



Malted Barley Appreciation Society

June, 2000 Newsletter

Philadelphia Update

by B.R. Rolya, Contributing Editor

It was a hot, May day when Bob and I left Manhattan en route to Princeton for a day long indie rock fest. Before we even set up our table with merchandise, the first order of the day was to go to the **Triumph Brewing Co.** and fill up a growler with their Bengal IPA. We drank it out of paper cups and didn't take any tasting notes, but it was the perfect, refreshing beer for a hop bite with hot, sunny day: great body. We felt a substantial malt sorry for the people walking around with tall boy Buds, but we were too selfish to share.



We had plans to attend the Winterthur Point-to-Point races in Delaware the next day so it made sense to spend the night in Philadelphia. The first stop was Monk's (of course). While waiting for our table, we sat at the bar in the back room and drooled over the tap list (then again, the drooling could have had something to do with the food aromas since we hadn't eaten since breakfast). Bob enjoyed a malty, estery **Gentse Tripel** and I had a **Cantillon** 1 year old lambic. The bartender, with a raised eyebrow, asked if I had ever had one before. After I assured him that it was indeed what I wanted, he said, "that was the kriek you wanted, right?". I guess the ladies are only allowed to drink fruit beers... Once I finally got what I wanted, I was extremely pleased: for a one year old lambic, this beer was nowhere near as acidic and harsh as one would expect. Instead, it was pleasantly sour (particularly refreshing on such a hot day) and with a very gentle finish. With dinner we enjoyed draft Liefmans Goudenbond and a bottle of earthy, yeasty Westvleteren 12.

Next stop: the Foodery - a tiny deli with the most amazing beer selection (they even have a computer-

ized inventory). The Cantillon was such a perfect match for the weather that we bought bottles of gueuze and Rose de Gambrinus to enjoy with our picnic at the races the next day.

We decided to try some bars that we had never been to but on the way stopped off at **Poor Henry's** which had some good lagers the last time we were there. Our verdict: stick with the lagers. The **Tripel** (brewed 1.26, OG 22, 9.5% abv) was grainy and very alcoholic. Somewhat dark for a tripel, it was slightly murky with just a hint of an estery aroma. There was some sweetness behind the alcohol and grain, but that was about it.

The **Dubbel** (brewed 1.17, OG 17, 7.25% abv) had an estery, somewhat banana aroma with a yeasty breadiness and some farm notes. There was some malt flavor with a raisiny character but not too much sweetness. The flavor was unexpectedly bitter with a dry and astringent finish.



This Month's Guest Speaker

Charlie Ewen

Saw Mill River Brewing Co.

Meetings are held at **Mugs Ale House**, Corner of 10th Street and Bedford Avenue in Brooklyn on the second Wednesday of each month. This month the meeting will be on the 14th.

While the beers were disappointing, the atmosphere was horrendous. There were not many people there - a few tipsy pool players most likely left over from the beer fest they had earlier and about 5 of us at the bar - but they had the sound system cranked up to at least 11 playing a radio station's "club mix" show - the kind where they are broadcasting from some club in Seacaucus and encourage you to come down and "par-tay". The music was bad enough, and conversa-

tion was impossible, but hearing the commercials broadcast at ear-drum shattering volumes was enough to curdle our brains and make us contemplate murder (or worse, drinking a lite beer).

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We quickly finished up our beers and headed to **Standard Tap**, a bar recommended by George at Home Sweet Homebrew which serves only local micros. There we enjoyed a much calmer, less "dude" oriented scene with decent music played at normal volumes.



The **Yard's Saison** was a murky light copper in color with a citric aroma with hints of coriander. The slightly sweet flavor was followed by an intense bitterness. The verdict: a pseudo wit pretending to be a saison. **Victory's Wit** passed muster with the requisite citric/lemony flavor and coriander in the aroma and flavor but the body was a touch light. **Neversink's Strong Ale** was very Rogue-ish in its hop aroma, flavor, and bitterness, and also reminiscent of Bigfoot. It had a tea-like quality both in the color and aftertaste and was very rich in alcohol. Not bad at all! **Savage Maibock** wasn't bad but certainly wasn't a maibock. It had a very grainy aroma with some DMS and medium malt character and a bitter, astringent finish. It seemed more like a cross between a pilsner and a maibock with a touch of Oktoberfest thrown in. We also had a Yuengling lager

just because and the only written comment was: "banana wheat lager?"

The next day we thoroughly enjoyed our bottles of Cantillon and while there were horses and blankets present, there was no horse blanket aroma in our beer. After the races we tried to go to the Brandywine Brewing Company in Delaware but they were charging a \$5 cover that afternoon and we had a suspicion that we would not enjoy that sort of environment.

