at the innovative roads he and his company have raveled, he takes a deep breath.

“I think back to the day we said, ‘We’ll only sell beer in the central Midwest because why would we go anywhere else?’ But in reality it’s all changed for us.”

Innovation, any way you look at it.

**- End of article**

# TRAVELING CONNOISSEUR

## THE BLOSSOMING OF JI-BIRU

*CRAFT BREWING  
GROWS FROM JAPAN'S  
EXTRAORDINARY GARDENS*

- By Martin Thibault

In Ushiku, an hour outside Tokyo via crowded trains where people are stacked up like slices of fresh fish on a sushi counter, a microbrewer is isolating the yeast found on cherry blossom flowers in order to ferment his yearly Sakura Kobo, or cherry blossom yeast wild ale.

In Shibu Onsen, a couple miles into the mountains east of Nagano where snow macaques bathe in natural thermal pools, another brewer is walking through his rice, hop and fruit fields, planning the brewing season ahead, inspired by his crop yield.

In Kofu, where the southern point of view is dominated by the elegant giant that is Mount Fuji, yet another brewer is throwing ume plums into his 14 percent ABV barleywine in order to give his wine yeast some extra fodder.

On a large scale, the Japanese craft beer scene may not have found its own identity yet, but a deeper look reveals that microbrewers in the Land of the Rising Sun have been finding fascinating ways to stand out. These craft brews, or ji-biru, aren't nearly as rare as geisha sightings, if one knows where to go.

### **A Burgeoning Identity**

The surreal white tree canvases during cherry blossom season have been the site of many a hanami, a ritual party for viewing the new flowers. It's not much of a surprise that Tomoyuki Kakui, a brewer and microbiologist once thought, inspired by this traditional moment of spring revelry, of taking one of the flowers under a microscope in order to see what it could hold. Chateau Kamiya, also Japan's oldest winery, is the brewery in Ushiku where one can taste find this experimental cherry blossom yeast brew every spring. Its delicate floral bouquet flows towards banana esters, herbal hops and light wilderness for a

refreshingly different quencher, one far less intense than the brettanomyces-laden brews popping up around America in the last decade.

A handful of Japanese breweries have also embarked on this wild cherry blossom yeast adventure, which is not surprising considering the high number of cherry blossom-based food products available around springtime in Japan. If they choose to develop this yeast, the Japanese hold the perfect ingredient to forge a distinct identity.

Up on the cool mountain slopes of the Nagano prefecture, crops of all kinds are being put to use in another brewer's creations. From the ubiquitous rice to buckwheat, from fruit and vegetables to a newly named endemic hop variety called Shinshu Wase (actually a blend of Saaz and a wild Japanese cultivar), everything that grows here is subject to being used in one of Eigo Sato's refined ales.

This eighth generation entrepreneur, who operates the Shiga Kogen brewery with his savvy two-man brew crew after his forefathers had concentrated on the family sake brewery, is indeed crafting some of the most characterful beers Japan has ever tasted. Super aromatic new world IPAs of all colors and strengths are joined by saisons imbued with modern flair by a fair sprinkling of Miyama sake rice here and there. Impeccable execution, openness to different brewing cultures and intelligent use of local ingredients make Shiga Kogen a champion of the country's brewing scene. An image of the torii, the traditional gate at the entrance of Shinto shrines, should be stuck to every glass of Shiga Kogen Oak-Aged Saison One to show that it contains a passage to higher realms.

This use of high quality rice seems to be another way for the Japanese brewers to set themselves apart. Swan Lake Beer, from the scarcely visited Niigata prefecture, brews Koshi Hikari Lager with the namesake sake rice. Its well developed barley malt and rice character sets the stage for a meticulous Noble hop display reminiscent of some Czech brewed Svetly 10°. Rice adds delicate subtleties to the beer's flavor environment much like the tinkling of bells does to an onsen, or hot spring spa, and there is no need to strip down to bare essentials in order to bask in its soothing currents. Sadly though, rice is still known as a cheap source of sugar for brewing; mostly because of the country's macrobreweries and their characterless use

of what some Japanese call "an alternative to oxygen." Detractors obviously haven't laid lips on Hitachino Nest's captivating Red Rice Ale and some of the other delicacies from the brewer known by its owl symbol.

### **Overprotection Hinders Maturity**

The special brews striving to forge a local beer identity are far from the norm in Japan. The four megabreweries (Sapporo, Suntory, Asahi and Kirin) still dominate the scene with their German-style lagers. And while there is nothing inherently wrong with most of what they are brewing, the system put in place by the Japanese government at the beginning of the 20th Century, as well as the cheaper prices at which these breweries can sell, nearly obliterated any attempts at brewing something different, something truly Japanese.

Major efforts were made as early as 1906 to stop the proliferation of smaller breweries. Initially, these measures were meant to protect the growing beer businesses already in place by making sure smaller local producers did not compete with the bigger brewers. In 1908, a change in the taxing laws introduced a yearly minimum quantity of beer to be produced, set at 1,500 barrels. That number rose to 150,000 barrels in 1940 and 156,000 barrels in 1959, making it virtually impossible for a new brewery to open.

Thankfully, that law was adjusted in 1994 and brewers have since been asked to only brew "at least" five barrels in a year. As a result, in the last 20 years or so, close to 200 new breweries have come on line. The vast majority of these breweries, understandably, try to emulate the best of Germany. That's what they have been exposed to and what beer is about for them.

As an indirect result of these teachings from bigger breweries, some of the best craft breweries in Japan, still today, offer excellent, authentic renditions of German styles. Fujizakura Kogen, for example, has one of the most impressive weizen's going outside of Bavaria. Set near the base of Mount Fuji, this brewery sits right next door to one of those theme parks for dogs. The brewery owns the Sylvans restaurant, a huge building where brewer Miyashita Hiromichi's wares wow beer travelers and hikers alike, who are brought in by the hordes on free buses from the nearby

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lake town of Kawaguchiko. The Rauch brew also could sit right next to a krug of Spezial in Bamberg and experienced tasters might think it comes from a Franconian brewer unknown to them.

The same could be said of the Bavarian-inspired brews of Otaru Beer. Based in a canal town on Hokkaido, the country's northernmost island, this talented brewer has now reached Tokyo through its Beer Horn bar. Even if the gimmicky horn-shaped glasses detract from the bubbly show of prowess master brewer Johannes Braun can deliver, the place remains a vibrant reminder of the Japanese's ability to imitate. The Pilsner, for example, possesses an intricate hop signature which displays spicy, citrusy herbs that freshen up the crunchy, straw-like base malts.

The colorful izakayas everywhere around the country though, where the tie-wearing salarymen join after work for a few pints and snacks in traditional Japanese decor, are exclusively serving beers from the aforementioned "Big Four." One would expect the microbreweries to want to integrate this market because these often tiny, atmospheric bars are not run by large companies and are rarely chains. They are often locally owned by small entrepreneurs, a market not unlike craft breweries in a way. But the bridge hasn't been crossed yet.

Craft beer bars, on the other hand, are trying to reach a crowd seeking modernity, openness to the world, which sometimes results in bland I-could-be-anywhere-in-the-world on the visual front. Some excellent establishments like Tokyo's Watering Hole or Osaka's Craft Beer Kamikaze or Q-Brick, for example, look like they could anywhere in the Occident, from San Francisco to contemporary London.

Devil Craft, a recent addition to Tokyo's rapidly expanding bar scene, sometimes ignores the local ji-biru, or craft selection, to make room for American micros on tap. It also specializes in Chicago-style deep dish pizza. Similar story for Shibuya's Craft Heads, where you can find a larger selection of bourbon than most quality bars in America. These places are godsend for hardcore craft beer lovers looking for the most varied and elaborate beer lists. But don't look for a typically Japanese experience beyond the ji-biru that flows from the tap handles.

### No Tipping, And Other Such Tips

Getting lost trying to find an address,

whether it's a brewery or your hotel, is part of the Japanese experience. And it's one of the first aspects of traveling which will burst your occidental convenience bubble. You're jetlagged but very excited, you've written down the address of the first beer bar you want to try out and you know the train station you have to reach. The rest can't be wizardry, right? Without a GPS device, it might be. Reality hits: street names are more often than not absent from street corners and door numbers are in no clearly understandable order. And then alleyways don't always appear on official maps, which can mean the "third on the right" is a narrow path towards the unknown.

The best way to find what you want: plan ahead and write down landmarks instead of street names. Something like close up: «Shinjuku station, east exit, walk towards the Green Peas pachinko building, turn left after walking by Green Peas and walk on that street until the first temple on your right.» And so forth. Using this method to get you around should lead you to your purveyor of choice as efficiently as a sushi master's knife slicing through a piece of sumptuous chutoro tuna.

Whether visiting a lively izakaya to check out how typical Japanese raise elbows, or a craft beer bar where ji-biru brewers' most recent delights are on display, some basic knowledge of pub etiquette should also help you ease into the first tulip glass.

First, remember that most craft beer bars are seen as upmarket establishments where people consume a luxury product. Prices for a pint can be much higher than lagers from the "Big Four," just like some farmer's perfect strawberry baskets at the market can go for many times the price of the mainstream, slightly-dented strawberries next to it. For example, when a guest walks in, a server will immediately come to see him to ask how many people there are in his party. This is when a reservation can come in handy. Most craft beer places in cities are cramped holes-in-the-wall, and thus get full rather quickly. When a bar is a priority, it's always a good idea to reserve ahead of time – as if you were going to a high-end restaurant.

In any case, the server will take you to your seat as soon as you tell him the number of guests in your party. Contrary to some North American practices, this diligent type of service is not done for tips. In fact, tipping is seen as reprehensible behavior,

a bit like bribing. Try it and the server may laugh uncontrollably, start blushing, or try to look away, flustered. The servers' seemingly exaggerated courteousness is not displayed because they are looking for an extra on your part. Even if they follow the guest out onto the street to bow farewell, that's just what they do and they're paid decently to do it.

Once seated, the last potential obstacle to a successful evening will quickly become apparent – the lack of an English menu. And that means, of course, you can't even deduce something because you can't decipher one single word on the beer list. One obvious solution is to look at the tap handles. These can sometimes help to give you the name of the brewery. But more often than not, the handles will not help you out much. What you can do though is ask your server to read the menu for you... in Japanese, mind you. From their reading and pronunciation, you can at least understand a few brewery names or beer styles.

Asking a bartender to speak English is sometimes another way to create discomfort. This is true even in megalopolises like Tokyo. Waiters are often shy if their English isn't perfect and will refuse to answer you in other languages than Japanese... even if they understand you.

The Japanese identity brings out large doses of perfectionism, no doubt. One can always hope more and more brewers follow this path and stay authentic and true to who they are.

### A New Spring In Sight

All signs point towards the Japanese craft beer scene gaining an influx of talent and creativity. Luc 'Bim' Lafontaine, for example, former head brewer at the Montreal's Dieu du Ciel! brewpub, will be setting up his own brewery near the temple town of Nikko. Known for his elegant sour ales and mouth-watering use of Japanese ingredients at the world-renowned Québécois brewpub, he will surely regale Japanese craft beer lovers with recreations of his Noce de Soie, Ochamena Biru, Toji Bi-ru and Yuzu Blanche, among other brews. All intelligently juxtapose ingredients like sancho peppercorns, green tea, ume plums, shiso leaves and yuzu rinds with acidic fermentation characters for tantalizing results the likes of which the Land of the Rising Sun has never seen. This can help the country showcase its high potential.

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Many of the thousands of people crossing the street every minute in front of Tokyo's Shibuya station might never know of the pleasures derived from Japan's own gardens and creativity when it comes to beer. But the rest of the world may well latch on to such tasty idiosyncrasies like they already have with some of Hitachino Nest's liquid wonders: Japanese Classic Ale, matured in cedar casks commonly used in the sake world, and XH, matured in shochu, or distilled sake, barrels. Along with growth of demand in the local market, this in turn can help the identity of jibiru blossom to maturity just like the cherry trees every awe-inspiring spring.

**- End of Article**

## CUISINE

# THE ALLURE OF PIZZA AND BEER

- By Owen Ogletree

Anyone with the least bit of awareness of beer and food combinations can rattle off a few celebrated, classic pairings such as a bacon cheeseburger with an American pale ale, bratwurst washed down with an Oktoberfest-Märzen, oysters complemented by a dry stout, fish and chips paired with a classic British bitter, or steamed mussels accompanied by a Belgian witbier. Of all the well-known food and beer permutations, none seems more perfect, diverse and ingrained in American culture than pizza with beer.

Why do pizza and beer make for such a perfect marriage of flavors and bliss? Is there an ideal beer for every type of pizza? Like modern beer, has pizza now entered into the artisanal or “craft” arena?

