

Malted Barley Appreciation Society

December 2004 Newsletter

<http://hbd.org/mbas>

From the Editor's Desk

Here's the December 2004 Newsletter!

Please keep the news, articles, and events submissions coming.

Proost!

Warren Becker

December Meeting

Wednesday, December 8, 2004

Guest Speaker is

Dan Shelton of Shelton Bros. Importers

MUGS ALE HOUSE

www.mugsalehouse.com



125 Bedford Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11211



NOVEMBER MEETING

By Warren Becker

Our November guest was Ron Carlson, sales manager of Wagner Valley Brewing Company from Lodi, NY. (pop. 300) www.wagnerbrewing.com Ron's brewing experience from his years in the Pacific northwest, brings knowledge of the process to their state wide sale efforts.

Wagner Valley's brewhouse is a 20 barrel system with 5 fermenters. They have a bottling line that accommodates both 12 oz. & 750 ml. sizes. Wagner Valley produces 4 lagers, Pils, Vienna, Doppelbock, and Trippelbock, plus several ales for distribution, at the moment, only in New York State. Besides beer, Wagner Valley produces roughly 50,000 cases on wine from their Lodi vineyards. Established by Bill Wagner in 1978, they were New York State's 2nd winery.

Ron brought several beers to share. First was the Grace House 3.8% Honey Wheat "table" beer. Pleasant low alcohol ale for the warm summer months in the Finger Lakes region of upstate New York. It is named after the owner's home of 78 years.

Next was the Oatmeal Stout. At 6.2% ABV, this year around ale uses rice hulls to avoid a stuck sparge. I found this stout to be a smooth, slightly nutty, , malt-centric beer with a nice finish.



Ron Carlson speaks to the MBAS about Wagner Valley beers.



Ron then poured his IPA. A hoppy beer of 6.2%, made with Cascade & Kent Golden hops. The Wagner Valley IPA harkens back to the time when the Finger Lakes region's breweries only used hops grown around Seneca Lake, the 2nd deepest lake in North America. Sled Dog Doppelbock was next. This is a sweet, clean, malt-driven winter beer at 8.2% ABV, made by decoction mash, and 6 weeks in the fermenters.

For our next 2 bottles, I had run down to Harry at New Beer Distributors on Christie Street to pick up several vintage 750 ml bottles of both the Doppelbock & Trippelbock. We sampled the 2 year old Wagner Valley Doppelbock, and it was smooth and delicious. I found that the aging help balance out the malt sweetness, while adding a slight sherry-like plum flavor.

The finale of the Wagner Valley tasting was the GABF Gold Medal winner, Trippelbock. This bottle was also a few years old, with nice clean malt flavors, lots of body, and long lingering smooth finish. Trippelbock is a full-bodied dark lager at 11% ABV. Sled Dog Reserve Trippelbock also earned a Gold Medal at the World Beer Cup 2004, an international competition held earlier in April, as well as Gold at the Great American Beer Fest in September 2003. A fantastic beer!

Thanks to Ron Carlson for coming down to Brooklyn especially for our MBAS meeting, and bringing the well-crafted Wagner Valley beers to share. Look for Wagner Valley beers around town, both on draft and in bottles in 2005.



An excited Ron receives our MBAS shirt from Prez Jennifer.



SCOTLAND: A MISSION IN MALT

By Warren Becker

"Be happy while you're living, for you're a long time dead."
An old Scottish Proverb

When malt & Scotland are mentioned in the same breath usually the conversation is only whisky. This trip was about whisky, beer, and more importantly, the people that create it, package it, sell it, serve it, and taste it.

I wanted to do something special for my Dad's birthday this year, and a visit to Scotland was an ideal choice. Scotland had all the things I like in an "easy" travel destination, easy to get to, easy to get around via mass transit, easy to communicate (though some accents around Glasgow were quite thick), a most importantly, easy to enjoy a craft brewed beverage, both whisky and beer. After much on-line investigation this summer, I found out about the annual autumn Dufftown WhiskyFest, http://www.dufftown.co.uk/autumn_speyside_whisky_festival_2004.htm through Fiona Murdoch of the Whisky Shop in Dufftown. She is a chief organizer for this terrific whisky tasting festival that takes place each year over a long weekend in the end of September. Dufftown is renown in the Whisky trade for being the Whisky Capital. It is home to seven distilleries, and close to the countless others on the Speyside Whisky Trail.



After flying into Glasgow, we stopped into The Pot Still, <http://www.thepotstill.co.uk/>, home to over 483 whiskies and counting. This cozy wood panel pub offers several fine Scottish cask ales, as well as infinite shelves of whiskies. We enjoyed Deuchars IPA 4.0%, Caledonian Tattoo 4.02%, Somerled Argyll 4.0%, and Archers Mild from Swindon

3.6%. There's no reason for sobriety around here! We then checked a Glasgow local recommended by Roger Protz, Black Friars. There we sampled Williams Bros. Gold 3.9% and a Houston's 4.2% Auld Humdinger.