In other trip news, we spent a long weekend in Canada at the Festival de Musique Actuelle in Victoriaville. The beer report can be best summed up by this exchange which occurred far too many times. Question: "What Canadian beers do you have?" Reply: "Oh, we have all of the Canadian beers! Budweiser, Molson Lite, Molson Dry, Molson, Molson Lite, and, um, Molson, Labatt's, Labatt's Dry", etc., etc.



Belgian Trip Notes: The Final Chapters By Bill Coleman



Getting a little air in Brugge.

When we woke up the next morning, we were still in the Hotel Erasmus in Brugge, with over a hundred beers to choose from, so you can't blame us for having another 1 or 2 after breakfast:

- Stille Nacht @1991 (Bill). Delicious!
- Louwage Faro (actually, a table beer) (John) . Quite dark and tasty, if a little thin in body.
- 21 Erasmus anniversary beer, by De Dolle Brouwers (Warren), 9% alcohol. Nice to have De Dolle as your contract brewers!!

Next, we stopped in the town of Zwinjaarde, south of Ghent, and went to Zwart Fles, a café with a very good selection of beers, and 12 different styles of eels! We had a bite, and drank the following beers:

- Sloeber.
- Tongerlo 6 Blond.
- Wtikap Stimulo
- Moeder Overste (probably Floreffé Tripel, and a re-

peat of 24 hours).

- Zwart Fles Natturbier (a house beer).

We had planned to visit the Huyghe brewery, but were running too late, and couldn't get hold of the brewer, anyway.



In front of Zwarte Fles.

The next bar we visited was the Hopduvel in Ghent. We were a little disappointed in the place this year, as they were out of vintage beers, but we found some good beers:

- Saison Double Enghein. Actually, a Brune, not a Saison.
- Rodenbach.
- Ezelbier.
- Poperinge Hommelbier. (A repeat).
- Deugniet (A repeat also).
- Gouden Carolus (a recent bottle).



The hopduvel made us do it!

Before going to another café, we stopped in the warehouse also named Hopduvel (owned by the same folks) and stocked up on some good beers.

Once we got to the center of Ghent, it was readily clear that this is a great city, with a fascinating mix of urban and medieval, worthy of detailed exploration at a later date. It's also filled with great bars! We really had barely time to stop in and move along at each place. Anyway, the first stop was the Trollekelder, a really cool-looking bar with a medieval look.

- Delirium Tremens (a repeat from 24 hours) (?).
- Westvlanderen 12 (?)
- Hoegaarden Grand Cru (John?)



In front of Dulle-Griet



T'Galgenhuis.

We stopped at another bar, Dulle Griet, which was an amazing place, with lots of beer memorabilia and a dark ages via Coney Island look, but realized that we had to get food, and hoped to get back later—we didn't! I have to seriously hang out at this bar at a later date.

Off to the next stop, Galgenhuis. It was supposed to have a restaurant, but it was closed for that time of the year! So, we had a quick round of beers, and asked for a restaurant recommendation.

- Stopken.
- Gentse Triple.
- Judas.

The next stop was De Gekroonde Hoofden, a restaurant with a decent beer selection. It was a five minute walk, but we had to cross 2 bridges to get to it!

- Hapkin.
- Campbell's Scotch (?)
- Leffe Dubbel (?).

Finally, our last stop in Ghent. A nice place, but not as interesting as some of the one's we breezed through, Het Waterhuis Aan de Bierkant:

- Gueuze Fond Tradition from St. Louis (Bill). Just as astringent as the last time I tried it!
- Chimay Red (John?). Not a very good bottle. (Hey, did I not write Warren's beer from this round?)
- Lindeman's Peche (John?).
- Vondel (Warren?)
- Vichtenaar Kriek (Bill).

So it was time to crash out. I left the Ghent bar scene with some regret, and a desire to return as soon as I had a chance.



Filip, Bill & John at Liefman's The cellar at Liefman's

The next morning, we were finally going to do another

brewery visit. The first stop was the Liefman's brewery in Oudenaarde, where we got the full tour of the brewery, we were lucky enough to be visiting at the time a primary fermentation had recently started, which was quite a sight!

Following the tour, by we had a tasting of Leifman's Goudenband and Kriek. We also picked up numerous bottles of Leifman's Goudeband from 1987, which was originally saved because it had gone bad, but has been improving mightily in the bottle! At the brewery, we sampled the following beers:

- Leifman's Goudenband (current).
- Leifman's Kriek.