### More Alike Than Different

Firstly, both pizza and beer have been around for a long time. Long before the Italians fired up their pizza ovens, ancient Egyptians, Babylonians and Greeks were cooking up flat breads with a variety of toppings in clay ovens. As a precursor to today’s focaccia, Romans and Greeks topped their bread with herbs and olive oil. Our current concept of cheesy pizza with tomato sauce did begin in Italy, and American troops returning from both World Wars brought home a taste for the dish that quickly permeated our culture.

In a similar tale, beer was first brewed in ancient Mesopotamia as a part of a daily diet and quickly spread to Egypt and surrounding cultures. Made from soaking baked bread in water, these early brews also contained a variety of herbs and fruit and were remarkably different from modern ales and lagers that are inspired by styles first brewed in Europe during the Middle Ages. Immigrant brewers brought European styles to America in the 1800s, and U.S. soldiers contributed to the popularity of flavorful, European-style beers in our country by picking up a taste for these beers overseas.

Crawford Moran, brewmaster for 5 Seasons

Brewing in Atlanta, says, “I remember reading many years ago that every culture – every group of people on the planet – made some form of basic flatbread with toppings and some form of fermented carbohydrate beverage. The combination of beer and pizza is so basic, it’s like some universal constant.”

Pizza and beer make up two extraordinarily similar food products. Pizza dough comes from milled grain, and the fermentable sugars of beer originate mostly from crushed, malted barley. Brewing monks from medieval times often called beer “liquid bread.” Most pizza dough and all wort (unfermented beer) require yeast to complete the transformation into their final, delicious outcomes.

Moran is partnering with friend Russ Yates in opening a new brewpub and pizza kitchen near Atlanta’s Emory University called Pint & Slice, and he explains, “As lovers of fermentation, we’re going to actually ferment our dough with wild Italian yeasts and add my favorite Belgian beer yeast from a Trappist monastery to the mix. I love this yeast, and, yes, there will be many beers at Pint & Slice brewed with the yeast to pair with our pizza.”

Pizza dough and sweet beer wort would be lifeless and lackluster without ingredients to add spice and complexity. Pizza benefits from a tomato zing, while ales come to life from fruity yeast esters. Herbs and garlic complement almost any pizza, while hop flowers provide a spicy, herbal, bitter balance to the sweetness of barley malt.

### A Harmony of Flavors

In Italy, red wine makes up the standard beverage to enjoy alongside a slice of pizza. The hop bitterness of beer compares easily to the bitter tannins in some red wines, so it makes sense that any foods that complement a dry, tannin-rich red wine will also go well with a dry, hoppy pale ale or IPA. In America, almost any beer lover will argue that beer forms a better pairing with pizza than wine. A reason may be that beer is less acidic than wine and makes for soft, complex flavor amalgamations with the components of pizza.

Many pizzas offer sweet, caramelized, earthy aromas and flavors – much like a malty brown ale, amber or German-style doppelbock. The earthy flavors of mushrooms, peppers and meats go well with rich, malty beers and form amazing flavor complements.

“Beer gives resonance with the taste of the dough right away,” says Daniel Imdieke, manager of beer operations for the Old Chicago pizza pub chain. “Then, you have the hops, malts and any spiced esters from the yeast all reacting differently to the cheese, the sauce and any herbs and toppings like pepperoni, sausage or mushrooms. All of the individual elements of pizza go well with beer on their own, so when you mix them together in one place, it’s hard to go wrong.”

Annica Kreider, VP of brand development for Mellow Mushroom, adds, “At the base, I think that pizza and beer are a classic pairing of cold and hot. Beer is a great carbonated refreshment that cuts through the tomato and cheese of a traditional pizza very well. Craft beer with pizza is just the natural evolution of this, now that consumers have a more sophisticated palate and are realizing that craft beer takes the pairing to a whole new level.”

*‘Every group of people on the planet made some form of basic flatbread with toppings and some form of fermented carbohydrate beverage. The combination of beer and pizza is so basic, it’s like some universal constant.’*

### Beer and Cheese, Please

Beer and cheese produce a mouthwatering range of flavors when enjoyed together, as the sweet, malty backbone of beer complements the creamy texture of cheese. Since cheese is a major component of most contemporary pizzas, here lies another reason for the popularity of pizza with beer.

Unlike the acidity in wine that washes the creamy coating of cheese quickly off the tongue, beer nurtures the flavors of the cheese on the palate, and beer’s carbonation mingles with the cheese to volatilize and release delightful flavor notes.

When deciding on a craft beer to match with a specialty pizza, consider the type of cheese on the pie. For example, dry, salty Parmigiano-Reggiano pairs well with a dry, spicy, mineral-like IPA, and the citrusy hop flavor of an American pale ale tends to be enhanced by the creamy essence and somewhat dough-like texture of mozzarella. Asiago is an Italian cheese with an elegant, nutty flavor that really complements a nut brown ale or caramely American amber ale.

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### Pizza Goes “Crafty”

“Pizza and beer belong together,” says chef, restaurateur and Top Chef judge Hugh Acheson. “They’ve been married for so long, they are like the happy, old couple we all look up to. They have also gotten so much better at the same time in the last decade.”

These days, the combination of pizza and beer is so much more than just a slice of pepperoni with a yellow American lager. Pizza and American beer have both experienced an artisanal rebirth, and it’s a brave new world out there for the pair.

The immense successes of pizza-centered brewpubs like Pizza Port in California and Piece in Chicago demonstrate the appeal of offering a massive range of house beer styles alongside a vast menu of unique, flavorful pizzas that are loaded with personality and intriguing ingredients. Following suit, Russ Yates and Crawford Moran plan to add whole new levels to the general pizza concept at their Slice & Pint brewpub. “I spent some time in Chicago last year and went to Piece Brewing,” says Yates. “I was very impressed with what they were doing up there, and the experience really got the gears turning for me on our pizza brewpub here in Atlanta. Our customers will never get bored with our house beers and pizza, as there will always be new flavor combinations to experience.”

For the string of Your Pie pizza restaurants in the Southeast, pairing craft pizzas with craft beer makes perfect sense. “We put the ‘craft’ building back into pizza,” says Your Pie founder Drew French. “We do smaller, individualized, customized, flavorful and healthy pizzas that we hand-toss and finish off in a brick oven, while hand-turning with an oven peel.”

Paul Childers, owner of Your Pie in Savannah, adds, “Craft beer is bringing back taste, quality, freshness and the individuality of its brewmasters – it’s about choice really – not ‘one size fits all.’ Your Pie does this with pizza, and craft breweries do it with beer. Simply, bigger isn’t always better, and the individual’s choice may be better than the mainstream.”

This current atmosphere of craft beer and artisanal pizza makes for enjoyable, yet challenging choices. American craft beer lovers and foodies are experiencing enormous arrays of flavors that seemed unimaginable just a few years ago. Moran sums it up, “A beer that pairs well with a pepperoni pizza may not be the best fit for a green Thai curry pizza or a chipotle with

adobo sauce pizza or a barbeque pizza. The fun is in the tasting and experimentation.”

### What Goes Into a Great Craft Pizza?

Hugh Acheson explains, “Making the best pizza depends on using great ingredients, sound skills and a light hand to make those ingredients shine. If you take the best mozzarella and sop it up with too much so-so sauce, then the results are going to be lackluster. But if you take great dough, just a touch of beautiful sauce, and awesome cheese - cooked at a really high heat - then you’ll have a winner.”

Your Pie’s French believes that a great deal of thought and energy must go into making impressive pizza. “Having great sauce and toppings to work with, and how you make the combinations work well together are what separates a good pizza from the very best pizza,” he says. “Of course, without our brick oven to finish it all off, our ingredients would not be highlighted so well.”

“At Mellow Mushroom, we put a tremendous amount of care in sourcing ingredients that meet our high standards,” says Kreider. “We use all-natural products whenever possible, spring water in our famous ‘mellow dough,’ the highest quality cheeses, fresh produce from a local company... and the list goes on. Another critical differentiator for us is that our pies are stone-baked. We believe that this attention to detail creates a product where the sum is greater than the parts.”

Indieke agrees, “At Old Chicago, we hand make and toss our dough fresh every day with all natural, from scratch ingredients. We have different dough recipes for our Chicago-style Thick Crust and our Tavern Thin Crust. We use different cheeses and from scratch pizza sauces. Making the best pizza in town is something we take seriously, and having 90-110 craft beers to go with our pizza doesn’t hurt either.”

Contrary to mainstream thought, Moran notes that cranking out exceptional pizza can be quite a complex process. “Everything that goes into the pizza is important – the flour, the yeast, the time and temperature of the ferment on the dough, matching the temperature of the oven to the type of dough, the type of oven, the sauces, the toppings, and, of course, the style and quality of the beer you enjoy with the pizza.”

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### Pizza & Beer Pairings

MELLOW MUSHROOM BUFFALO CHICKEN

*Mozzarella cheese, grilled Buffalo chicken, caramelized onions, Applewood smoked bacon with a swirl of Buffalo sauce.*

**Suggested beer style – American Pale Ale or IPA**

MELLOW MUSHROOM FRESHIES PIZZA

*Mozzarella, Roma tomatoes and basil.*

**Suggested beer style –Flanders-style Brown Ale/Oud Bruin**

OLD CHICAGO’S DOUBLE DECKERONI

*Pepperoni, hot sauce, parsley*

**Suggested beer style – Double IPA**

MELLOW MUSHROOM KOSMIC KARMA

*Red sauce base with feta and mozzarella cheeses, spinach, sun-dried tomatoes and Roma tomatoes with a pesto swirl.*

**Suggested beer style – American Amber Ale**

MELLOW MUSHROOM GOURMET WHITE PIZZA

*Olive oil and garlic base with sun-dried tomatoes, Provolone, feta and mozzarellas cheeses, Roma tomatoes and onions.*

**Suggested beer style – Belgian-style Saison**

MELLOW MUSHROOM HOLY SHITAKE

*Olive oil and garlic base, Shitake, button and Portobello mushrooms, caramelized onions, Mozzarella and Montmore cheeses drizzled with garlic aioli and black truffle oil. Garnished with fresh chives and shaved Parmesan.*

**Suggested beer style – German-style Doppelbock**

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### And the winner is... IPA

When asked for a personal favorite craft beer and pizza combination, interviewees went overwhelmingly with the ever-popular American IPA (India Pale Ale) for their choice of brew...

### Hugh Acheson

Atlanta chef, restaurateur and judge for TV’s Top Chef

*“I love Antico Pizza’s Diavola with a good IPA. Sopressetta, buffalo mozzarella, Calabrian peppers... the spice of the peppers on the pizza just works with the hoppy complexity of a good IPA like a Dogfish Head. Full flavor meets full flavor.”*

...continued

**Drew Fench**

Founder of Your Pie

*"I would have to go with our Ischia pizza – extra virgin olive oil, Roma tomatoes, fresh mozzarella, basil and garlic – then we add marinara, more garlic and pepperoni. I pair it with an American IPA, because the hoppy notes balance out the garlic and pepperoni."*

**Annica Kreider**

VP of Brand Development for Mellow Mushroom

*"My personal favorite is our Philosopher's Pie paired with a hoppy IPA. The pie is very unique and rich with a lot of flavor-forward ingredients like steak, three cheeses, grilled Portobello mushrooms, artichoke hearts and Kalamata olives on our olive oil and garlic base. To me, the hoppy bitterness helps cut all those savory flavors."*

For a little variety, also try these pairings...

– Thai-style pizza with curry or sweet chili sauce alongside a Belgian saison or tripel.

– Wild mushroom and three cheese pizza with a German-style doppelbock.

– Spinach and caramelized onion pizza matched with an English-style strong bitter (ESB).

– Margherita pizza with anchovies washed down with a hoppy Bohemian pilsner.

– Veggie pizza with yellow peppers and arugula alongside a fruity, clove-like German-style hefeweizen.

– Pizza with smoked salmon and capers with a rich, dark, robust porter.

– Chicago-style deep dish pizza loaded with cheese and tomato sauce paired with a dry, acidic Flanders red ale.

**- End of article**

# RESTAURANT SPOTLIGHT:

## THE PUB AT MONTE CARLO

- By Bob Barnes

People arrive in Las Vegas for many reasons! Fortunately, craft beer lovers are not neglected when visiting the city that never sleeps.

One of the largest of selections on the famed Strip can be found at The Pub at Monte Carlo, a mega-beer list gastropub. The location is mega, too – at the Monte Carlo Hotel near the hotbed intersection of Tropicana Ave. and Las Vegas Blvd.

Inside The Pub you'll find a massive 13,000 square foot space with a post-modern décor featuring copper ducting, red brick walls, a high ceiling and a lighted array of kegs behind the long bar showing off its wares. A second level accommodates guests, especially at night, when crowds pack the room. More than 35 TV screens offer viewing capability from any quadrant of the room and project a variety of sports programming. Dining al fresco is an option, with a patio area overlooking the Monte Carlo's pool allowing for optimum people watching while enjoying the desert weather.

