

THIS is the HOTV BREWSLETTER

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Oktoberfest Edition

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President's Corner

by Lee Smith

The August 10th brew-off was a success. About a dozen or so brewers attended and we cooked up about 25 gallons of beer for the picnic. Hopefully, all of it is fermented by now, conditioning under deal temperatures, and free of any bad things inside. This was a good learning (and socializing) event, and it is something we should consider doing more often.

Eighteen members came to the August meeting (50% of our club membership), finding their way to my house in spite of Skyline Drive being closed for repair. Helen's jambalaya and a range of good beers made it worthwhile, and we all had a good time. We talked about the upcoming picnic, the October pub crawl, and the Capitol Brewers' beer/dinner in November. We also have a litter pick up set for mid September. Finally, Jeff Tobin has jump started the "Beer Style of the Month" tasting, and he has stockpiled enough rarities for the next three meetings. As before, we will ask those who share these beers to help defray their cost with a donation. See you at Kim's house on September 18.

-Lee

HOTV Apparel Department

We still have five "Limited Edition" club T-shirts leftover from the last run. They are all XL size. Get one while they last. These shirts are sure to be a collector's item. And, if you go to the right place, you can be treated to free beer just for wearing it! Hint: Try the highway cleanup . . . I hear they honor the shirt club there.

Announcements

This month is just full of HOTV stuff. Read on!

Were you at the brew off? Did you cook up a batch? Have you noticed that the 12-inch stainless steel lid to

your brew kettle is missing? Call Lee to claim this lovely item. Or leave it for the raffle at the next annual competition and festival!

This month our meeting will be held at Kim Kittredge's Corvallis Chateau. The address is 626 SW 5th Street. The house is just South of Western on the West side of the road. Look for the Monkey Puzzle Tree in the front yard. Meetings traditionally are held on the third Wednesday of each month at approximately seven in the evening. This month, the meeting falls on the 18th, a few short days after the litter pick up.

Be on the lookout for the revival of the Beer Style of the Month at the meeting. In the past, someone felt it would be a good exercise to sample several examples of a particular style of beer at each monthly meeting. This event was well received; however the person who was responsible weaseled his way out of continuing the program, and we have been awaiting its reincarnation. Jeff Tobin has graciously agreed to take over the task for a few months. This month, we will sample Bier de Garde. Please bring a few dollars to donate to this worthy cause if you intend on participating. As usual, anyone who has a good idea for the Beer Style of the Month should pick up some examples, get a message to your humble newsletter editor for publication, and become somewhat familiar with that style. In the past we have sampled Scottish Ale, Stout, Brown Ale, Pale Ale, Wheat Beers (including hefe, dunkel, and American wheat but not including Belgian wheat beer), and, I think, IPA.

Of course you realized that Oktoberfest has started! There are many Oktoberfestivities going on here in the Willamette Valley. By the time you get this newsletter, you may have already missed the Eugene and the Salem Oktoberfests, and possibly the Mt. Angel Oktoberfest also. Be on the lookout for more celebrations, and support your local community by joining in for a polka and quenching your thirst with a festive lager!

Also coming up this month is our regular Highway Hike (a.k.a. garbage grab, roadway refuse roundup, tarmac trash tromp, shoulder-strip scavenge). Meet us at 11:00 am on Saturday the 14th of September at Hyak Park. Bring a hat, gloves, and long pants. As usual, refreshments follow.

And, whatever you do, don't forget about the Second Annual Willamette Valley Brewers' Picnic on Saturday, September 21. This gala event will occur at noon at Grand Prairie Park in Albany. Plan on a fun day filled with food, games, and beverages for the whole family! Please RSVP to your club president. Cajun fried turkey will be provided; however, participants are asked to bring a covered dish or desert to share.

Editorial:

For the "Discriminating" Palate

by Taratoot

Another few weeks must have past as there is a new brew available at your local store. This new offering has many similarities to another fairly new line of beers marketed under the name "Oregon." This latest liquid is marketed under the name "Babe Beer," and they don't mean a talking pig.

I suppose I should sample some of this brew before criticizing it. However, since I refuse to buy this offensive product, I will take the liberty to assume the beer is insipid. All the marketing is focused on the label and none on the beer itself. The brew is described as "smooth, mouth-watering, and full bodied, lager" obviously intended as puns rather than a description of the flavor profile.

