



# Malted Barley Appreciation Society

June 2003 Newsletter

## From the Editor's Desk

*Well here it is, the June 2003 Newsletter.  
There's plenty of beer events & news to report.  
As always, please keep the news, articles,  
and events submissions coming.*

Warren Becker, Ed.

**June meeting  
Wednesday, 11th, 2003:**

**Mug's Ale House,  
125 Bedford Avenue**

**Our Guest Speaker will be**

Phil Clarke of Ramapo Valley

*He will talk about his transition from amateur to pro brewing over the last few months, and even bring beer from Ramapo Valley, where he's now the assistant brewer.*

## May Meeting

by Sam Michalowski



Neill Acer, formerly of Ramapo brewing, now at West End City Brewery, spoke at our last meeting about those mysterious flavors, which often find their way to a brew. Some of these of the off flavors are acceptable and even necessary to a style of beer. Take the Belgian style of beers for example.

These germs have several sources.

First, there are many varieties of germs, which live on wheat. Second, during the fermentation process, letting in any amount of air (i.e. by moving the brewing vessel) encourages the yeast to release al-pacydalactate, a diacetyl precursor.

**What are the off-flavors and are there ways to correct these?**

The most common is Diacetyl, which produces a butterscotch flavor. Using old tired yeast can cause this flavor. Also during the Lagers ferment cooler – having a diacetyl (fermenting) rest – take the lagering beer out of the cold. Neill recommends doing a Diacetyl test, warm up a mug quickly, see if it smells like butter scotch. Kraeusen the batch, if you suspect diacetyl release.

**DMS:** Sweet corn, oyster, medicinal

Caused by a germ and a lack of boiling

*Like rolling rock, apparently they got rid of the flavor, but there were complaints to bring it back.*

Check your plastic tubing, plastic buckets, and use your cleaning solutions with care to avoid that detergent flavor; use B-Bright.

**Acetic acid** --- caused by slow fermentation

Sour like a Belgian at smaller doses

Likes oxygen, yeast likes oxygen and normally gets rid of extra oxygen (acedelbacter [?])

**Acidic** – milk sourness, like sour cream, lacto bacillus, a very strong hearty germ

**Acidamonus** – less common, sour like apples

**Acetaldehyde** – green apple flavors

**Metallic** – iron pickup, inky, harsh.

Comes from things that are not stainless steel; any small thing, sometimes pots are only coated.

*“Check with a magnet.”*

**Salty flavor** – usually from refrigerant in big brewers

**Sulfur** – ok in lager, contact with aluminum,

**Light struck** – skunk, like an imported flavor, happens instantaneously,

**Sulfidic**, when brewers use anti-oxidants

**Cheesy** – off-flavor due to use of old hops

**Oxidation** – oxygen pickup during bottling for homebrewers, cardboard flavor

**Catty** – *tomcat*, exposure to oxygen

**Musty** – over pasteurization

**Phenolic**, wild yeast, everywhere, hefeweizen flavor, tough to get rid of.

10 microns in size a circle wild yeast is 7-8 with much more variable sizes

**Bretanomisias** – wild yeast, small lactobacillus (lowers the ph)

**Astringency** – a sharp taste, very dry finish

**Chlorine** – from sparging with cold water, chlorophenols are produced which produce that smell

**Meaty** – is a dead yeast off-flavor.



## **Fire Waters** **by Warren Becker**

The Tropicana Hotel in Casino in Atlantic City, New Jersey there is now a beer bar called Fire Waters. Pretty good... certainly one the best selections in NJ... with 50 drafts and 101 bottles. The bar is on the first floor, boardwalk level, beneath the casino floor & layout is very open, with the taps clearly visible, and 2 bottle refrigerators in view from the bar.

I enjoyed bottles of *Rochefort 10*, *Allagash Dubbel*, *Orkney's Skullsplitter*, and *Urthel Hiberius*.

From their draft selection, I tried *Heavyweight Lunacy*, *Troegs Troegenator Doppelbock*, and *Weyerbacher Blithering Idiot*.

If plan on visiting Fire Waters, make sure that you request a non-frozen glass for your draft choice.

It seems that most bars, and even certain brewpubs serve their draft products in those dopey frozen glasses, that along with masking out any flavor of the beer, gives you a “slushy headache”.