While the competition in Las Vegas for tourist attention generates many nice atmospheres, The Pub at Monte Carlo holds a strong hand with its beer list. More than 300 beers are offered, and with 11 of its 120 taps pouring local beer there's a good sampling of Vegas craft brews. Designed for easy navigation, which counts for something with a list this long, the menu carries symbols for draft, bottled and local beer. It's arranged into 19 major beer styles with style description, serving size, price and the specific sub-style.

No matter the preference or mood, there's something to like here. The list includes Belgian styles (St. Feuillien Saison, for example, and Goose Island Pepe Nero); Trappist ale (Rochefort 8 and 10 and Westmalle Dubbel or Tripel); Pale Ale (Anchor Liberty Ale and Firestone Walker DBA); IPA (Dogfish Head 90 Minute and locally brewed Tenaya Creek Hop Ride); Porters (Ballast Point Black

Marlin and Stone Smoked Porter); Stouts (Young's Double Chocolate Stout on nitrogen and locally-brewed Joseph James Red Fox Imperial Stout); Fruit Beer (Samuel Smith Organic Strawberry and Wells Banana Bread); and Ciders (Woodchuck Apple Amber and Sam Adams Angry Orchard Crisp Apple).

With another nod to the emphasis on hospitality in Vegas, five varieties of beer flights are offered: Local Brews (select 4 for \$15), Belgian Styles (4 for \$19), Hop Heavy (4 for \$17), American Craft (4 for \$15) and Customized (any 4 of the 120 taps for \$15).

General Manager Robert Parekh is the mastermind behind the carefully selected beer menu and has a wealth of beer knowledge. "The inspiration behind picking the beers is to select beers that represent well the major styles," said Parekh, who is on track to become a certified cicerone. "With craft beer taking off and revolutionizing the beer industry, we want to be in the forefront on offering new releases and styles."

Parekh also believes in supporting local beer. "We showcase five of our local breweries – Big Dog's Brewing, Chicago Brewing, Joseph James Brewing, Sin City Brewing and Tenaya Creek Brewery. While it's important to support local breweries, they also sell very well and are in big demand, with people from all over the world coming in to see us and what's brewed here in Las Vegas." The Pub Private Label Pale Ale, made locally by Joseph James, is on the list. Other notable local brews being poured include Big Dog's Red Hydrant Red Ale, Joseph James Hop Box IPA and Sin City Amber, Tenaya Creek Hauling Oats Stout and Chicago Brewing Root Beer.

While guests may come for the beer, they stay for the food – another Las Vegas tradition. The menu is stacked with an array of appetizers, burgers, soups, salads, large plates and wood-fired flatbreads. Burger connoisseurs can design their own with choice of five meats, nine cheeses, three buns, nine sauces, nine toppings and five fry selections. Or one can choose from dishes made with beer, such as Goose Island Braised Short Rib, The Pub Pale Ale Fish & Chips or Newcastle Beer & Cheddar Soup. Large plates include dishes of grilled salmon, whole roasted chicken, filet mignon, bone-in rib-eye and shepherd's pie.

Starting this spring, The Pub and Executive Chef Timothy Radigan have been

hosting "Gus's Beer and Bites," a series of beer pairing dinners. Named after Gus, the Pub's whale mascot and logo, each dinner is priced at \$50 (plus tax and tip) and is a six-course beer pairing held in The Pub's upstairs dining room. Past dinners have featured the brands of Ballast Point, Left Coast, New Belgium, Sam Adams and Goose Island and are slated to continue monthly through 2014.

A stage at one end of the room suggests that live entertainment is part of the experience at The Pub. The Dueling Pianos perform a combination sing-along and Karaoke experience (with the opportunity to perform on stage) Thursday through Sunday from 9 p.m. to midnight, and on other select nights live bands and DJs perform.

A happy hour, Monday through Friday from 3 to 6 p.m., offers food and drink specials, \$3 off any draft and The Pub Pale Ale for \$3. Nevada residents can request a Pub LOCALS Access Card (free with Nevada ID), which delivers all day happy hour and 50 percent off on all beers on Sunday. The Pub is non-smoking and open to all ages.

*"The inspiration behind picking the beers is to select beers that represent well the major styles. With craft beer taking off and revolutionizing the beer industry, we want to be in the forefront on offering new releases and styles."*

- Robert Parekh, General Manager

### THE PUB AT MONTE CARLO

3770 S. Las Vegas Blvd  
Las Vegas, NV 89109  
(702) 730-7420

Sunday -Thursday  
11:00 a.m. - midnight  
Friday - Saturday  
11:00 a.m. - 1:00 a.m.

(During football season The Pub opens at 9 a.m. on Saturday and Sunday.)

To reserve a seating at a beer pairing dinner, visit: <http://www.montecarlo.com/BeerSeries> or call (702) 769-6699

- End of article

# BEER REVIEW

- Notes by Charlie Gow

The American love affair with hops continues unabated. So we focused on IPA's and pale ales in the current review. Our line-up shows there's more than one way to brew up these classic styles, such as a barrel-aged IPA and a low-alcohol / low-hop IPA. Among the pale ales, we sampled a "Louisiana" model and an English version from out West. The bill includes a leaning toward Belgium, too, with sour, fruit, strong and saison styles sampled here. For those always in the mood for lagers, we've got them in different shades, plus a sweet and unique wheat beer. Enjoy!

## OUR JUDGING PROCESS

The beers were judged based on their individual merits but with an eye toward how well they exemplify specific styles, as defined by both the Brewers Association and the Beer Judge Certification Program. To ensure the validity of the judging and to provide all of the beers being sampled with a truly objective evaluation, each and every beer was tasted blind. The beers were presented to the judges as numbered entries, with the only identifying information being the entry's style.

### The scores break down as follows:

**100 to 96:** World Class

You need this beer in your life.

**95 to 91:** Exceptional

Don't hesitate.

**90 to 86:** Very Good

A brew to savor.

**85 to 81:** Good

Enjoyable but not life-altering.

**80 to 75:** Average

Somewhat unimpressive.

**74 and below:** Not recommended

Just walk away.

## JUDGES

### Tim Artz

Tim started homebrewing while in college, and since then his brews have earned many awards, including Best of Show at the Virginia State Fair. A longtime member of the Brewers United for Real Potables (BURP) homebrew club and a beer judge since 1992, he currently holds the National rank in the Beer Judge Certification Program. Tim is the founder of two premier regional beer events: the National Capital Spirit of Free Beer Homebrew Competition and the Spirit of Belgium Conference and Homebrew Competition.

### Tom Cannon

Tom has been drinking beer for 35 years, hunting for good beer for 22 years and homebrewing for 18 years. He is currently an Exam Director for the Beer Judge Certification Program and has reached the rank of Grand Master Level II beer judge within the organization. He has visited breweries from Portland, Ore., to Plzen in the Czech Republic and would expand his explorations if there were any decent beers west of Portland or east of Plzen (he still needs to get to Australia). Tom lives in Fairfax, Va., and works as an architect for the United States Navy.

### Pete Garofalo

Pete has been appreciating good beers since the days when locating a tavern with two "alternative" taps was a major find. He has been a homebrewer since 1991 and an active member of the Beer Judge Certification Program since 1994, and he now serves on the BJCP Board of Directors as the Northeast/International representative. A co-author of the BJCP Style Guidelines, he recently achieved the rank of Grand Master III. He and his wife Lesley moved from Upstate New York to Delaware two years ago.

### Charlie Gow

Charlie coordinated this review and wrote the judges' notes sections. He has been brewing for nearly 20 years, and for the past eight years he has served as a National level Beer Judge Certification Program judge. Currently an Associate Exam Director on the BJCP's Board of Directors, he has basically committed the past 12 years of his life to an extensive study of the brewing process. The common thread among his entire circle of friends is beer.

## 95 - MONK'S CAFÉ SOUR FLEMISH ALE

Style: Flemish Sour / Oud Bruin

ABV: 5.5%

IBUs: 10

Serve at: 42° to 46°

Brouwerij Van Steenberge

Ertvelde, Belgium

www.vansteenberge.com (imported by Global Beer Network, www.globalbeer.com)

Distribution: Available throughout the U.S. except MS and WY.

### Food Pairing Recommendations

Oven roasted lamb shanks; chicken stewed in a brown fig sauce

Cheese: Epoisses; Meadow Creek Grayson

### Judges' Notes

Philadelphia's Monk's Café is one of America's iconic pubs, considered one of the great Belgian beer destinations on this side of the Atlantic. Proprietor Tom Peters has contracted with Brouwerij Van Steenberge to produce Monk's Café Sour Flemish Ale, a sweet/sour Flanders-style brown ale. Rife with notes of sour cherry and luscious caramel, the aroma is classic Oud Bruin. Pete was a bit taken aback by the upfront acetic tang, likening it to "finely aged Modena balsamico," but felt the underlying malt sweetness and plum notes help to balance the nose. Pouring a deep, saturated brown and showing flashes of ruby along its edges, this beer is topped by a persistent creamy, tan-colored head. With this beer, as goes the aroma, so goes the flavor. Gobs of Montmorency cherries, warm toasty malt, and a pronounced underlying sourness dominate, yet no component overpowers in this exceptionally balanced brew. The deft interplay of "flavors of sweetish young beer overlaid on aged sour beer" and a quenching, slight dry-ish finish really impressed Tim, who pronounced it "classically inspired Old World Flemish ale." Tom, too, enjoyed the puckering sourness, but found it tended to be lactic, leaving him wanting a bit more "crisp, lightly vinegary" element that helps define the style. With limited distribution, Monk's Café Sour Flemish Ale presents the perfect excuse for an impromptu trip to visit Philadelphia and the café.

...continued

## 95 - ALL DAY IPA

Style: American Pale Ale

ABV: 4.7%

IBUs: 42

Serve at: 45° to 50°

Founders Brewing Company

Grand Rapids, Michigan

www.foundersbrewing.com | (616) 776-2182

Distribution: AL, CT, DC, GA, IL, IN, IA, KY, ME, MA, MI, MN, MO, NC, NH, NJ, NY, OH, PA, RI, SC, TX, VT, VA, and WI.

### Food Pairing Recommendations

Garlic hummus with toasted pine nuts; grilled trout alongside new potatoes

Cheese: white cheddar; Caerphilly

### Judges' Notes

Somewhat of a dichotomy, All Day IPA is a "session" IPA, weighing in at a conservative ABV of 4.7 percent and sporting just over 40 IBU. With its low alcohol and bitterness, All Day IPA is a rather welcome refuge in a world teeming with strong IPAs, Double IPAs and enamel-stripping Triple IPAs. Rich, juicy tropical fruits dominate the aroma, all floating over a faintly nutty, Ritz Cracker-like malt. Tim was "blasted by fistfuls of guava, overripe pineapple, and bright tangerine zest." Brilliantly clear and radiating from the glass with a fulgent golden glow, this beer boasts a mountainous, rocky white head. Adroitly balanced, All Day doesn't throttle the palate with aggressive bitterness. In this brew, the bitterness plays a supporting role, balancing the malt and showcasing hop flavors and esters. The overt fruitiness surprised Pete, who found the beer "a bit out of balance, with sweet tropical fruit" masking the underlying malt base. However, he was impressed by deft melding of the mélange of pineapple, mango, papaya, and guava flavors. Tom, as well, keyed on the "dense fruity notes of dragon fruit and grapefruit," and digging further, teased out hints of green tobacco. The slightly bitter finish rescued this beer from being overly sweet, and all judges agreed it is a truly "sessionable" brew. All Day IPA is a perfect compromise between quaffable session beer and hop monster.

## 94 - AGAVE WHEAT

Style: American Wheat Ale

ABV: 4.2%

IBUs: 19

Serve at: 40° to 45°

Breckenridge Brewing

Denver, Colorado

www.breckbrew.com | (800) 328-6723

Distribution: AR, AZ, CA, CO, CT, FL, GA, IL, IN, IA, KS, KY, MA, MD, ME, MI, MN, MO, NC, ND, NE, NH, NJ, NM, NY, OH, PA, RI, SC, SD, TX, VA, VT, WI, WV and WY.