The selling point: Each bottle has a peel off label featuring a picture of a barely-dressed woman. A point of sale brochure encourages saving these labels to build ". . . your own priceless collection" and to "Trade (duplicates) with your buddies and help them build their own valuable collection." Give me a break!

As with the "Oregon" line, it is difficult or impossible to determine who is responsible for Babe beer. The only reference I could find on the bottle was a Beaverton address. Plenty of accompanying literature is available, but it does not say much. The literature claims that an ". . . award winning Oregon brewmaster" (who I will not name here because we all know who he is) is responsible for what goes into the bottles. However, it is not the beer that is supposed to sell; it is the label on the bottle.

Offensive advertising and marketing are no longer confined to mega-brewed swill and the Swedish Bikini Parachute team. It has infiltrated the pseudo-craft beer market. Hopefully, this kind of marketing will not make its way into the quality beer market. Advertising and marketing gimmicks that objectify women are offensive and insult the intelligence of beer drinkers. Whoever is responsible for this new product is doing a disservice to the beer and brewing community. Be a "real man"; don't buy this product!

Guest Article from Andy's European Beer Journal:

Belgium!

Last July I decided to take a bit of a vacation over in Belgium and Holland. So after living in England for eight months without a car I finally purchased one (of course, just to increase the uncertainty factor, it was from a car auction) and 12 hours later I was on my way to Dover and the car ferry to Oostende, Belgium. The main objective was a Lambic Festival in Beersol, but a discussion of that will have to wait until my column all about European Beer Festivals. I won't bore you with all the details of my trip, but rather just one of the stops: Namur. Namur is a Walloonian city known as the "Gateway to the Ardennes." It is a relatively vibrant town (for the region), located at the intersection of the Meuse and Sambre rivers. I did not have any particular reason for stopping there. It was somewhat of a spontaneous decision. But I'm quite happy that I did stop and I would recommend it to anyone else on a beer-hunting holiday in Belgium.

On the Fourth of July, some people watch massive fireworks displays while others invite friends and family over for a barbecue. I went to the Musee Des Bieres Belges (19 Rue de la Gare) in Lustin, Belgium. This "museum" is located about 10 miles south of Namur and just a couple hundred yards from a tiny train station. I'm telling you this so that you don't make the same mistake that I did. I found a hotel in Namur and then drove south to the Beer Museum without knowing about the train station. I could only drink two beers before I had to stop for fear of impairing my driving. [Europe is MUCH more severe with drunk driving than the U.S.] The next time I return to the Beer Museum, I will take the train. It runs twice an hour between Namur and Dinant with a stop at Lustin.

While the Belgian Beer Museum truly is a museum, in some ways it is more a bar. A sum of 60BF is charged as an admission fee to enter. However, this fee is waived if you can show proof of membership in CAMRA (England), OBP (Belgium), or PINT (Holland). These are the main beer preservation organizations within each country. I did not have my CAMRA membership card with me, but the woman running the place let me in for free when she saw that I was consulting my copy of "Good Beer Guide to Belgium and Holland" by Tim Webb (a CAMRA published book). I was also the only person in the museum on that Tuesday afternoon. The museum really is in the middle of nowhere.

Once the proprietress saw the look of religious fervor on my face while I gazed in rapture at all the beer in stock as well as beer memorabilia on the walls, she explained the museum to me. There are about eight to ten basic Belgian beers on drought behind the bar just as you enter the museum. The average person who knows little of beer is encouraged to order one of these beers. Once you show a knowledge and appreciation of Belgian beer, you can peruse the extremely extensive beer menu and order your favorite. If the staff really like you, you can order from the special selection of aged beers kept in separate storage. I

could not find a menu of these beers, but rather the information was all kept in her head. They have quite a unique pricing system in that "Supply & Demand," the watchwords of economists the world over, have no bearing. The Beer Museum has a matrix pricing system with the two variables being alcohol level (actually, the Belgian tax band which is based on alcohol level) and volume of the bottle. This applies even to the special aged beer. A ten-year-old Stille Nacht costs the same as today's Piraat: 90BF. What a bargain!