Next, we grabbed a taxi to the Clockwork Beer Company, <http://scottishbrewing.com/breweries/clockwork.shtml> This big, two level old clock factory building is a terrific brew-pub with nine of their own craft beers on draft. They included an Amber IPA 3.8%, Red Alt Ale 4.4%, Original Lager 4.5%, Key Weisse 5.0%, Hazy Daze Ginger 5.0%, Hazy Daze Banana 5.0%, Oregon IPA 5.5%, Oatmeal Stout 4.2% and Raspberry Weisse 4.2%. The Clockwork beers were varied in flavor, surprisingly hop-centric, and had loads of personality. In addition, they had 30 other drafts, mostly Scottish beers such as Deuchars IPA 3.8%, Caledonian 80/- 4.1%, Barnsley Bitter 3.8%, Cathedral Belle 4.2%, Lia Fail from Inveralmond 4.7%, and Cart Blanche Acelburn 5.0%, including several casks, 150 bottles (including lots of Belgians), and around 100 whiskies. Now that's a beer list that would impress even the most finicky of imbibers. Clockwork's kitchen serves up pub food to enjoy with a great view of their brewhouse.



After taking the train from Glasgow up to Aberdeen, then on to Keith, we called upon a local taxi driver to drive us to Dufftown, via a guided tour of the lush green countryside,

with ample stops along the way to point out the many distilleries, and their warehouses.

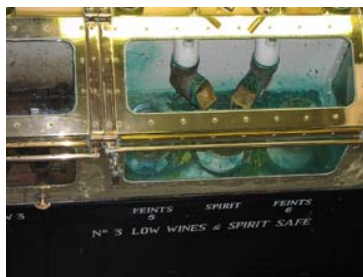


Arriving in Dufftown, we were struck by the large clock tower that would later be the focal point of the Whisky Fest's opening ceremony replete with a "dripping" light-up still image. The local Dufftown pipe band got the festivities started at sundown. People gathered beneath the tower to enjoy complimentary drams of Glenlivet and Balvenie, and enjoy the fireworks. Afterwards, we all walked down the street to a Scottish Ceilidh, with traditional music, song and dance.



My Dad & I had big plans for Saturday. We visited Tamdhu, to see the Saladin maltings in operation and then to Glenfarclas for a tour and tasting. They have one of the largest mash tuns in Scotland, at an impressive 30 feet in

diameter. The Glenfaclas tasting was held in a room with decor refitted from an early 1900s luxury liner. We enjoyed a clean 10 year old, a strong, sherry 105 proof cask strength, and a very smooth, sherry 21 year old. Young Glenfarclas from bourbon and sherry casks was sampled as well. Later that day, we visited Tamnavulin and Tomintoul distilleries, and a whisky tasting at The Whisky Castle. That night we enjoyed the preview of the Glenfiddich 30 year old at the Taste of Speyside restaurant's special whisky and food pairing dinner.



On Sunday, we visited our previous evening's host Ian Millar, manager of the Glenfiddich Distillery. This was a rare behind the scenes tour of the distillery operations, as well as my favorite, visiting and sampling their vintage products in the cask warehouse.

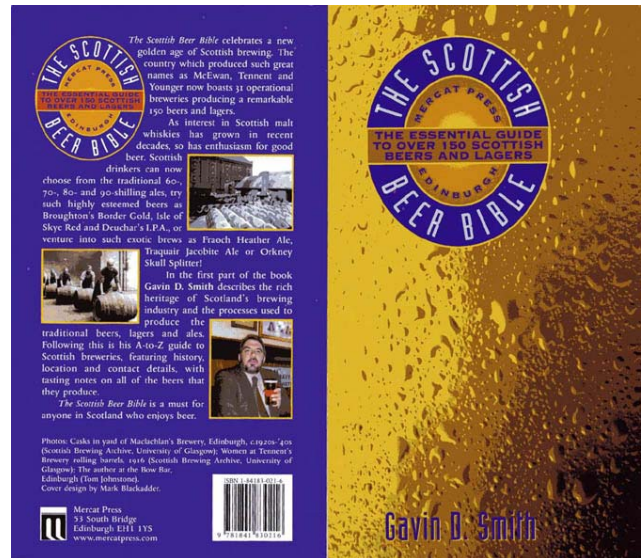


It was there, that we sampled a smooth '62 Glenfiddich from American bourbon oak, a slick, wine-like '66 Balvenie from Spanish sherry cask, and a very potent and woody '58 Glenfiddich also from oak. We visited Aberlour Distillery for their connoisseur's tour with tutored whisky tasting in the afternoon.



