

Malted Barley Appreciation Society

June, 2002 Newsletter

May Meeting

By Eric Freberg, MBAS

Last month's meeting featured two more MBAS club members who are achieving success in the beer industry.



Last year, Rich Sholz decided to leave Wall Street to pursue the classic American Dream of opening his own business. He felt that his Park Slope neighborhood was ready for a gourmet beer shop, since the commercial

area has begun to thrive. His friend Ricky was laid off from his construction job in Florida and came up to Brooklyn, this provided the momentum needed to open their doors within five months of starting the effort in June. During this intensive period, the two caught a few breaks along the way, such as discovering a tin ceiling above the drop ceiling which was in fine condition. Another key development was when Rich hired Andy Ager (I venture to guess that this networking took place at an MBAS meeting) who went to work buying the beer. I'm sure most of you have noticed that even the top beer bars or distributors tend to miss the last link in the chain, their employees have no clue about good beer and therefore miss many opportunities to help lure customers that are looking to widen their experience. Andy has certainly helped make sure that Bierkraft did not go down that road; he is knowledgeable enough to deal with customers as well as distributors. Andy pointed out that with distributors also being retailers themselves, this complicates the already competitive atmosphere; still they have been able to maintain an

inventory including over 550 different beers.

Andy does some homebrewing during the day, with a temperature-controlled RIM (recirculating infusion mash) system on premises but it is strictly for sampling. He's recently made a Czech Pils and a hoppy IPA. (Hmmm. Comes in at noon, homebrews at work...now who's living the American Dream??) But selling homebrew supplies is not in Rich's plan as the space and cost becomes a problem, the online suppliers seem to be able to do this more efficiently (with a few notable exceptions, e.g. Maltose Express).

WANTED

The Malted Barley Appreciation Society is seeking an **EDITOR** for the monthly newsletter. If you are interested, please contact Andrew Schlein at aschlein@nyc.rr.com or Lucy Zachman at lzachman@oppenheimerfunds.com

To go with all this great beer, Bierkraft also features gourmet food, including fresh, brick-oven breads, an amazing selection of chocolates, salsas, sausages, pastas, and over 100 cheeses, many of which are soaked in Belgian beer such as Cochet or Chimay. Rich's wife Daphne has a background in gourmet food and therefore handles most of this part of the business.

This Month's Guest Speaker Phil Markowski



Southampton Public House

Meetings are held at Mugs Ale House, on the corner of 10th St. and Bedford Ave in Brooklyn on the second Wednesday of each month. This month, the meeting will be on the 12th. Mugs is three blocks from the Bedford Ave stop on the L train.

MBAS Newsletter is published almost monthly by the

Malted Barley Appreciation Society

58-07 Metropolitan Avenue
Ridgewood, NY

Lucy Zachman, President

Jim Simpson, Treasurer

Andrew Schlein, Newsletter Editor

B.R. Rolya, Contributing Editor

Dan Shelton, Trade Relations Editor

Bob Weyersberg, Photography Editor

Getting back to educating the customer, on Tuesday evenings Bierkraft has beer tastings, often with speakers. Each beer is paired with cheese, one example he cited was bock with goat cheese. Rich was encouraged to find that his customers are generally quite knowledgeable, and the interesting beers are outselling his more mainstream offerings.

Rich brought along some great beer for tasting, including Southampton Biere de Garde (in corked bottle), and two beers from Urthel – Tonicum Finiboldhus, a very potent Belgian amber ale, and Hibernius Quantum, a strong, malty Tripel with some spicy, floral notes.

Bierkraft is located at 191 5th Ave, Park Slope, Brooklyn.

Coffee with that Danish? Only if it's Stout...

by BR Rolya & Bob Weyersberg

Another Danish friend came to town recently and brought more Danish beers, insisting that there were some unique summer ones that we had never tried. And he was right! Did anyone know that the Danes brew wheat beer?



We started with the modest **Ceres Top Pilsner Øl**

(4.6%). The label on the back of the bottle was a little less modest: it featured the torso of a buxom young woman whose chest was partially covered by a bikini top made from bottle caps ("Top Pilsner", indeed). The beer itself was a bright, golden color and had a malty and characteristically Danish aroma. It was a very light-bodied yet flavorful beer with a clean lager flavor and a touch of hop bitterness.



The seasonal **Tuborg Classic Hvede** (4.6%) was a bit of a surprise. From the label we assumed that "ufiltreret" meant unfiltered and the accompanying graphics (pour beer, swirl bottle, pour out yeast) and the cloudy beer that came out of the bottle confirmed our attempt at understanding Danish. The minute we tried it we realized that it was not an unfiltered lager. Brewed with over 50% wheat malt, this beer was a credible attempt at the traditional Bavarian style. It had a very wheaty aroma combined with some clove, spice, and a hint of citrus. There was a mild wheat flavor plus a touch of harsh bitterness. Overall, while it wasn't bad, we found it a bit watery and not quite as refreshing as a German weizen.

Beer number 3, **Ceres Havskum Bering Bryg** (5.5%), was the biggest shocker of them all. We had to recheck the label for the alcohol content to make sure that we hadn't been given a children's drink instead. This beer smelled like a soda, looked like a soda, and tasted like a soda! There was very little traditional "beer" flavor. It had an odd combination of sweetness and herbal tartness and was reminiscent of grapefruit soda combined with beer in both aroma and flavor. It was highly carbonated,

cola-colored, and the mild yet assertive medicinal herb flavor reminded us of schnapps.