I had a Rodenbach Grand Cru and a 1985 Liefmans Goudenband. Without going into tasting notes, I thoroughly enjoyed myself. Unfortunately, I had to pry myself away and drive back to Namur. My next destination was L'Eblouissant (27 Rue Armee Grouchy), which is French for "The Brilliant One." This place is highly recommended in Tim Webb's book, so I had to give it a try. I must say that I was somewhat disconcerted at first. The bar is literally a family's house. The house is narrow, with the bar and dining areas situated on the ground floor in the front portion of the house. Wooden tables, nick-knacks all over the walls, and home spun curtains on the windows adorn the bar. No attempt is made to offer a balanced musical selection I surmised after listening to an entire Neil Young CD. The music is simply whatever the proprietor wants. The whole experience reminded me of the cows I once saw at the University of Maryland. The cows have glass windows installed in their stomachs to allow the students to witness the digestive process of a cow. L'Eblouissant allows the visitor to meet a Walloonian family within their own home. I was the only person when I first arrived there as it was early in the evening. Over the course of the evening I ate a meal as well as drinking the following beers: Bourgogne des Flanders, Het Kapittel Watou Prior, La Caracole Troublette, Poperinges Hommelbier, Grimbergen Optimo Bruno, and Maredsous 10.

As the night went on, I watched as the family who own the bar sat down at a table together and ate their own meal. At that point in time I had to be patient before ordering another beer. It took almost two hours before I finally discerned where the toilet was located. There are no cute signs proclaiming "Gulls & Herons" as one might expect in an American bar. (Luckily, my bladder was working well that evening.) Alain Mossiat, the owner, offers an interesting selection of Belgian beers with the emphasis on Walloonian beers. He speaks English (which is good because my French is horrible) and recommended the Troublette as being similar in style but superior to Witkap Stimulo. Troublette is made by La Caracole, a Namur brewery, so his bias is understandable.

As the evening wore on I became quite content to just sit and watch the people coming and going (as well as drinking my beer!). By 10 or 11 PM the place had a fair number of people in attendance. This is not a loud and flashy place but rather a place to enjoy a fine beer and good food in the company of friends. This is not the place to get primed before hitting a nightclub.

By about 11:30 PM I decided it was time to leave and return to my hotel. As I got within a couple of blocks of my hotel, I saw a sign in a window advertising beer made on the premises. What? A brewpub in Namur? So, with much curiosity I asked the doorman, in my incredibly poor French, if this really was a brewpub. Luckily for me, he introduced me to Serge Deboot who is the brewmaster for Artisan Les Brasseurs (2, Place de la Station) and who also speaks excellent English. Artisan Les Brasseurs is a family-run brewpub which had only opened a few months before. Serge was trained at Leuven, so he has a solid background in brewing. They had five beers on draught and I tried them all through their "Sampler Platter." Interestingly enough, the two beers which I thought would do the best in an American brewpub, a Pils and a Wit, were their least selling beers. They also make an Amber, a Special Brown ale with 10% unmalted wheat, and an abbey tripel. I was quite fond of the Special Brown ale but would seriously be at a loss to state what "category" it fits in. It would probably be lumped in the ubiquitous Belgian Strong category at a U.S. homebrew contest.

Artisan Les Brasseurs shut down soon after I had finished my sampler platter, but Serge let me stay around and ask questions as he cleaned the bar. I went down to the cellar where they keep the 4 HL brewery. He mentioned that it is the exact same turnkey system as the set up in the Maximillian brewpub in Amsterdam. Two days later I was drinking at Maximillian in Amsterdam and the quality of their beer was

no where near as good as that of Artisan Les Brasseurs in Namur. This only served to reinforce my long-held belief that the brewmaster is more important than the equipment. Four months later I was in Antwerp for The Great Belgian Beer Festival and I was able to sample the beers of Artisan Les Brasseurs once again. They now bottle some of their beer and sell it under the name Mibrana Aldegonde. As the success rate for new brewpubs is not the greatest, I was happy to see they were still in business and had even expanded.

The next morning I woke up with a rather thick head and continued on my vacation by driving north to Amsterdam. The blood alcohol level in my system may have been low enough to drive, but I did have an extremely foggy head. Oh well, all in the name of beer research, and now it's time for me to go and hoist another pint of research.

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