### Food Pairing Recommendations

Cream cheese stuffed jalapenos with bacon; halibut crusted with garlic parmesan bread crumbs

Cheese: Queso fresco; mild Camembert

### Judges' Notes

For almost 25 years, Colorado's Breckenridge Brewing has provided thirsty devotees with an ever-growing repertoire of characterful, occasionally quirky beers – including Agave Wheat. Another session strength brew in this issue, Agave Wheat just barely tops 4 percent ABV with just enough bitterness to tame the underlying malty sweetness. Swirling with notes of freshly baked bread, tart lemon zest, and the faintest whiff of alcohol, the aroma is unmistakably American Wheat Ale. Diving a bit deeper, Tom found traces of lavender among the cracker-like malt and tart wheat tang, noting the overall effect as "suggesting the coming of Spring." As expected, this beer shows a pale golden countenance, shot through with milky white flecks. The prodigious, meringue-like head collapses quickly, leaving a small collar of foam in its wake. No real "agave" flavors put in an appearance, but there is a lingering sugary sweetness lurking beneath the prominent lemony tartness. Tim detected hints of mango and a light background "citric, lemon-lime hop flavor," lauding the brewer's "skillful balancing of sweet, tart, and sour." Conversely, Pete lasered in on the "grainy, slightly toasted" malt, and felt the beer would benefit from a touch more bitterness. Like Tim, he found notes of mango, but drilled down and discovered a "Sweet Tart-like" flavor to balance the sweetness. Eminently drinkable and chock full of flavor, Tim and Pete both deemed this a superb summer quencher.

## 92 - BURTON BATON

Style: Imperial IPA (Oak Aged)

ABV: 10%

IBUs: 70

Serve at: 54° to 60°

Dogfish Head Craft Brewery

Milton, Delaware

www.dogfish.com | (302) 684-1000

Distribution: CA, CT, DC, DE, FL, GA, IL, KY, MA, MD, ME, MI, NC, NH, NJ, NV, NY, OH, PA, TX, VA and VT.

### Food Pairing Recommendations

Toast points with olive tapenade; barbecued baby back ribs

Cheese: English stilton; Idiazabal

### Judges' Notes

Dogfish Head's mastermind, Sam Calagione, has never been apologetic in his pursuit of beers that push stylistic boundaries, creating some of the most sought after brews on the market today. The sublimely wood-aged Burton Baton IPA is just one of those beers. Oozing with massive notes of sultry Madagascar vanilla and sticky caramel, the nose is unabashedly oak-driven. Tim pushed through the sweet vanilla to reveal "potent earthy, almost minty" hop notes backed by an underpinning of Oloroso sherry, leading him to proclaim this a "beautifully oak-aged brew, reminiscent of the finest Old Ales." This beer does not throw the longest-lived head, but sports a decent collar of foam. It sulks in the glass, throwing glints of mahogany from its deep copper core. The flavor leads with a solid alcohol punch riding over chewy crystal malt. Tom was blown away by the initial vanilla blast, but worked his way deeper to find a "warming Jamaican rum" note, with sufficient bitterness to balance. He did feel, however, the massive alcohol punch was overpowering. Pete found a "pleasant, chewy, nutty, caramelly base note" with hints of toffee and golden treacle, all balanced out by an emphatic hop bitterness and prodigious alcohol kick. Weighing in at a crushing 10 percent ABV and laced with a powerful oaky character, this is not your standard IPA – extremely tasty and surprisingly easy on the palate.

...continued

## 92 - BABA BLACK LAGER

Style: Schwarzbier  
 ABV: 4%  
 IBUs: 32  
 Serve at: 40° to 45°

Uinta Brewing  
 Salt Lake City, Utah  
 www.uintabrewing.com | (801) 467-0909

Distribution: AZ, CA, CO, DE, DC, GA, ID, IL, ME, MD, MA, NC, NV, NH, NJ, NM, NY, OH, OR, PA, RI, UT, VA, WA and WY.

### Food Pairing Recommendations

Wild mushroom flatbread; Bourbon pecan pie  
 Cheese: Comte; Gruyere

### Judges' Notes

Now in its 20th year of providing painstakingly crafted beers with all brewery power being wind or solar-derived, Uinta is dedicated to sustainability in terms of both the environment and distinctive brews. Baba Black Lager is the Salt Lake City brewers' schwarzbier entry, one bursting with aromas of black licorice, cocoa powder, and French roast coffee. Wafting among the prominent dark malt notes, Tom picked hints of "Fuji apple and Crenshaw melons," and noted a virtual absence of hops. He likened the overall effect to a "slightly fruity cup of chocolate milk," and deemed it "not entirely lager-like." Deep, dark brown, almost verging on black, with occasional glints of ruby peeking through, this brew touches on opaque. The tan-colored head was somewhat anemic and collapsed almost immediately. Bold flavors of cold-pressed espresso and raw cacao nibs dominate, while a restrained caramelly sweetness provides a needed counterpoint. Pete uncovered fleeting hints of dates and dried figs riding beneath the "bracing coffee and semisweet chocolate" that segued into a slightly acidic finish. The high carbonation caught Tim off guard, but he dug in and pulled out a blend of sweet milk chocolate, Ibarra Mexican chocolate and roasty malt. He also found a pleasant spiciness, comparing it to a "classic, spicy dark Czech lager." More assertive than most "dark" lagers, Baba Black Lager brings big flavors packed in a session strength beer.

## 92 - ST. TERESE'S PALE ALE

Style: American Pale Ale  
 ABV: 5.1%  
 IBUs: 29  
 Serve at: 45° to 50°

Highland Brewing Company  
 Asheville, North Carolina  
 www.highlandbrewing.com | (828) 299-3370

Distribution: AL, DC, FL, GA, KY, NC, OH, SC and TN.

### Food Pairing Recommendations

Pan-fried chicken escalopes; seared sea scallops with arugula  
 Cheese: Red Leicester; Humboldt Fog

### Judges' Notes

On the very low end of bitterness for an American Pale Ale, Highland's St. Terese's Pale Ale certainly makes up for it in hop aroma. Tucked away in the scenic, beer culture rich environs of Asheville, N.C., these folks have been knocking out tasty brews for almost two decades. St. Terese's aroma is dominated by bright notes of grapefruit and tangelo, backed by resinous pine notes. Tim enjoyed the "delicate give and take of sweet caramel and sharp grapefruit tang," all interspersed with subtle floral notes of hyssop, proclaiming the nose as "decidedly American, driven by pungent Pacific Northwest hop notes." Crystal clear and pouring a burnished gold, this beer is capped by an ivory tinged, mousse-like head that leaves beautiful lacework as it subsides. Though not as hop-driven as the nose, the flavors tend toward fruitiness supported by biscuit-like malt. Tom found the flavor "a bit too hop forward - more like an IPA," though he complimented the beer's balance between bitterness and sweet malt. He also enjoyed the clean, crisp finish. On the other hand, Pete appreciated the hop notes of "resiny, Spruce tip and tart Bergamot orange," declaring the flavor exceptionally balanced, with smooth bitterness and a "quick finish that cracks across the palate." If you can't find St. Terese's close to home, a trek to Asheville to sample it at the source is definitely in order.

## 90 - INVERSION IPA

Style: India Pale Ale  
 ABV: 6.8%  
 IBUs: 80  
 Serve at: 38° to 42°

Deschutes Brewing Company  
 Portland, Oregon  
 www.deschutesbrewery.com | (503) 296-4906

Distribution: AK, AZ, CA, CO, HI, ID, IL, KS, MN, MO, MT, NV, NM, ND, OR, SD, TX, UT, WA, and WY.

### Food Pairing Recommendations

Chicken wings with Jamaican jerk seasoning; endive salad topped by crisp duck confit  
 Cheese: Parmigiano-Reggiano; Shropshire blue

### Judges' Notes

A cornerstone of craft, Deschutes has been slaking thirsts of for over 25 years. Inversion IPA is one of a long line of stellar ales from this venerable producer, packing 80 IBUs from no less than six different hop varieties. Surprisingly, Inversion's aroma favors malt over hops, and throws around notes of caramel, toffee, and bread dough with abandon. Hops do make their presence known, but are subdued with hints of pine needles and grapefruit peeking through the malt. Tim felt the hop aromas lacked definition, but he did tease out some "whiffs of orange sherbet and lemon verbena" from under the sugary malt sweetness. Pouring a light copper and tinged with a faint chill haze, Inversion dons a moderately well-sustained, off-white head. This beer's flavor, driven by boatloads of caramel and honey sweetness, belies its substantial bitterness - yet some citrus hop notes do emerge as the beer warms. Tom found a "nice balance between malt and hop flavors" with the malt coming across as "toffee-ish, almost like a Bit o' Honey." He noted the bitterness seemed a bit low for an IPA. Pete worked around prominent maltiness and picked out "sorbet-like berry fruit, resinous hops, and nutty, honey-like malt." Unlike Tom, Pete deemed the bitterness "substantial" and felt it balanced the malt sweetness. Though assertively bittered, Inversion's malt sweetness keeps everything in balance, rendering it a seriously quaffable IPA.

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## 90 - DENVER PALE ALE

Style: English Style Pale Ale

ABV: 5.4%

IBUs: 40

Serve at: 45°

Great Divide Brewing

Denver, Colorado

www.greatdivide.com | (303) 296-9460

Distribution: AL, AZ, CA, CO, FL, GA, IL, IN, KS, MA, MD, MN, MO, NC, NE, NJ, NY, OK, OH, OR, PA, SC, TX, VA, and WA.

### Food Pairing Recommendations

Tempura shrimp drizzled in soy dipping sauce; oyster po' boy sandwich dressed with remoulade

Cheese: mature Cheshire; double Gloucester

### Judges' Notes

Crafted in the English pale ale style, Denver Pale Ale abounds with earthy, lightly grassy hop notes and sweet fruity esters. Also identified by the letters DPA writ large on the label, this brew is one of the rock solid beers Great Divide has been knocking out for the past 20 years. Gobs of tropical fruit dominate the aroma, with notes of pineapple guava and overripe mangos skipping over the top of a crackery, biscuit-like malt base. The nose's fruity sweetness struck Pete as "too overripe, just bordering on cloying." He likened it to "syrupy fruit salad," but found some grainy and caramel malt notes. Showing just the merest trace of chill haze, this deep yellow brew falls just shy of golden and is topped by a small, ivory-colored foam collar. The aroma's intense fruitiness doesn't appear in the flavor, allowing the crisp, saltine cracker and sugary caramel notes to shine through. Noting "a pronounced bitter, almost astringent edge," Tom found the flavors a tad out of balance, though he did pull out some "warm cookie dough and fresh hearth bread" malt flavors from under the hops. Tim, however, pushed past the overt bitterness to find "a swirl of fruity plums, apricots, and cherries," all backed by lightly toasted malt. Complex and highly drinkable, DPA is an ideal "go to" beer for the picnic or barbecue.

## 89 - TOASTED LAGER

Style: American Amber Lager

ABV: 5.5%

IBUs: 28

Serve at: 40° to 45°

Blue Point Brewing Company

Patchogue, New York

www.bluepointbrewing.com | (631) 475-6944

Distribution: CT, DE, FL, GA, MD, MA, MI, NC, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VA, and VT.

### Food Pairing Recommendations

Strawberry spinach salad topped with candied nuts; chicken tostadas with fresh cilantro

Cheese: Brillat Savarin triple crème brie; Asiago

### Judges' Notes

Since launching its Toasted Lager from a direct-flame fired kettle in 1998, Blue Point has grown into a regional powerhouse, producing 30,000 barrels a year of uniquely flavored beers. Direct firing produces toast and caramel notes, which are star players in the flagship Toasted Lager. Woven through the toasty malt aromas are notes of clover honey, lightly spicy hops, and hints of Anjou pears. Tom found the aroma reminiscent of "oatmeal spice cookies" with just a whiff of creamery butter wafting over the top. Brilliantly clear and filling the glass with a soft, lambent golden glow, this brew wears a velvety, pure white foam crown that lasts to the very end. As suggested by its name, Toasted Lager boasts a rich, toasted maltiness right up front, with just enough hop bitterness to balance after the initial malt blitz. Pushing aside the overt toasty base notes, Pete pulled out some "earthy, almost woody hop" flavors hidden among grainy, graham cracker malt. As the malt receded, Pete found a "slightly harsh, bitter edge to the finish." Tim deemed the beer "exceptionally balanced for such a malt forward style," lauding the seamless integration of caramel, toast, spicy hops and fruity esters. A distinctly American tippie, Toasted Lager is just the ticket for a day at the beach, especially if that beach is on the South Shore.

## 89 - LOCAL 1

Style: Belgian-Style Golden Strong Ale

ABV: 9%

IBUs: 26

Serve at: 45° to 50°

Brooklyn Brewing Company

Brooklyn, New York

www.brooklynbrewery.com | (718) 486-7422

Distribution: CT, DC, DE, FL, GA, IL, IN, KY, LA, ME, MD, MA, MI, MN, NH, NJ, NY, NC, OH, PA, RI, SC, TN, TX, VT and VA.