Next stop was Ingelmunster, home of the Von Honsebrouck Brewery, where Kasteel Bier, Brigand, K-8 and St. Louis lambics are made. There was no brewery tour available, but that was okay, that was not why we were there; Warren and I had been there last year, and knew it was the only place you can get Kasteel Brown 1989 (the first year) both in the Tavern at the Castle, and to take home.



Enjoying pancakes covered in vintage beer.

So we sampled the beer, with some pancakes (panokoken or something like that in Flemish) cooked with the more recent Kasteel Brown and ice cream. We have to admit it, we also poured some of our vintage 1989 Kasteel on the pancakes, and they tasted damn good! We also had a second round. So the beers we sampled there (all Von Honsebrouck products) were:

- Kasteel Brown 1989 (750 ml bottle; one full round).
- Kasteel Brown current, on draft (Bill).
- Vlammisch Wit (Warren).
- Bacchus (John) a Flanders Brown ale, and a very nice one, too! Very nice malt flavors.

Now there was a fair amount of additional driving before we arrived in the city of Liege. Our only stop in this city (we were running late) was the Vaudree II, which has around 800 beers. It was the first of two cafes (the other was Vaudree I, a few paragraphs down) that recognizes American microbreweries, as it has "Brookling Lager" and 2 Anchor products, Steam and Porter. (The Celis beers you see in Belgium are brewed by De Smedt in Brabant.) We didn't have any of those beers, however (I think we can find them in better shape at home).

- Goldie Barleywine (Bill) (The only beer from the

Thomas Hardy brewery actually called a Barleywine). At 7% alcohol, something of a "Thomas Hardy Lite," and a very tasty beer, at that!

- Accener Jan Hertog Grand Prestige (Warren). A very nice, big-bodied Dutch beer.
- Dobbel Palm (John).
- Vapeur Roussee (Bill) a beer from the Vapeur brewery that hasn't made it to the US so far. Very nice; spicy, rich, and flavorful.
- Satan Ale (?)
- Timmerman's Caveau Gueuze. The hard-to-find traditional lambic from this brewery.
- Watney's Scotch Ale (John?).
- Triple Soleilmont (?)

Next, we headed for the hotel, in Angleur, a suburb of Liege. And why were we staying in Angleur? Why the Vaudree I, of course; that insane bar, open 24 hours a day, with 1,000 beers. I am happy to say that if you start up your Alta Vista web search, and type in the word "Vaudree," the first item that appears is the comic strip I did about the Vaudree last year. Anyway, it was fun to return to it again, and we sampled the following items:



Inside the Vaudree.



In front of the Vaudree

- Rochefortoise Brune (John). A little too fruity tasting; a bit harsh. Too bad, this brewery usually has a good reputation.
- Rochefort 10 (Warren).
- Belzebuth (Bill). A very strange beer from France; blonde, with 15% alcohol, and a shockingly clean flavor! This is from the Brasserie Jeanne D'Arc (talk about saints and sinners!), better known in this country for Grain D'Orge..
- Old Brussels Lambic (Warren?). A 7 year old lambic from a defunct brewery. Quite complex.
- La Gaffe (from Vapeur) 1987 (Bill?). Another unique product from this brewery. I seem to be missing a beer here, as I do not have a second round from John.

So, we went to bed at our hotel.

Friday, October 22

Then we woke up the next morning in Angleur, and where do you think we had breakfast at? Why, (30) Vaudree I, of course! Why not, if the place is open 24

hours? After consuming our pancakes, coffee (all the coffee in Belgium was very good, by the way), we had, just had, to consume a few more beers. Let's see, what did we have...

- Wets-year unknown, but old. (Bill) The bartender warned us about this one, making a face. I had forgotten I had it Baarle Hartog, but this bottle was not as good. It had a bad seal, and the neck of the bottle smelled absolutely horrible from the funky cork. The beer itself, while fairly flat, and not great, still tasted better than expected. It was a more interesting beer than the pop-lambics, anyway.

- Von Hollevon's Stout (Warren). A big, strong, sweet Dutch stout from Heineken.
- De Troch Apricot.
- Mills Scotch, from Haacht (Bill).
- Accener Jan Hertog Trippel (Warren).
- Paranoia. (John) A big (6%), blonde Belgian beer, which was clean enough to be a maibock, and had very wacky packaging, including a purple hippo!