*Firewaters Beer Bar @ Tropicana Casino & Resort Brighton & The Boardwalk, Atlantic City, NJ 8401 (609) 344-2005*



*Guarding the MBAS faithful attendees*

## Road Trip Report: Brewery Ommegang by George de Piro

After three years of living relatively close to Cooperstown, I finally visited Brewery Ommegang. It was a dreary, rainy day, typical of this gloomy spring. The ride from Albany down (or is it over?) to Cooperstown was longer than I expected; almost two hours! The wooded countryside was still largely devoid of leaves, but the sun occasionally peaked through the clouds to illuminate the landscape, making for a pleasant drive.

The directions available from the Ommegang website force visitors through the center of Cooperstown. Perhaps they get a tax break for promoting the quaint, pleasant village, but it did increase travel time. It didn't help that the main thoroughfare, aptly named "Main Street," was curiously lacking pavement and cluttered with wildly gesticulating men dressed in day-glow orange vests. I wonder what they were trying to communicate?

Jenn and I eventually made it to the brewery, only one and half hours later than planned. Randy Thiel, the brewmaster, joined us for lunch and discussed recent events: Ommegang was recently bought by Brewery Moortgat, the producers of Duvel. While some beer writers have had few kind words about this transaction, Randy is optimistic that the brewery's business will improve under new management.

In case there are any readers who aren't aware of Ommegang's history, I'll summarize it here: Brewery Ommegang was founded by Belgian beer importers Don Feinberg and Wendy Littlefield in 1997. The brewery is dedicated to brewing Belgian-style beers using traditional methods. They have three brands in regular production: the dark, fruity, malty Ommegang; the hoppier, spicy, deep gold Hennepin, and Rare Vos, a relatively hoppy golden ale that is somewhat less fruity than the others. They also brew Three Philosophers, a very rich, strong dark ale with flavors reminiscent of cocoa, burnt sugar, raisins and banana. It weighs in at a respectable 9.8% ABV. All of the beers are very good; my favorites are Three Philosophers and Rare Vos (I couldn't choose just one).



The brewery is a beautiful and unique structure, built to resemble a large farm house. It blends nicely into the countryside, with a spacious meadow behind it to accommodate festivals and such. Inside is an interesting juxtaposition of modern and, um, not-so-modern brewing equipment.



The glistening stainless steel brewhouse dominates the room like a sacred altar, the vapor stacks soaring toward the pinnacle of the high ceiling. Its complex plumbing serves both to move wort and impress visitors. In the midst of the contemporary brewhouse and maturation vessels is a small room housing the open fermenter.



Entering this room while the yeast are busy takes your breath away, quite literally: the vapors of alcohol and carbon dioxide combine to form a potent smack in the head! Randy reports that there are plans for installing a proper air handling system. While that will take some of the adventure out of visits to the fermenter, it will also make it less likely that purple hearts will be awarded to the brewing staff.



Interestingly, each 40 barrel batch is split between the open fermenter and a modern, cylindroconical vessel (CCV). Randy says that the half in the CCV attenuates more completely than the stuff in the open tank. The two halves are blended together prior to filtration. After filtering, the beer is dosed with yeast and priming sugar and then bottled.

After two weeks of warm conditioning (I believe the room was about 86 °F) the beer is cellared at cooler temperatures, ideally 55 °F. In the past, Ommegang has cellared beer at the nearby Howe Caverns. This is a fun idea, and great marketing gimmick, but does it really impact the beer? I guess it doesn't matter.

Brewery Ommegang brews some of America's most interesting beers, and their facility is certainly just as fascinating. Hopefully, the new owners will continue to enable Randy Thiel to brew great beers for our enjoyment!

One final note: club trip?