### Food Pairing Recommendations

Spicy red Thai steamed mussels; Indian chicken curry (Murgh Kari)

Cheese: Aged gouda; Limburger

### Judges' Notes

Brimming with brash notes of cardamom, allspice, and ripe banana, Local 1 is yet another monster brew from Garrett Oliver and the folks at Brooklyn Brewery. Brewed in the Belgian strong ale style, Local 1 packs a whopping 9 percent ABV, derived from classic European malts and a judicious dose of Demerara sugar. Yeast-derived phenols are center stage in the aroma, with Tim picking up "light hints of clove, Jamaican allspice, and a whiff of fresh white pepper." Unrestrainedly hazy yellow and shot through with milky white hints, this brew is capped by a mountainous head of dense, almost custard-like pure white foam. A firm alcohol punch leads off the flavor with spicy phenols and big fruity esters coming in behind. The initial alcohol blast struck Pete as "too hot and aggressive up front," but he found "soothing hints of green cardamom, Malabar black peppercorns, and sweet rock candy" riding behind the unrestrained booziness. Tom enjoyed the "clean bready malt" and "slightly chewy candi sugar sweetness," and felt the alcohol "deftly camouflaged." The spiciness struck Tom as "too aggressive to be truly Belgian," with big notes of clove and black pepper overtaking the malt in the finish. A solidly crafted, straightforward American interpretation of a powerful Belgian strong ale, Local 1 is perilously drinkable despite its substantial alcohol strength. Enjoy this stunning brew in moderation and proceed with caution.

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## 87 - PÊCHE MEL' SCALDIS

Style: Belgian Specialty Ale  
(w/Peaches)  
ABV: 7.5%  
IBUs: NA  
Serve at: 42° to 48°

Brasserie Dubuisson  
Pipaix, Belgium  
www.br-dubuisson.com (imported by Vanbergh & DeWulf, www.belgianexperts.com)

Distribution: Throughout the United States.

### Food Pairing Recommendations

Caramel cheesecake; white chocolate mousse with espresso bean shavings  
Cheese: Fontina; Havarti

### Judges' Notes

Generally known for the blockbuster, high-octane brews (Scaldis, Scaldis Noel), Brasserie Duboisson entered the fruit-flavored beer market just under five years ago. Of course, the brewers stayed true to their roots, and the result, Pêche Mel'Scaldis, clocks in at an impressive 8.5 percent ABV. Not unexpectedly, the nose is completely dominated by sweet, ripe peach notes backed by an alcohol booziness. Tim proclaimed the aroma "akin to walking through a peach orchard" and "like grandma's fresh baked peach pies," with no real underlying "beer" character. After some concerted effort, he did find some brandy-like alcohol notes. This is a distinctly orange-tinted brew, showing just a hint of cloudiness, that throws a very low head which collapses almost immediately after pouring. As with the nose, the flavor is dominated by syrupy Cling peach, guava and a complex melding of exotic flavors. There was not enough "beer character" in some views to balance the slightly cloying sweetness. The peach flavors struck Tom as "dried, rather than fresh peaches," which lent a faintly off-putting mustiness to the beer. Pete and Tom both opined that the beer would benefit from more bitterness to keep the sweetness in check, as well as some "Belgian beer" spiciness to add a bit of complexity. More like peach brandy than beer, this is the ideal base for an updated Bellini.

## 87 - LA 31 BIÈRE PALE

Style: American Pale Ale  
ABV: 6%  
IBUs: 27  
Serve at: 40°

Bayou Teche Brewing  
Arnaudville, Louisiana  
www.bayoutechebrewing.com | (337) 303-8000

Distribution: AL, GA, LA, MS, and NY.

### Food Pairing Recommendations

Seafood gumbo; almond-crust fish with beurre blanc sauce  
Cheese: Cabot's Clothbound Cheddar; Colston Bassett Stilton

### Judges' Notes

Dedicated to creating beers that honor strong Acadian roots, the brewers at Bayou Teche have created a "Louisiana Pale Ale" to pair with Cajun and Creole cuisine. A faint floral hop hint wafts over notes of freshly toasted English muffins and Tupelo honey, all commingling to form a nuanced nose. Tom dug some "frail minty and peppery" hops out from under the warm, buttered toast malt notes, finding the overall aroma "too malt-centric and lacking in definition and hop character." LA Biere 31 Pale lives up to its name. It pours crystal clear and light golden, donning a persistent, velvety, snow-white head. A firm bitterness and floral/spicy hop notes carry the flavor, with the slightly nutty Belgian malts laying down a solid foundation underneath. "Notably bitter and slightly thin-bodied" were Pete's first impressions, yet he worked past that and found "pleasant hints of strawberries and even tangerine peel." Overall, Pete found the beer "kind of neutral and lacking a distinct character." Tim found the beer "balanced toward hops," yet he enjoyed the complexity lent by "light, toasty, crusty white bread" malt notes, deeming this a "cleanly brewed session beer for hop lovers." Straddling the line between unassuming and assertive, Bayou Teche is pushing the boundaries and expanding beer's horizons. Although not yet widely distributed, LA 31 Biere Pale is capable of gracing the tables of crawfish boils throughout Acadiana and beyond.

## 87 - DOUBLE PILSNER

Style: Imperial Pilsner  
ABV: 8.1%  
IBUs: 39  
Serve at: 40° to 45°

Odell Brewing Company  
Fort Collins, Colorado  
www.odellbrewing.com | (970) 498-9070

Distribution: AZ, CO, ID, KS, MN, MO, NE, NM, SD and WY.

### Food Pairing Recommendations

Spicy sushi rolls with wasabi; lump crab salad with a mustard/vinegar dressing  
Cheese: Wensleydale; P'tit Basque

### Judges' Notes

Double Pilsner is Odell Brewing Company's strongly alcoholic riff on the venerable Bohemian pilsner, though with a surprisingly low hop bitterness. Jam packed with Pils malt and less traditional citrus hop notes, this is an iconoclastic brew. Generally not found in pilsner, sweet hints of Satsuma and Meyer lemon dominate the nose, drifting over crisp, cracker-like malt notes. Pete found some "light coriander notes floating between honeyed malt and a faintly herbaceous background," and likened the aroma to a Belgian Witbier rather than Czech pilsner. This beer radiates from the glass, a sparkling yellow brew laced with flashes of gold, and topped by a fluffy head of pure white bubbles. Supported by an emphatic hop bitterness and grassy/herbal hop notes, the sweet Ritz Cracker like malt is squarely in the forefront, with other flavors peeking in from around the edges. The malt struck Tom as "crisp and bright up front, followed by a sticky sweetness," that he felt was out of place in a pilsner with prominent alcohol heft. Contrarily, Tim enjoyed the "bracing hop bitterness in the forefront," and felt it "tamed the overt sweetness." Hop flavors were "green and grassy," rather than the expected floral and spicy notes. Though pale yellow and effervescent, Double Pilsner carries just over 8 percent ABV and suited more for sipping, rather than quaffing, on a sultry summer afternoon.

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## 84 - STATESIDE SAISON

Style: American Farmhouse Ale

ABV: 6.8%

IBUs: 18

Serve at: 45° to 50°

Stillwater Artisanal

Baltimore, Maryland

[www.stillwaterales.blogspot.com](http://www.stillwaterales.blogspot.com) |

(443) 668-5255

Distribution: AL, AZ, CA, CO, CT, DC, FL, GA, ID, IL, IN, IA, KS, KY, LA, ME, MD, MA, NY, NC, NV, OH, OR, PA, SC, TN, VA, VT, WA and WI.

### Food Pairing Recommendations

Thai coconut chicken soup; steamed lobster with garlic drawn butter

Cheese: Fiscalini Farmstead Bandage-Wrapped Cheddar; Selles sur Cher

### Judges' Notes

One of a growing number of “gypsy” brewers, little is known about Brian Strumke and his Baltimore-based brewing. We do, however, know that he produces quirky, occasionally off-kilter brews in styles less daring brewers tend to shun. Stillwater’s Stateside Saison is just such a beer, redolent of sweet, new mown hay and peppery phenols. Riding under the grassy, spicy baseline Tom teased out “sweet, savory lemon meringue pie,” shot through with hints of kiwifruit and green bananas. Not unexpectedly, this beer pours a cloudy yet deeply saturated gold crowned by a thick, creamy white head that refuses to surrender until the very end. Flavors are a bit funkier than found in traditional saisons, yet the classic notes of leather and horse blanket are there, all supported by a tart, acidic twang. Tim delved deeper, getting under the overriding barnyard and citrus, to find a “lush Osage honey sweetness, laced with just a hint of honeysuckle” all deftly balanced with a quenching acidity. Pete commended the brewer’s deft hand in using the underlying acidity and “zingy white pepper” to “sharpen rather than blow away notes of guava and ripe kumquats.” This is a credible American take on the highly revered Belgian farmhouse ales, the perfect accompaniment for any meal – from backyard barbecue to haute cuisine. Still in limited production, if you can see Stateside Saison on your purveyor’s shelves, grab it while you can.

- End of article

# EUROPEAN REPORT

**BELGIUM • GERMANY • UNITED KINGDOM • CZECH REPUBLIC**

*The European Report is endorsed by Artisanal Imports*

A special section of *The Beer Connoisseur*, the European Report is the place to find news and feature stories from the cradles of some of the world's best beer.

In this section, our resident experts and other authoritative journalists report on stories of interest. Since its launch, stories in the European Report have included brewery visits; interviews with key personalities; histories of some of the iconic styles found in Europe; and other notes of interest about beer history.

At home in America, we've talked to some of the top importers to get their perspectives. By bringing unique styles into the country, the importers have long been a prime influence on the craft scene and were the first to introduce American beer lovers to the iconic styles brewed in Europe. It was the English who launched IPA, the current calling card of craft. It was the Belgians who have perfected sours, a current new frontier for America's more nimble microbrewers.

The report also covers news, festivals, cuisine and culture in ways that can help our readers plan ahead for travel in Europe. Let us take you to the source.

*We invite you to pour your favorite European ale, lager or lambic, then hoist a glass, relax and enjoy our special section.*

## CONTENTS

### THE REPORT:

**Belgium:** New Beers Are Pouring In

**Czech Republic:** Rattled by Radlers

**Germany:** Warsteiner Gets Scare

**UK:** BrewDogs Invade

### Czech Republic:

Pilsner Urquell Celebrates

### United Kingdom:

A Cyder Familias

### Featured Beers:

Pilsner Urquell, Bockor OMER., Bockor Cuvée Des Jacobins Rouge, St. Feuillien Saison, St. Feuillien Grand Cru, Aspell Cuvée Chevallier, Aspell Perronelle's Blush Cyder, Aspell English Dry Cyder

### BELGIUM: NEW BEERS, DRAFT ON TAP

- By Carl Kins

The year 2014 will mark the 100th anniversary of the start of World War I and commemorations in Belgium will abound. Brewers are anticipating this and are launching new beers such as Ypres by Struise Brouwers, plus Remembrance, a new one from Eutropius, and Passchendaele from Van Honsebrouck.

The Great War is not the only reason for launching new beers. Indeed, new products abound. To name just a few really interesting ones, Van Honsebrouck (them again) launched Kasteel Hoppy, a 6.5 percent ABV blond ale loaded with hops, and Trignac, a tripel aged in Cognac barrels. Gueuzerie Tilquin released a blue plum-based beer called Quetsche and Cantillon used rhubarb for its most recent version of Zwanze (only available at the brewery).

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The Norbertine abbey of Averbode just announced plans to launch a range of beers and cheeses. What is clear is that the monks will not brew it at first, although they aim to install a small test brewhouse in the abbey before moving on to contract brewing.

Important news from the Chimay trappists about the Chimay Dorée, their table beer at 4.8 percent ABV. Until recently, you could only taste it at their bar Poteaupré. Recently, however, they decided to serve it on draft in a limited number of Belgian beer bars. This is the third trappist beer on draft, next to Westmalle Dubbel and Chimay Tripel.

A fight is ongoing about the water Rochefort trappist brewery uses for brewing. Their industrial neighbour Lhois wants to expand the limestone quarry another 60 meters below the approved level of 220 meters below sea level, and this is expected to dry up the source which provides the Fathers water for their beer.

In the Netherlands, the De Kievit trappist brewery at Zundert is expected to release its first beers at the end of this year.

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The former Brussels Stock Exchange building will be converted into the Belgian Beer Temple by 2018, a museum dedicated to the beers of Belgium. You cannot get more symbolic than this, right?

The building is a 19th Century standard near the capitol's famed Grand Palace and presents the Corinthian columns of a classic temple.

Here are some more items from Belgium.

- Poperinge's Hop Museum recently installed a beer wall, showcasing all currently existing Belgian beers. There are approximately 1,400 of them.

- Two noteworthy culinary novelties popped up recently. The first one is a collaboration between Bockor and chocolate maker Choc Carré, They have created pralines with liquid beer filling. Beer such as Kriek Max and Omer really is at the core of the praline, which they call Chocobeer.