Our final night in Dufftown was spent at the Scottish beer tasting (see list on my Image Station link for beer listing) at The Whisky Shop, <http://www.dufftown.co.uk/whkyshp.htm> hosted by Fiona Murdoch and staff. This was a beer tasting of 50 bottled ales from throughout the country. Gavin Smith, whisky writer and author of the informative Scottish Beer Bible, <http://www.mercatpress.com/> was on hand to discuss his travels and the renaissance of Scottish craft brewing. He mentioned that the average small craft brewery is a mixture of renegade outcast and entrepreneurial

spirit. These breweries operate on their own terms, some using age old local ingredients and traditional recipes to produce distinctive beers. Sounds familiar to the U.S. craft brewing movement of the late 1980s? The dynamic is very similar, and I predict many more Scottish beers getting the spotlight on the world beer stage.



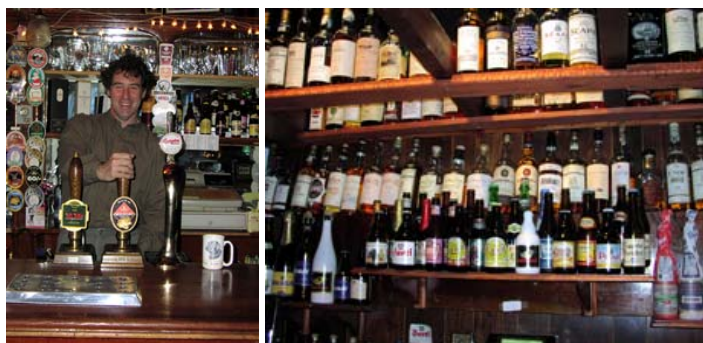
Gavin Smith's Scottish Beer Bible is available for shipment to the U.S. on Amazon UK at

<http://www.amazon.co.uk/exec/obidos/ASIN/1841830216/qid%3D1097075360/202-8734619-0449455>



When "Mr. Beer Philadelphia" Jim Anderson announced that on April 1, 2003 that his family was moving to Fortrose, Scotland to run their own hotel, restaurant, whisky bar and pub, many, including me, thought that it was an Anderson April Fool's Day joke. Fortrose is located on the Black Isle, roughly a half hour from Inverness. During the warmer weather, golfers, fishermen, dolphin and seal watchers and sailboats are abundant in and around the waters of the Moray Firth. After a year and half, The Anderson, <http://www.theanderson.co.uk/> has made great strides in itself becoming a destination. With 15 drafts, 2 cask ales

(Robinson's Hartleys ESB 4.0% and Wildcat Amber 5.1%), over 135 whiskies, approximately 100 Belgian and other bottles, and a carefully selected wine cellar, it is just that. Jim and his wife, Chef Anne have created an elegant hotel with 2 bar areas, including a pub and whisky tasting room, and a spacious dining room to enjoy the many diverse culinary masterpieces on their menu. Before dinner, I enjoyed a smooth Dalmore 16 year old, a Black Isle local distillery. My sumptuous dinner consisted of four courses, each paired (we shared) with an appropriate Belgian or Scottish Ale. As Django Reinhardt played on through the dining room, I enjoyed the salad and cheeses with both Hoegaarden Grand Cru and Saison 1900, Sweet Potato & Chestnut soup with a Westmalle Dubbel, Blackened Ostrich Steak (Cajan Style, a Chef Anne specialty!) with roasted potatoes paired with a Gordon's Scotch Ale, and a creamy triple layer black and white truffle chocolate cake with pouring cream paired with a tart Liefmans Glukreik, served warm.



I joined Jim and two surprise guests that happened to be passing through, in his pub. Michael Field of the Anglo Dutch Brewery in Dewsbury <http://www.anglo-dutch-brewery.co.uk> and Sean Tomlinson of the Cairngorm Brewery in Aviemore <http://www.cairngormbrewery.com/> were busy picking up and dropping off casks in northern Scotland. I got a chance to meet, Betty, the Anderson's dog, also and an American from Philly. We all stayed up well past the public "closing time".

As Jim says about his establishment, "(The Anderson is a place to) eat and drink well in the Highlands, an oasis of great food and drink." I agree.



Not far from The Anderson is the Black Isle brewery, <http://www.blackislebrewery.com/> Martin of Black Isle was gracious enough to give us an on-the-spot tour of their farmhouse brewery. The quaint 5 barrel brewhouse, fermenters, and bottling line have done well for this award winning brewer of fine organic ales. They produce both

bottle and cask versions of their smooth Red Kite Scotch ale, chocolaty Thornbush Porter, Cascade hopped Goldeneye IPA, and even a Weizen, Bavarian inspired Green Kite.