Also from the Ceres brewery, **Royal Export Classic** (5.8%) was a return to the traditional Danish lager category. This light amber beer was a fairly clean and crisp yet grainy lager. It had an aroma of toasty malt and a pleasant malt flavor supported by some bitterness with very clean aftertaste. It had a substantial body but wasn't too heavy. All in all, a refreshing, tasty lager.

Ceres Royal Selection (7.7%) didn't have much going on in the aroma aside from some faint malt. It had a clean Danish lager character but the high alcohol content was very apparent. The flavor was rather bitter, with the malt hiding behind the hops and the alcohol. Nonetheless, this deep gold beer had a fairly clean and smooth finish.



The last beer remaining was the **Ceres Royal Stout** (7.7%). The roastiness in the aroma combined nicely with that of molasses. The flavor, also roasty, was very rich and sweet but finished slightly chalky. The alcohol was apparent in the finish but overall this was a rich and satisfying beer.

Having enjoyed a variety of straight-forward lagers, Christmas beers, Easter beers, and summer seasonals, we're now looking forward to seeing what the Danes brew up for the fall - Hamlet's Halloween Bryg perhaps?

Beyond Miller: Beer And Loafing In Milwaukee

By Bob Weyersberg

While traveling on business to the town that made Schlitz famous (or was that the other way around?) I managed to find time to sample some of the local fare. I was stuck in a used record shop in a desolate part of Milwaukee with some crazed record collectors when I noticed a bar across the street. My companions found their obsession and I was soon to

find mine!

The bar was the famed Onopa Brewing Company, Milwaukee's reputed brewpub and microbrew bar. It's an enormous, cavernous space in an out-of-the-way part of town that hosts interesting musical acts on a regular basis, including many bands with which I work.



Milwaukee's own Lakefront Brewery was represented on tap with their Riverwest Stein (named for the drinking vessel, and not the style). Lakefront, founded in 1987, is a 60-barrel brewery located downtown. The beer was slightly grainy, very malty and had a distinct caramel flavor. Its slight smoky quality, possibly attributable to the use of roasted unmalted barley, built up after successive sips and helped balance out the sweetness of this fine brew.



Next was a Doppelbock from Stout Brothers, another downtown Milwaukee brewpub. This beer's sweetness was punctuated by a crisp bite. It had a grainy, homebrewed quality to it as well as a malty, caramel flavor. The dark cola-color of the Sprockator was offset by a fine white head. Though its strength was evident from the noticeable presence of alcohol in the flavor, it wasn't overbearing. As the beer warmed, more complex aromas became apparent, such as nut and marzipan.

Great Dane Brewing is yet another Wisconsin brewpub that sells their beer off-premises. Founded in 1994, it was Madison's first brewery since 1966. Their Black Earth Porter is an English style version, incorporating 9 varieties of malt. A good percentage of them must consist of dark roasted malts, for the beer had a sharp, acrid aroma and was as black as a moonless night. Though very roasty, this porter had an ice-cream-smoothness and coffee flavor highlights. A thick, cream-colored head added to the rounded flavor of this brew, which was far less acrid in flavor than the aroma let on, with a very clean after-taste for such a dark, roasty beer.



Finally I got around to trying one of the house beers, Onopa APA (American Pale Ale). It featured a huge floral-hop nose - so strong that it reminded me of a pungent, overripe grapefruit. A very strong, fresh, green hop aroma, to be certain. The color was a murky gold-copper, strongly suggesting that it was unfiltered. The hop

bitterness was nowhere near as strong as the hop aroma. The flavor came off as a bit watery and sweet. It was a clean and mild drink with a touch of a pumpkin note. The bitterness did build as the glass emptied.

Another house tap sampled was the Onopa Oatmeal Stout, which had a strong coffee syrup/coffee soda/coffee candy aroma, with a touch of licorice. The flavor was mild over all with expected sweetness and creamed-coffee notes. For an opaque, roasty stout, Onopa's version had a mild aftertaste and a slow building bitterness perceived with repeated swigs. A sharp carbonation tang helped balance out its rich body.

Next month, read about the bottled fare found in some of Milwaukee's and Chicago's underground rock venues. Don't expect news of \$7 bottles of Rolling Rock à la CBGBs!



ANNOUNCING THE 2002 NEW ENGLAND HOME BREWER OF THE YEAR COMPETITIONS

Every year, a group of New England homebrew clubs join to sponsor competitions for:
New England Homebrewer of the Year

New England Homebrew Club of the Year

New England Cider Maker of the Year

New England Mead Maker of the Year

All brewers and clubs in New England are eligible to compete for these awards. Brewers and clubs from other areas are encouraged to enter, and their accomplishments are announced in the report of results. Determination of the recipients of the NEHBOTY awards will be based upon the competitions listed below.

Puddle Dock Homebrew Contest

Portsmouth, NH, late September to mid October, 2002

Scott Kaplan, 603-431-9984,
gr8scott@nh.ultranet.com

New England Fall Regional Homemade Beer Competition

Deerfield, MA, December 7, 2002

Jason Hunter, 413-519-1738,
hunter@postandbeam.com

For further details on the NEHBOTY competition, specific competitions, and rules and forms common to the competitions, go to the NEHBOTY website at

<http://mail.symuli.com/NEHBOTY/>



President Zachman