- The second crazy initiative consists of "tattooing" fish and meat such as steaks with "beer ink." Basically Vincent Florizoone, who runs the restaurant Grand Cabaret at Nieuwpoort, and Nicholas Harmon of Maine cook beer into a syrup, or about a tenth of its original volume. They use Boon Oude Kriek and some added beetroot sap for the red ink and Westmalle Tripel and squid ink for black ink.

Enjoy!

### CZECH REPUBLIC: CIDER AND RADLERS RISE

- By Max Bahnson

The Czech Brewer and Maltsters Association have released official industry figures for 2012. The overall output grew by 2.75 percent. Much of that growth was driven by a sharp rise in exports (nine percent) and radlers. In fact, in their press release the Association points out that the production of traditional beers had continued to fall.

Although many in the Czech beer industry seem to believe that beer and soda mixes still have potential for growth, and new flavours were introduced this year. There were some signs, however, that point to two emerging trends.

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Last April the Czech subsidiary of Heineken presented Krušovice Pšenice, a very much by the numbers German style weizen that has received solid advertising support and has been deployed at most bars tied to the brand. Although weizens aren't a rarity, this is the first of its kind from a major brewery since Gambrinus Bilé was discontinued more than a decade ago.

Meanwhile, Plzeňský Prazdroj, which has decided to give more marketing support to Fénix, their Belgian style wheat beer launched last year, presented Kingswood, an apple cider very much modelled after the likes of Magners or Strongbow. The juice of freshly pressed apples is a popular beverage among Czechs in the late summer and early autumn, but cider has always been a rarity. In the last years some small producers have popped up, mostly making Austrian or Breton style ciders. The small producers have mixed feelings about Kingswood. On the one hand, they welcome the attention it will bring to the drink. On the other, they fear Prazdroj will throw its considerable corporate weight around and push them out of the market.

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In the so-called mycotoxin affair, Dtest, the Czech version of Consumer Reports, published the results of a series of test they carried out on beers from regional and big breweries. According to these tests, beers from Primátor, Svijany, Vyškov and Žatec were found to have dangerous levels of mycotoxins. Both the affected breweries and the trade association were quick to respond, and to commission their own tests, which produced completely different results. The breweries have announced they would take legal action against Dtest, which has refused to make public the name of the laboratory that did the test and the methodology that was used.

## **GERMANY: OKTOBERFEST BEER TENTS FALLING SHORT?**

- By Jonathan Ingram

**A** Munich newspaper reported that authorities warned brewers and their bartenders about short pours prior to this year's Oktoberfest, the annual gathering that draws an estimated 7 million beer drinkers over the course of 15 days.

The official responsible for order in the city of Munich said bartenders who failed to pour full liters in the traditional beer steins by including too much foam risked being banished. In a story appearing in the Münchner Merkur, Wilfried Blume-Beyerle also stated that tent operators could face sanctions, especially if as many as three bartenders in one tent were found to be lacking on their pours.

According to other media sources, some tents at the Oktoberfest consistently have poured only 0.8 liters of beer to patrons paying as much as \$13 for a full 1.0 liter. The Kafer's Oktoberfest Tent was reported to be the worst offender. Löwenbräu was rated as the best place for a full stein, regularly filling 0.94 liters.

As has been typical, the average cost of beer went up by over three percent again this year. The price of beer at the festival has continued to climb each year since 1995.

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Warsteiner suffered a setback in September when wastewater discharged from the brewery was discovered to have Legionnaire's Disease bacteria. The largest privately owned brewery in Germany was not considered the source of an outbreak of the disease in the town of Warstein, where the illness infected more than 160 people.

Since brewing temperatures are more than high enough to kill the legionella bacteria responsible for the disease, the Warsteiner beer was regarded as safe to drink. Nevertheless, tourists were temporarily warned to stay away from the area of the brewery located in the North Rhine Westpahlia region.

The Environment Ministry said the brewery was not regarded as the original source of the outbreak. It was believed the bacteria entered the Warsteiner sewage system through either airborne means or via water coming into the brewery.

Within 10 days of the wastewater discovery, authorities tested samples of Warsteiner beer and water, declaring both to be safe.

## **UNITED KINGDOM: BREWDOGS VISIT AMERICA**

- By Carolyn Smagalski

**F**or quite a few years, Martin Dickie and James Watt, founders of BrewDog in Scotland, have been getting in their licks during a plethora of wild antics designed for publicity. The duo has been wild enough, it

seems, for reality TV. Their attention-getting schemes have been rewarded with a contract for six episodes on the Esquire Network by Custom Productions and Redtail Media.

In one episode about American independence, the BrewDogs targeted a small town just outside Philadelphia for some steamy filming. During the Pottstown Fourth of July Parade, the extremists made their U.S. video debut on a float, mashing in a new beer for the patriots among us. They declared that strands of the yeast's DNA were digitally encoded with the preamble to the Declaration of Independence, which they claimed meant each batch contained 328 million copies of the preamble.

While Executive Producers Steve Stockman, Jared Cotton and Chris Burke were busy filming, the Advertising Standards Authority in the UK focused their evil eye-piece on BrewDog's website. They cited Dickie and Watt for offensive language over such phrases as "corporate beer whores," "rip you straight to the tit," and, their own self-descriptive phrase, "apocalyptic mother fu\*ker of a craft brewery."

Social networking fans of the brewery struck back against the Advertising Standards Authority with Twitter and Facebook posts of #KissMyASA. BrewDog, which recently opened 42,000 shares of stock to the public, was grateful for the publicity.

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Perspective is everything. In a surprise action, tiny Belleville Brewery was issued a cease-and-desist letter by the legal team of Anheuser-Busch InBev for trademark infringement in the UK. It seems that the title of Belleville Brewery, named after Belleville Primary School where children of the founders attended school, was too "visually and aurally similar" to AB InBev's BelleVue brand of fruit beer. Their complaint argued the similarity was "bound to lead to deception and confusion," despite the fact that Belleville, a brewery that serves 30 local establishments, had been in operation for just three months.

With no funds to fight the giant, it is likely Belleville will change its name to Northcote, a name of a former local brewery now defunct and a name currently used on the Belleville's Northcote Blonde.

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# FEATURE STORY

## CZECH REPUBLIC

*The European Report is endorsed by Artisanal Imports*

### **PILSNER URQUELL CELEBRATES 150 YEARS IN AMERICA THE BEER FROM PILSEN THAT CHANGED BEER**

- By Max Bahnson

This is a story that started in a Western Bohemian town in the late 1830's, when a group of burghers, who were also brewing rights holders, decided to fight fire with fire. The town had been flooded with cold fermented beers from nearby Bavaria that were superior in quality (and sold at a better price) than the warm fermented brews that had been the norm since the 13th Century.

In 1838 these burghers/brewers started to draw plans to set up their own brewery, purpose built for this new and increasingly popular style. Their goal, legend says, was to make the best beer. To achieve that, they introduced what was then called "the English way of malting" that dried the grain in kilns with indirect heat, which was more efficient than the traditional direct coal or wood fired method. This approach could produce pale malts, which were becoming a favourite among brewers in many countries.

The most important thing, however, was to find a good brewmaster, one who would know his way around this kind of beer. They found him, logically, in Bavaria; a brewer was recommended who had worked with Anton Dreher and Gabriel Sedlmayr, two of the most important figures in the history of brewing. His name was Josef Groll. The name of the town was, and still is, Pilsen, and the name of the beer today is Pilsner Urquell.

Once the brewery had been built, Groll, who had brought with him a culture of lager yeast, was able to put his skills into practice, and in November 1842, the first batch of the Pilsner beer was presented to the world. It was different to pretty much any other beer at the time, rich gold in colour, aromatic, truly innovative. In a way, it was also a global beer from the start. Brewed by a Bavarian, using

Czech barley malted the "English way", and spiced, of course, with local hops, the Pilsner was more similar to the pale ales that were already very popular among the British.

The English link might be a bit of a stretch. (One of the founders of the brewery went to England in the late 1830's to gather information on new brewing and malting techniques, but there is no documentary evidence that he wanted to emulate a pale ale.) The fact is that the new beer was an almost immediate success, and not only in its home town. A year later it would show up in Prague, and soon it would start being exported to Vienna and all over the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and still further, reaching American shores, and drinkers, by 1873. By 1913, Pilsner Urquell was producing 850,000 barrels a year, which made it the biggest brewery in the Empire.

Once full-scale production began, Pilsner Urquell started distribution in the U.S., where this year the brand celebrates the 150th anniversary of its arrival. Since full-scale production began, Pilsner Urquell is still being brewed in exactly the same place, using the same prized source of underground water, characterised by its almost distilled-like softness, and following the same recipe designed in 1842 and, with a few concessions to modernity, the same processes.

*"But then it was time to go to the now legendary cellars of the brewery, where the interview would take the shape of a friendly chat over a few beers at the pub."*

Today, Josef Groll's cap is worn by Václav Berka. Like Groll, he comes from a brewing family. "My dad was a brewer here," he said when I met him on a rainy afternoon in late May. "When I was a child I used to run around the brewery all the time. I loved it here". His career choice was very easy – he studied Fermentation Technology at the almost legendary Industrial High School in Prague, the alma mater of most Czech brewmasters since 1868. He would later continue at the city's Institute of Chemical Technology.

After graduating, he returned to where he started working for Plzeňský Pivovar n.p., the state company the Communist regime had set up to run several breweries in West Bohemia. He was in charge of inventory of raw materials, later he would work as sklep mistr (the person in charge of the lagering cellars) and a few

years later he would become Pilsner Urquell's head brewer.

Being the face of the country's favourite beer, Berka is rather well known in the Czech Republic, an almost larger than life figure. In reality, he is a really friendly guy, easy on the smile, the sort you can end up establishing a casual friendship with while sharing a table at a traditional Czech pub. He showed me around the brewery, starting with the malting operations.

Although it's still common for some Czech breweries to produce their own malts, there was a time when that was the rule. It was believed that only by having control over the quality of the malts could a brewer guarantee the quality of his beers. That is the reason why Pilsner Urquell still produces its own malts.

Following the production process, we visited the heart of the brewery, the brewhouse. One of the things that characterises Czech brewing tradition is its stubborn refusal to abandon decoction mashing. Even in Germany, there are many voices who consider this an unnecessary process. It consists of taking part of the wort, boiling it in a separate kettle and returning it to the mash tun. Its detractors claim that decoction only means more time and higher consumption of energy only to get the same results they can get with an infusion mash. Berka would have none of it. "A triple decoction mash," he explains with conviction, "is as much a part of the character of Pilsner Urquell as Saaz hops. It gives the beer not only its signature mouthfeel, but also its colour." At Pilsner Urquell in particular, they still decoct in copper kettles that are heated with an open fire. Temperatures at the bottom of the kettle can reach up to 600 °C, and, despite a system of copper chains that swirl the wort to prevent it from burning, some of the sugars caramelize.

Up until this point in the tour, Berka had been very businesslike, almost like a top manager in a big company, happy to talk about what he and his company do. Up until then, I felt pretty much like another one of the many journalists, surely, who interview him every year. He was doing his job as the face of one of the most iconic beers in the world and I was doing my job asking questions and getting the information I needed for an article. But then it was time to go to the now legendary cellars of the brewery, where the interview would take the shape of a friendly chat over a few beers at a pub.

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Lager beers (or Bavarian-style beers, as they were referred to in Bohemia in the mid-19th Century) require low temperatures for both fermenting and maturing. Aware of this, the founders of Pilsner Urquell had a network of deep cellars dug below the brewery. As demand grew, new sections were added until the cellars became an almost maze-like complex nine kilometers long that housed thousands of wooden casks for fermenting and lagering.

In 1992 the barrels became history and Pilsner Urquell adopted modern stainless steel, cylindro-conical tanks. Berka says that it was a necessary step in order to improve quality management, something that, due to the scale of the brewery, had become extremely difficult.

Not all of the casks would be dismantled and taken away; one section was kept working. Today, this part of the cellars is the culminating point of every brewery tour, the moment when visitors who come from all over the world can taste the legendary beer drawn right from one of the lagering casks. But PR or nostalgia weren't the reasons behind the decision to keep that bit of history alive. According to Berka, it was the only way to make sure that the technological changes would not mean a change in the character of the beer. They needed those barrels to see that the beer stayed the same.

The Pilsner Urquell historical cellars are an amazing place, indeed. It's literally like travelling back in time. The temperature is kept constant and naturally low all year round. I followed Václav until we reached a wing with open fermenters with dates and temperatures chalked on the front, and then we went to a neighboring wing, walking along the narrow corridor left between the rows of massive lagering barrels. Beers were drawn from one of them and we found a barrel-cum stool table where we would spend the next hour or so talking about beer, pubs, brewing and tradition.