Our next stop is the town of Beersel, a southern suburb of Brussels. It took longer to get there than it should have, because of some erroneous driving directions by me, but we finally arrived. First stop, the Restaurant/Brewery, Drie Fonteinen, a very classy, fancy restaurant. We make it just in time to order lunch. While consuming it, we have the following beers:

- Drie Fonteinen Gueuze from April 1993 (big bottle, split). Very delicious.
- Draft Lambic (Bill). An amazing beer! The best draft lambic I've had to date; it was softened by low carbonation and keg-conditioning. The beer was an amazing blend of flavors of both Lambics and cask-conditioned real ale. It was quite a shock, and a delicious beer.
- Draft Kriek (John). John enjoyed this smooth, complex Kriek, quite a bit. It was quite drinkable; I personally found it a little sweet, but quite good.
- Draft Faro (Warren). A very drinkable sweet-sour beer, made in the traditional manner by adding dark candi sugar to draft lambic in the keg. Very tasty, and somewhat reminiscent of a Flanders brown.



After tasting these wonderful beers, we were able to visit the Brewer/Blender, Armand Debelder at his warehouse down the street. I say brewer/blender because they have only recently started making their own lambic beer. Anyway, we were able to try 3 different beers that they

blend to make their lambic beers, straight from the casks:

- Boon, 2 years old.
- Lindeman's, 1 year old.
- Girardin, 1 year old.

Then, we went a little down the street, to Oud Beersel, to try their beers, although we got some bad news, which needs to be verified, later on. It's quite a different place from Drie Fonteinen, with much more of a local bar, working-class ambience. Nevertheless, you will see a table-full of folks drinking away their gueuzes, which is a very good thing! Anyway, we tried (all bottles, all quite wonderful):

- Lambic.
- Kriek.
- Gueuze.



John and discuss beer styles at the Beer Circus

We were running late, so after we checked into the hotel, we hit one bar only, the Beer Circus. It's a great little bar, with lots of brewery memorabilia, an unusually good selection of Wallonian ales, and a very attractive, well-organized menu-better than Mug's new one, I have to admit! Anyway, the beers sampled were:

- La Moneuse. A spicy, hoppy, delicious Saison from the Blaugies brewery.
- Regal Xmas 1985. It was flat, but quite tasty. The bartender charged us 1/2 because of the lack of carbonation!
- Saison D'Ezerezee Automne 1994. A very citrusy saison. Quite spicy in flavors. None of the funkiness that hampers some Fantome beers that make it to the US.
- Biere Cochonne la Bissextile 1992. The first batch of Cochonne, and the last bottle of that batch in the bar. Very delicious; not quite as sweet as later batches of Cochonne, with more of the sweet-sour quality of an Oerbier, for example.

We headed for the hotel at this point, before going to bed, we opened a bottle of vintage beer we had purchased, which admittedly was pretty shook up at that point:

- Leifman's Goudenband 1987. Even under those circumstances, it was quite delicious, with a lot of subtle sourness balancing malty sweetness, and some extremely subtle sherry flavors. Very complex!



Conducting our beer tour

The next day did not go as planned. I woke up way earlier than everyone else, and had breakfast by myself, afterwards going to the Falstaff to have an early beer:

- Orval. A repeat numerous times already.

When we were all up, the first stop was a tour of the Cantillon brewery. We got the full, self-conducted tour (they give you a sheet a paper and let you wander around the brewery unattended!), checked out all the brewery equipment, and were able to sample the following Cantillon beers, all much smoother and more drinkable than the often somewhat harsh bottles that make it to the USA (after shipping and storage under non-ideal circumstances, no doubt):

- Lambic (unblended and flat).
- Gueuze.
- Framboise.
- Vigneronne (grape).
- Kriek
- Iris (barley-based, no wheat).
- Faro.



Transporting fine beers is a lot of work

While we were there, our guide told us that Our Beersel no longer makes their own beer; we were informed that the beer they sell there is now Boon with Oud Beersel labels. That's the bad news I was talking about earlier; I hope it's not true! I loved their beers last year.

Then we had to finally deal with all the beer we'd been buying all over the country. I hadn't gone into too much detail in this article, at least in this draft, but it was a lot! By the time we returned and I had time to count, it turned out we had over 200 bottles in the car, including over 70 750 ML bottles. That's a lot of stuff to carry! We had to buy 2 suitcases and many, many socks, which we picked up at the Brussels Foot Locker, to provide packing mate-

rial for all these beers. This took several hours, while John relaxed at the hotel. By the way, the Belgian prices for socks and suitcases are not nearly as good as their prices for beer!

Finally, we packed all our beers away, and went to Spinokke, a highly-reputed restaurant a block from our hotel. Along with the fine food, the following beers were ordered:



Cantillon

- Cantillon Draft Faro (Warren & John-pitcher) (Spinokke's own version, different from that served at Cantillon).
- Cantillon Draft Gueuze (different from that of the brewery, which was from a bottle. Very smooth, the best draft Cantillon I've had—miles more drinkable than that found in even the very best US beer bars.
- Duchess du Bourgoyne (Bill).
- Rochefort 10 (John)
- Warren's second beer. No notes.