We headed back to Glasgow, specifically the airport area. I know that doesn't sound like to promising an evening in most cities, but in the area close to the Glasgow Airport there is The Fox and Hounds restaurant, home to the Houston Brewing Company <http://www.houston-brewing.co.uk/> They had 5 of their beers available that night. A smooth, slightly roasty Mortlach Stout, hoppy and creamy Peter's Well, pleasant Barochan, light Killellan, and a seasonal malty, vanilla and toffee flavored Old Humdinger. This 1780 converted inn was the ideal place to close out our 1 week of great beers and whiskies, with an evening of fine dining and pleasant ales.

If there wasn't enough whisky tasted on our trip, my Dad and I enjoyed an informal Glenmorangie, from the Northern Highlands, tasting in the duty free shop at the Glasgow airport. We sampled the Glenmorangie Cellar 13, as well as versions with these wood finishes, port, madeira, sherry, and burgundy. All were delicious, and we were inspired to fill up the few remaining empty spaces in our carry-on bags.

I enjoyed WhiskyFest in Dufftown, tasting the many vintage whiskies, sampling the craft beers with author Gavin Smith, visiting the brewery at Black Isle, and an awesome visit to The Anderson in Fortrose.

Please check out my image station pictures at: <http://www.imagestation.com/album/?id=3140985093>

For further info regarding Scottish Brewing check out Neil Spake's great web site: <http://scottishbrewing.com/> Slainte!

HOMEBREWING COMPETITIONS:

January 14-16, 2005:

BURP's Fourth Spirit of Belgium Conference and Homebrew Competition, Arlington, Virginia..

Information on the conference can be found at the [Spirit of Belgium web page](#). The Homebrew Competition will be held Satur-

day morning, January 15. Categories to be judged include all Belgian Styles in the 1999 guidelines. Entries are due by Saturday, 8 January. More information on the competition can be found at the [web page](#). It is expected that requests to judge at this competition will be high, so we reserve the right to give first judging priority to BJCP judges who register for the entire Spirit of Belgium Event. If you are planning on attending, and would like to judge in the homebrew competition contact [Tom Cannon](#). If you have any questions about the homebrew competition, please contact the competition organizer, [Andy Anderson](#).

Information can be found at their web page:

<http://www.burp.org/events/sob/2005/index/html>

<http://www.burp.org/events/sob/2005/competition/htm>



BEER RELATED EVENTS:

Sat. Dec. 4

Sint Niklaas Visits Brewery Ommegang

Cooperstown, NY

Christmas event, brewery tours and tastings, Sint Niklaas tells Belgian tales and stories to children, sleigh rides, hot chocolate, other Belgian foods and goodies.

<http://www.ommegang.com>

Tues. Dec. 7, 7PM

Victory for NYC at David Copperfield's

Join Bill Covaleski, master brewer and co-founder of Victory Brewing Co., as we drink some real specialties. We'll talk, taste, talk, taste and talk some more. Bill will regale us all with stories of the brewery's current expansion. Featuring:

Storm King Stout, Prima Pils, Altbier, Moonglow Weizen Bock Old Horizontal. V-12 + casks: Milltown Mild and Hop Wallop

<http://www.davidcopperfields.com>

Thurs. Dec. 9, 7PM

A Very Schmaltzy Hanukkah at David Copperfield's

Join Jeremy Cowan and the folks who bring you He'Brew beers for a fun filled, rib tickling, humor enhanced beer tasting event for Hanukkah. Featuring Miraculous Jewbelation, Messiah Bold and Genesis Ale on tap in NYC for the very first time. Gifts, prizes.

<http://www.davidcopperfields.com>

Fri. Dec. 10 & Sat. Dec. 11

UNYHA 27th Annual/16th Empire State Open

Rochester, NY

UNYHA's 27th Homebrew Competition open to all brewers in New York State. Part of the New York State Homebrewer of the Year competition. AHA sanctioned, \$5 per entry.

<http://www.unyha.com>

Tues. Dec. 14, 7:30PM

Lindemans Holiday Dessert Party

Mile Square, 221 Washington St, Hoboken, NJ

See how wonderful desserts and beautiful fruit lambics can go together. 201-420-0222

Wed. Dec. 15

Night of the Imperials

Blind Tiger Ale House <http://www.blindtigeralehouse.com/>

Wed. Jan. 19

Heavyweight Slugfest

Blind Tiger Ale House <http://www.blindtigeralehouse.com/>

Sat. Jan. 29

BeerAdvocate.com presents the 2nd Annual Extreme Beer Fest, Boston, MA. Tickets on sale in advance for \$22.50 through www.beeradvocate.com

Sun. Jan. 30

Connecticut Real Ale Fest

Bru Rm @ BAR, New Haven, CT

203-729-5445 <http://www.niteimage.com/clubs/BAR/bru.html>

CHECK OUT YOUR BEER ALERT PAGE

<http://hbd.org/mbas/beer.html>