There's a pearl of Czech beer wisdom that goes "A beer is brewed at the brewery, but made at the pub." Like the proper beer lover he is, Václav understands the meaning of this very well; it's all part of a chain that ends when a beer gets to the consumer. For him, how the beer is taken care of at a pub, and how it's tapped, is a critical part of the whole process, if not the most important. All the work a brewer has done will mean nothing if the drinker gets

a beer in bad condition, and that's why he has made it a personal mission to institute the figure of the Tapster Legends.

Every year, Pilsner Urquell holds the Master Bartender competition, which chooses the world's best tapster. Berka's vision, however, goes beyond that. He explained to me that he got this idea after seeing historical records that mentioned by name legendary tapsters of the past, people whose skills at pouring beers were admired by drinkers. In his opinion, just like the kitchen of a restaurant is the responsibility of one person, the head Chef, the taps at a pub should be the responsibility of one person, whose job should be to see that the beer is given the care it requires and train the staff to serve it the best possible way. He also told me how he's been working with the Pilsner Urquell ambassadors in America to spread his concept, introducing the dispensing system typically used by Pilsner Urquell pubs in the Czech Republic along with the proper half litre mugs to serve the beer – at the right temperature, of course.

We spoke some more about different pubs we both know and he gave me a quick lesson on how to draw a beer from the lagering barrel, something that is much harder than it looks, which is the reason why it is seen almost as an art form in the Czech Republic. At this time, I asked him what would Josef Groll think if he visited the brewery today. "He would be surprised", Václav said. "Very surprised, but happy." "Would he recognise the beer, would he like it?" I asked. "Of course!" he said with a huge smile, before suggesting we have yet another beer.

Pilsner Urquell claims that its beer hasn't changed in its 170 year history and they have lab analyses to back that up. There are people who might claim to have reasons to doubt that, but even the staunchest among them would agree that Pilsner Urquell is an icon of Czech brewing and the benchmark for pale lagers the world over.

A visit to the brewery itself, with its history, stories and personalities like Václav Berka, should be on the list of every beer lover in the world, regardless of what their opinion of the beer might be. Pilsner Urquell, after all, not only gave birth to the defining Czech beer style, but also to, arguably, the most influential beer in modern history, the one that would eventually become the archetype of beer for most people around the world.

## FEATURE STORY UNITED KINGDOM

*The European Report is endorsed by  
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### **ASPALL CYDER REUNITES STATES, BRITAIN**

*"It burns in your throat, boils in your  
stomach... and tastes almost exactly like  
pure, melted gold."*

*– Comment in Roald Dahl's "Fantastic Mr.  
Fox" after the first taste of the cider stolen  
from one of the farmers.*

- By Seth Levy

**F**or two nations that share a language and history, America and England's cultures differ in surprising ways. Unlike the Brits, we like our lager cold and our cars on the right. But until recently, both nations had reached a tipsy, unfortunate consensus that cider is a low quality beverage.

It wasn't always this way. American forefathers such as John Adams quaffed bracing drafts of hard cider for breakfast, and the burning apple elixir played a role in the nation's westward expansion. (Did you think Johnny Appleseed was planting those trees for pie?) In Britain, cider was the drink of nobility, who rejected imported wine and drank refined, bottle-fermented ciders as a matter of national pride.

But during my brief stint at Oxford, I have fuzzy, terrible memories of drinking three-liter plastic bottles of "Fortified" Cider, which had a foul acetone aroma. Ordering draft cider at the pub earned a raised eyebrow from the barkeep, who asked if it was for my girlfriend. My girlfriend, who knew better, drank Young's Bitter.

Things were worse in America. Cider had a brief, heavily sweetened resurgence in the 1990's, but was a challenge to locate for those willing to endure such a poor product. Cider in the U.S. has also experienced an identity crisis, frequently mistaken for its

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soft, sweet cousin – the apple cider drink traditionally served with donuts in the fall.

From the esteemed drink of revolutionaries and kings, to a mere catalyst for high fructose hangovers: cider has certainly fallen from grace. What happened to cider, and will it rise again?

To get to the core of the cider story, I called Henry Chevallier Guild. Henry and his brother, Barry, are the ninth generation of Chevalliers to operate Aspall Cyder of Suffolk, the oldest continuously operating cider makers in England. The brothers' great, great, great, great grandfather, Clement Benjamin Chevallier, inherited the family estate from his great uncle and, missing the beverage of his homeland, imported the needed apple trees from the Channel Island of Jersey, plus a stone wheel and trough from a French island off the coast of Normandy, and established Aspall Cyder in 1728.

The cider-soaked lineage of his family qualifies Henry Chevallier, who generally represents the family business when it comes to the media, as an expert. The Chevalliers of Aspall Hall, as the family compound is known, are a well known clan who emigrated to England from the Channel Island of Jersey. Their genealogic prowess doesn't stop there – the family is related to both William the Conqueror and King Henry I, though Chevallier said he's "about as closely related to the Crown as you are, Seth!"

Times have changed since apples were grounded to a pulp by the Aspall ancestors with the stone wheel and trough. Aspall's modern operation grinds more than 11,000 tons of apples a year into cider. But, selecting the varieties of apples is as important today as it was eight generations ago. According to Chevallier, "There are three primary types of apples: sweet apples, sour apples, and bittersweet apples."

Each variety has a different virtue, and an unblended cider would either be "too sweet, too thin and sour, or without any body or structure." Aspall blends all three varieties, paying special attention to the bittersweet apples, which he describes as "rather like the red grape of apples, with loads of tannins, no acidity, but a lovely body and structure."

The apples are hand-graded, undergo several washes, are ground to a pulp, and are crushed under enormous pressure in

hydraulic presses. At this point, the product is a sweet apple juice, of which Aspall sells a small quantity. In the U.S., some orchards allow natural yeasts and bacteria a brief reign, which converts some of the juice's abundant sugars into acids and adds faint carbonation. The juice becomes the more complex, but still non-alcoholic cider we enjoy on hayrides. While most "sweet" U.S. ciders are pasteurized at this point, Aspall doesn't pasteurize its juice at all.

The Chevalliers' cider follows a different trajectory entirely from its unpasteurized sweet apple juice stage. With the addition of a champagne yeast, the cider ferments for several weeks in stainless steel vats. But what about doing wild fermentations, in wooden casks, with ambient yeasts? "We gave it a try," said Chevallier. "Most of them were fair-to-middling, some of them were absolutely disgusting, and one was the best cider I've ever had in my life. It's simply too risky. We do some limited-editions, cask-aged and all, but we wouldn't make a go of it on a large scale."

After the initial fermentation, Aspall's racks the cider off the lees and ages it for up to four months, which, according to Henry, "is quite important if it's got a lot of bittersweet apples in it. The aging mellows out the phenolic compounds, which can be quite unpleasant otherwise, and really stick to one's taste-buds." Some of Henry's bottled ciders receive a "dosage" of sweet apple juice or sugar to stimulate bottle fermentation, adding delicate carbonation and more complex flavors.

To make beer, brewers skillfully manipulate at least four ingredients, converting complex starches into simple sugars, and adjusting thousands of variables. Cider operates under a different paradigm: the direct conversion of fruit to beverage, a process much closer to wine-making. The blending, the dosage, the talk of "terroir," it all sounds like wine to me.

Regardless of how it's made, the truth of the liquid is in the drinking. So what exactly is cider? Something you quaff by the pint, like beer, or something fussy that you "swirl, sip and spit," like wine? Chevallier suggests that cider occupies a unique position between wine and beer: too refreshing to be hauteur, yet too refined to be blue-collar.

He describes the whole process as "emulating the German wine-making

traditions of the Moselle valley. We market our ciders as a wine. All English ciders were traditionally consumed as a wine. But, our biggest selling product is sold by the pint in pubs! We don't see beer as a competitor at all. People might start off on our cider, but they are moving on to something else as the evening progresses. At five percent alcohol, it's a bit strong for the British consumer to have more than a few. After four, perhaps you'd be having a bit too much fun!" So what does Henry, cider enthusiasts that he is, move on to after a few ciders? "When I'm in America, I'm drawn to Dogfish Head 60 Minute in a nearly instinctive way. If it's on tap, I know that it's good and that's what I'm ordering!"

Quaffing five percent pints of cider in the pub sounds a lot like beer! Henry muddles the waters further as he delves deeply into the history of cider, where strong, nine percent ABV bottled "Cyder" was sipped by Nobility, and two percent "ciderkin," made from the second pressing of the apples, was consumed by working men who found it "cheap, refreshing, and safer than water."

I was able to locate an attractive bottle of Aspall's Perronelle's Blush in the U.S., brewed in honor of Henry's grandmother, Perronelle Chevallier. He explained that it was inspired by Kir Royale, but American laws required the use of blackberry juice, rather than the liqueur, for the export version.

I was apprehensive, as I find some ciders cloying even without the berry, but I dove in nonetheless. The Blush appears to be light amber with a hint of purple and topped with a thin lacing of foam. The initial aroma is of sour-apple candy with a touch of vinegar, but as it warms, a faint, flowery, berry aroma edges in. There's a prickle of carbonation on the tongue, and an opening salvo of sharp, malic apple. The berry waits until the aftertaste, where its warm, jammy flavor muscles in and wipes away the acidity. The berry is so rich, it's almost "meaty," but a drying tannic finish leaves me thirsty for more.

It's complex enough to enjoy alone, as I did, but it would also be a provocative and ideal pairing with a fresh summer desert like cheesecake or a granita. This is no hayride cider, and certainly nothing I'd be embarrassed to order in a pub or serve to guests.

...continued



If cider can be this good, then why the terrible reputation? According to Chevallier, a complex chain of events drove cider into disrepute. First, a tax on cider in the late 1700's reduced consumption. Second, a growing horror of the effects of excess gin consumption led to Hogarth's famous painting "Gin Lane," and spurred Parliament to encourage the consumption of beer— but not cider. Henry suggests that in the U.S., increased grain production gave brewers an edge over cider-makers before Prohibition set back consumption of all artisan alcoholic beverages 40 years! When Chevallier's father took over the business in 1970, Aspall had strongly diversified, also making apple juice and apple cider vinegar. The emphasis by Henry and Barry on cider as a mainstay came later, during an era when small producers of craft beverages started re-making the drinkable world.

Since Henry's family first planted its orchards, the fortunes of nations rose and fell, and cider, once the beverage of nobility, became a shadow of itself. Aspall Cyder is inextricably intertwined with the history of cider making and cider drinking: there at the dawn of the cider age, mourning its decline, and playing a role in its resurgence. As my cider warms in the glass, I reflect on the paradoxes of this simple drink. Quenching yet complex, sweet but also sour, fallen yet rising again, cider unifies the past with the future in both America and Britain.

## FEATURED EUROPEAN BEERS

*The European Report is endorsed by  
Artisanal Imports*

### **Pilsner Urquell**

Pilsner Urquell Brewery  
Plzeň, Czech Republic  
www.pilsnerurquell.com

*One of the first beers brewed with light roasted malt, triple decoction gives this, the original pilsner, its golden color and a distinct series of taste notes.*

### **Bockor OMER.**

Bockor Brouwerij  
Bellegem, Belgium  
www.bockor.be

*Pale golden, Omer has a firm malt character with pleasant hop bitterness and warm, bready aroma. Tasted from a signature glass, it pleases the eye, nose and palate.*

### **Bockor Cuvée**

Des Jacobins Rouge  
Bockor Brouwerij  
Bellegem, Belgium  
www.bockor.be

*This is a complex, beautiful sour beer. It has a robust character but is sophisticated with a full body and overtones of vanilla, dried cherry, stone fruit and cocoa.*

### **St. Feuillien Saison**

Brasserie St. Feuillien  
Le Roeulx, Belgium  
www.st-feuillien.com

*A golden blonde ale, this saison is a top-fermented classique. Thanks to secondary fermentation in the bottle, it has an unmistakable flavor full of nuance and a slight tang.*

### **St. Feuillien Grand Cru**

Brasserie St. Feuillien  
Le Roeulx, Belgium.  
www.st-feuillien.com

*Pale in color, Grand Cru has brilliant clarity. The nose is a cascade of hoppy aromas and rich fruitiness. A second fermentation leads to lingering hoppiness followed by an intense, pleasant bitterness.*

### **Aspall Cuvée Chevallier English Cyder**

The Cyder House, Aspall Hall  
Suffolk, England  
www.aspall.co.uk

*An elegant double-fermented cider (11% ABV) made with higher acidity apples, it mirrors classic champagne. A slight earthiness joins hints of pineapple.*

### **Aspall Perronelle's Blush English Draft Cider**

The Cyder House, Aspall Hall  
Suffolk, England  
www.aspall.co.uk

*There is a subtle blackberry aroma and aftertaste with a hint of traditional cider apple in this blush. A silky palate balances sweetness and acidity.*

### **Aspall English Dry Draft Cider**

The Cyder House, Aspall Hall  
Suffolk, England  
www.aspall.co.uk

*Pale golden in color, with a delicate apple aroma, this dry and refreshing cider is reminiscent of brut champagne and makes an excellent aperitif.*

**- End of article**

# BREWERY TOUR:

## JESTER KING

### BREWERY

*– There’s something in the air and in the beer at Jester King.*

- By Jonathan Ingram

The heaves and limestone outcroppings of the Texas Hill Country on the west side of Austin produce a dramatic landscape traversed by waterways big and small. In the midst of this geographical wonder, where scrub oak and mesquite add greenery and shade to the chalky terrain, resides the Jester King brewhouse, a re-located Victorian farmhouse.