In front of, Chez Moeder Lambic

Finally, we went to the final bar of the trip, Chez Moeder Lambic, with around 8 beers, and not much bigger in size than one of my backyard barbecues. This is the only bar I've been to in Belgium with graffiti, and the only graffiti I've ever done in my life (really, I mean it!) was in the bathroom of this bar. Happily, it was still there, a drawing of the Salty Dog, of course with only the addition of an earring and peace sign in the year since I did it. However, the original drawing was done in a very weak, thin pen line, so with the help of Warren's sharpie, I was able to touch it up. If you ever go there, check it out! Anyway, I also added a comic book to the pile of comics they have there. Now, on to the beers:

- Monette Brune (Bill). Another malty sweet beer.
- Binchoise Noel (Warren). Very spicy, and quite nice.
- La Poiluchette Cuvee De Chateau Brune (John)-also malty and sweet, with a nice finish.
- Galoise Blonde on Draft (Bill). Very nice and clean,

with an oddly-shaped squat mug as the glass of choice.

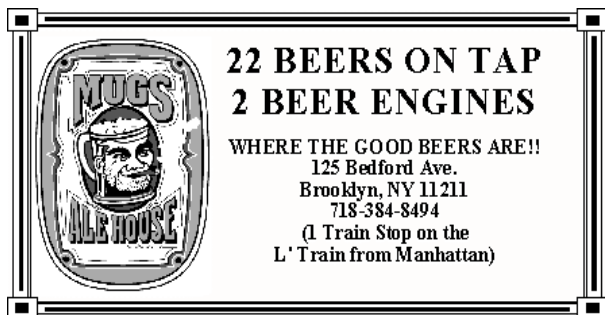
- Triple Toison d'Or (Warren).
- La Poiluchette Cuvee De Chateau Blonde (John).
- Godefroy 5.8 (Warren)
- La Vieille Salme (Bill) (Contract brew from Chouffe, with a witch on it).
- Ciney Blonde (John).
- Saison 2000 Quintine (Bill), a special beer from Ellezelloise.
- Hellekeltebier (Warren). Malty and sweet, big beer. A repeat from early in the week, although we didn't remember at the time.
- Lindeman's Peche on draft (John).
- Rochefort 10 (Bill). A reliable, big malty complex beer to wrap up my trip.
- Orval (John). John finishes off with the big surprise for him on the trip.
- Zotte Bie Brune (Warren). Warren comes up with another winner as the last beer; the dark version of Zotte Bie honey beer. Very good!!

At this point, we went back to the hotel, regretfully. The final beer was one we opened in the hotel room that night:

- Leuwendige Witte (I believe).

It had turned out to be quite a spectacular trip. During the nine days we spend in Belgium, we visited 14 different cities, stopped in 35 separate cafes, and tried 277 beers (in that case, with some duplicates, but what can you do?).

Anyway, the next morning, it was back to the USA. Luckily, we had many beers coming back with us to sample!



Contests, Festivals, and Others Goings On

June 21: Summer Solstice Celebration, Park Slope Brewing Co., 40 Van Dyke

St., Red Hook, Brooklyn

718-246-8050. \$30 for BBQ and Beer

June 21: Belgo Beer Seminar, dinner with 6 beers and 5 courses, \$69, 7 pm

at Belgo, 415 Lafayette

June 23-25: Summerfest 2000, Black Forest Brewhaus, Farmingdale, NY,

631-391-9500 or www.black-forest-beerhouse.com

June 23-25: 4th Annual Old Dominion Beer Fest, Ashburn, VA, 703-724-9100.

www.olddominion.com. \$5 entry fee includes festival glass

June 25: 4th Annual Garden State Craft Brewers Guild Beer Festival, 12-5

pm, Waterloo Village, Stanhope, NJ, \$20. For more information:

973-347-0900 or www.njbeer.org

July 1: American Beer Rally, Philadelphia, 303-447-0816

July 8: Brooklyn Brewery Block Party

July 8: "Belgium Comes to Cooperstown" - Ommegang's salute to Belgium,

Ommegang Brewery, Cooperstown, NY,
www.ommegang.com

July 14-15: Vermont Brewers Festival, Burlington, VT, 802-244-6828

August 12: 1st Annual Home Brew Competition in conjunction with the Salt City Brew Club (Albany) and part of the NY State Fair.

<http://www.nysfair.org/>