Jester King produces some of the most unique hand-crafted beers in America in such limited editions that the best bet for finding one may be the brewery itself. Jeff Stuffings, who gave up a legal career, and his brother Michael Steffing, who left behind a career in finance, co-founded Jester King in 2010 and have since been joined by partner Ron Extract, who previously worked at U.S. importer Shelton Brothers.

On this Texas ranch, the owners are dedicated to the traditional farmhouse methods. Additionally, their development of barrel-fermented beers fueled by yeast from French Flanders and local wild Hill Country yeast requires a good deal of time and hands-on care. The finished products are hand-bottled and packaged, a process that takes up all the available room in the relatively small 30-barrel brewhouse. Given these demands, which can include bottle conditioning, tours and tastings are limited to Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays.

Generally, it’s Stuffings who hosts the tours. When standing on a short ladder in the barrel house surrounded by a crowd of connoisseurs, his presentation was reminiscent of a political stump speech or revival meeting – except for its dedication to beer and Jester King’s unique processes. There was also the acknowledgement that even farmhouse brewing, where the fruit, for

example, is added to barrels by hand, needs a little modern help. Keeping up with all the variations in the racks of barrels surrounding him, said Stuffings, requires “a computer and a spread sheet.”

The Jester King list includes traditional saison creations plus beers like those made with cedar chips (El Cedro), and barrel-aged brews made with pecan-smoked malt (Salt Lick) or raspberries (Atrial Rubicite). There’s also a couple of “Viking beers” based on traditional Swedish brews. “We really try to keep a strong focus on the creative side,” said Extract. “It’s not about spices. It’s letting the yeast drive the train and see what we can do to coax flavor out of it. We really want to show some creativity.”

What is driving the creative pursuit over the long haul, beyond the constant experimenting with blending beers and using fresh fruit or wood influences, are beers using strains of wild Hill Country yeast. Currently, the limited editions of beers using this wild yeast are blended together with beers fermented by traditional farmhouse yeast sourced in France from Brasserie Thiriez.

It’s not always a precise process, especially when it comes to blending or secondary yeast inoculations. Last year, 2,000 of the wooden barrels were produced and the beers in only 1,200 of those barrels were sent to market.

The barrel house roof is where coolships with wort are placed during winter months to gather wild yeast strains, which are then isolated and propagated by contemporary lab processes. The goal is eventually to produce beers that are made with 100 percent wild Hill Country yeast.

“It requires a lot of the right conditions to work properly,” said Extract. “One strain took off within a week. One took more than two months for the fermentation process to begin. This is an example of enhancing nature. We’re focused on the essence of fermentation and were using batches of organisms that only exist here.”

It may be a long and complicated undertaking, but not one made solely by the small staff at Jester King. “We stay in touch with a lot of members of the craft beer community who already have the knowledge about how to do this,” said Extract. That list includes brewers from Cantillon in Belgium, and brewers from some well known U.S.

brands such as Russian River, Jolly Pumpkin and Allagash.

Jester King has a line-up of six year-round brews made with the farmhouse yeast of Thiriez, the brewery’s own well water and mostly with organic ingredients. Thus far the brewery has introduced 19 limited edition brews, including several collaborations with Mikkeller and the blends using wild Hill Country yeast and occasionally brettanomyces. The goal is to produce clear, fruity ales with a dry finish. This includes the distinct sour beers, which are not of the sugary and vinegary variety.

Those visiting for the tour and tastings can order wood-fired pizza at Stanley’s Farmhouse Pizza, which shares some of the rustic ranchland at Jester King. Since the beer often reflects the Hill Country, a visit to the brewery, located on a relatively obscure unpaved entrance road, is an infusion of sorts. The magic of the land mixed with a brief brewery tour plus tastings of artisanal brews at open air serving tables – the same open air that produces some of the wild yeast – makes for a remarkable afternoon or evening.

#### **Jester King Brewery**

13005 Fitzhugh Rd., Bldg. B

Austin, TX 78736

(512) 537-5100

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

Tours and Tastings

Friday – 5 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Saturday, Sunday – noon to 6 p.m.

**– End of article**

# BREWERY TOUR: SCHLAFLY

## *St. Louis Brewing*

- By Phil Farrell

St. Louis may have a long, rich brewing history, but in the first 75 years of the 20th Century most of it disappeared as more than 300 breweries closed their doors.

By the time Thomas Schlafly was a practicing estate attorney in 1977, there were only two remaining breweries in the St. Louis metro area, including, of course, the Anheuser-Busch Brewing Company. Considering no brewpub had opened in the state since before Prohibition, when Tom and business partner Dan Kopman opened the Schlafly Tap Room in 1991, they were rewriting the book.

The Schlafly Tap Room opened in a century-old building where the John S. Swift Printing Company had operated until 1969. Business failures and neglect in this vicinity during the 1970's led to the abandonment of entire city blocks. A huge fire consumed most of the neighborhood in 1976. Flames stopped just short of the Swift building, however, but there was extensive smoke and water damage.

Although spared direct destruction by fire, the Swift building was slated for demolition in the 1980's prior to Schlafly and Kopman buying it. Thankfully the city ran out of money before the wrecking ball finished what smoke and water had not destroyed. Once installed, the brewery flourished and a second complementary property was repurposed and opened in 2003 as the Schlafly Bottleworks. When visiting St. Louis, both locations may be visited in a single day with a little planning, but there is more than enough to enjoy over a long weekend.

The St. Louis Brewery is the name of the company that brews and distributes Schlafly beer just as the Boston Beer Company brews Samuel Adams. There is only one proper pronunciation of the eponymous brand name. The "Sch" has the sound of universal silence - shhh. The "laf" is pronounced the same as the word laugh and the "ly" has a long e pronunciation - the same as the

proper name Lee. You end up with three syllables and the emphasis on the middle one: Shh-LAF-lee.

Both Schlafly breweries are restaurants with a full slate of specials and monthly festivals. The Schlafly Tap Room is a large multi-level brewpub with only the brewery cellar not routinely open to the public. While tours do occur at the Tap Room they are usually associated with festivals and special events. The Schlafly Bottleworks is a 20-minute ride to the west in Maplewood, Missouri. There you will find a production brewery and restaurant with a gift shop, ample indoor and outdoor seating and multiple bars as well as brewery tours on weekends. The tour takes about an hour and free tickets are available at the gift shop counter.

The neighborhood is an eclectic mix of residential and commercial buildings, with the type of stores and cafes that invite walk-in shoppers. The Schlafly Bottleworks continued the Tap Room's good neighbor tradition of hosting community events and featuring local entertainers. The Wednesday Farmer's Market, a tribute to the building's roots as a grocery store, will sometimes interrupt the tour schedule with a weekend market.

The tour starts in a well appointed room called the "Brewseum", with memorabilia chronicling the long, rich history of brewing in St. Louis. The tour follows the brewing process covering the grain mill, mash, lauder, boil and whirlpool kettles as well as the fermenters and packaging equipment. The vessels are larger and optimized as a production brewery, unlike the Schlafly Tap Room, which utilizes a smaller, more hands on brewpub system.

The Bottleworks lives up to its name with a fully automated bottling line for all of Schlafly 12-ounce offerings. The tour ends in a quieter private tasting room complete with bar, tables, and the brewery visible through large windows. Unlike many American craft brewers, Schlafly went with an English-style Pale Ale as its flagship beer. It still accounts for roughly 40 percent of sales.

The American Hefeweizen was the other initial beer offered on opening day. Both are still among the six Schlafly beers available year round. There are numerous seasonal beers as well as dozens of styles that routinely rotate. The day I visited, there were two different American IPA's on tap as

well as several German and Belgian styles to go with the year-round brews and seasonals.

The Schlafly Bottleworks will consistently serve 12 to 15 styles on draft as well as offer several other bottled beers. The eastern half of the building is a full service pub, restaurant and bier garden. Both brewery restaurants use fresh local ingredients. The menus are tuned to the seasons as well as synchronized with brewery events. Each location has its own chef, ensuring a fresh menu even for frequent visitors.

### **Schlafly Bottleworks**

7260 Southwest Ave.  
Maplewood, Missouri 63143  
(314) 241-2337  
www.schlafly.com

Free tours noon to 5 p.m on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays.

Call to confirm tours are active.

### **The Schlafly Tap Room**

2100 Locust Ave. (at 21St.)  
St. Louis, Missouri 63103  
(314) 241-2337  
www.schlafly.com

Tours of the Tap Room are only offered during festivals and special events.

**- End of article**

# CONNOISSEUR'S CORNER

## *A League of Their Own*

- By Carol Smagalski

**W**ould you want to have a drink with your attorney? Do you enjoy the time you spend with him? How willing is she to talk with you while making strategic decisions?

Adrian Dayton sums up this type of attorney as “beer-worthy.”

In his book *Social Media for Lawyers*, Dayton says being beer-worthy is a key to attracting clients engaged in all types of businesses. But with 2,483 craft breweries in the United States and 1,500 more in planning, the need for attorneys who are well-versed in the alcohol business – beyond willingness to meet at the bar – is expanding.

Those among the growing community of brewers, brewery owners, or wholesalers gravitating to the niche market of craft beer would be well-advised to seek out a lawyer who fits Dayton’s criteria of beer-worthy and who understands the beer business.

Craft beer grew out of a grass-roots movement, one that initially encompassed a very small network of free thinkers involved in the “illegal activity” of homebrewing. Brewing for personal use did not become legal on the federal level until 1978 when President Jimmy Carter signed into law H.R. 1337. According to the Brewers Association, Charlie Papazian and Charlie Matzen launched the American Homebrewers Association just seven weeks later.

Homebrewers existed as an alternative to the corporate giants who were at the heart of consolidation in the American beer world. In 1980, only 50 breweries still operated in the United States. Industry experts predicted that number would drop to five, but homebrewers had a different vision.

These days, the mindset to combat corporate consolidation still exists in much of the craft beer world. Law firms, particularly big ones, may be viewed as part of that oppressive corporate world, in disguise. Many small brewery owners hesitate to approach a lawyer for their business needs because of this traditional perception.

Alva Mather of Hangley, Aronchick, Segal, Pudlin & Schiller in Philadelphia represents beer wholesalers and craft brewers in Pennsylvania and New Jersey and can be described as beer-worthy. She understands that all-important difference between representing mega-brewers and craft brewers. “It’s a different practice,” she explains. “A-B InBev is brand driven. Craft brewers are about: ‘What can we put together that will give the customer a great experience?’”

The need for counsel in the beer world is dictated by the complexity of laws regulating business formation, licensing and permits. Then, there are the circuitous issues of trademark infringement, distribution and franchise law, environmental concerns, advertising, marketing and employment law.

In the December 2012 issue of *The Growler*, attorneys Gregory B. Perleberg and Jeffrey C. O’Brien advised, “Based on our experience, if you integrate your lawyers into your brewery team early, you will hopefully avoid monster issues down the road.”

Beer lawyers are cropping up in all areas of the country. The most successful create a web presence, sharing tidbits about themselves and their hobbies. They create easy access to relevant articles and websites through their own sites and may even set up a professional dialogue with beer attorneys serving other regions of the country. Although some beer attorneys operate from firms with hundreds of lawyers, most who serve the niche beer market are doing it from mid-sized to small law firms.

Candace L. Moon of San Diego, California, is known as “The Craft Beer Attorney.” In addition to her everyday duties of providing counsel for start-ups and brewery operations, she regularly teaches classes on trademark law. As a member of the California Craft Brewers Association, she presents seminars on various topics for the Association, as well.

Ashley Brandt of Freeborn & Peters in Chicago entered the craft beer niche after an analysis of the firm’s client base. When the firm realized this base represented a huge number of food and beverage companies, it was time to focus on the iceberg itself.

Laws fluctuate from state-to-state, so a regional mindset among beer attorneys makes for more effective representation. The standouts sponsor highly visible beer

events, or list memberships in the Brewers Association, Craft Brewers Association, or National Association of Alcoholic Beverage Licensing Attorneys. They keep their eyes focused on industry concerns and oppressive legal regulations, too, and may even go to bat on behalf of the local brewers’ coalition. And if they’re truly beer-worthy, word of mouth puts them in a league of their own.

- End of article