## Konig Ludwig barred at the Gate

(An editorial by Warren Becker)

*As your humble, but opinionated editor of this newsletter, my payment for putting forth this monthly club info is having the chance to air my opinions regarding beers, pubs, and breweries.*

*We live in an era where the term "quality of life" is so widely used, that it loses all meaning. To get to the point, since when have bars become a sanctimonious place of health-oriented people, fearful of association with "man or beast". The smoking ban and the barring (quite a pun indeed) of dogs from pubs with food (and some without) are ludicrous. To force the consumer to the street for a smoke merely moves that person to a public place thereby affecting those that do not want to visit that pub establishment. Also, not allowing a dog into a place of drink, and food should be the choice of the bar owner, not the state. A properly groomed, well behaved dog, like a sanitary, well-behaved person poses no threat of disease by infection or mischief. It is supposedly illegal for an open-air environment, i.e. the backyard of Mugs, to allow smoking or having our four-legged friends with us (without the separation bar), aka Ludwig. I feel both should be allowed, as it does not infringe on another's enjoyment of the Mugs backyard while enjoying good food & fantastic beer. Anyway, that's my two cents, where's my beer? Woof woof!!*



## Upcoming Event Calendar

**Sunday, June 22<sup>nd</sup>**, NYCHG is holding its annual picnic on Sunday, June 22 at Croton Point Park.

The picnic should run from 11:00 to 5:00. The guild will be supplying hot dogs, hamburgers, chicken, (and veggie equivalents). We ask that anyone wishing to attend to contribute \$10 to cover expenses and to donate either a side dish or homebrew. If anyone has any questions, they can contact Phil Clarke at: [doggiebe@yahoo.com](mailto:doggiebe@yahoo.com)

- June 4: **DeGroen's, Baltimore Brewing Company, *The Blind Tiger Ale House***, 6:00 p.m. onwards, 518 Hudson Street (on the corner of West 10th St.). Telephone: (212) 675-3848.2002. Featuring 6 very special DeGroen's brews on draught for the first time in NYC. Selection to include Altfest, Doppelbock 2001, Edelweiss, MaiBock, Marzen, Rauch and possibly more
- June 11: **Malted Barley Appreciation Society Meeting**, 7:30 p.m at **Mugs Ale House**, 125 Bedford Avenue (North 10th St., three blocks north of the Bedford Ave. L-train station). The Malted Barley Appreciation Society meets at Mugs Ale House at 7:30 on the *Second Wednesday* of each month. The remaining dates for 2003 are: *July 9, August 13, September 17, October 8, November 12, and December 10.*
- June 11: **Victory For Flag Day, *The Blind Tiger Ale House***, 6:00 p.m. onwards, 518 Hudson Street (on the corner of West 10th St.). Telephone: (212) 675-3848.2002, Victory Brewing Company, Downingtown, Pennsylvania, The Blind Tiger will be pouring at least 5 special brews from Victory including Mad King's Weiss, Prima Pils, Rauchbier, St. Boisterous and Whirlwind Wit, plus a surprise cask and a rare Victory bottled brew or two... hosted by Victory Brew Master & President Bill Covaleski!
- June 14, 2003: **The Official Smuttynose Debut Party, *Mugs Ale House***, 125 Bedford Avenue, (North 10th St., three blocks north of the Bedford Ave. L-train station). on 2:00 to 6:00 P.M. Lineup will be The Smutty Shoals, Shoals (cask), Brown, IPA and others.
- June 18: **Dogfish Head Pain Relievaz' CD Release Romp, *The Blind Tiger Ale House***, 6:00 p.m. onwards, 518 Hudson Street (on the corner of West 10th St.). Telephone: (212) 675-3848.2002. fueled by 120-Minute IPA
- June 25: **Unibroue (On Draught!), *The Blind Tiger Ale House***, 6:00 p.m. onwards, 518 Hudson Street (on the corner of West 10th St.). Telephone: (212) 675-3848.2002. (Details to follow).

## Moving prompts massive homebrew equipment sale!

Among the many items for sale are:

- Immersion wort chiller
- Lots of pin lock and ball lock 5 gallon kegs Carboys
- Bench Capper
- Carboy and bottle brushes
- Complete collection of Zymurgy magazine, 1992-1998
- Complete collection of Brewing Techniques magazine (entire run)
- Complete Joy of Homebrewing, Dave Miller books, and many other brewing books and magazines
- Lots of Bottles (Grolsch swing tops, brown 12 oz, 25 oz, and 1/2 gal growlers (clean and ready
- All sorts of brewing miscellany (way too much to mention).

Contact Paul Sullivan at [paulsull@gis.net](mailto:paulsull@gis.net) or by phone: 212 807-6074 (days)/ 718 789-0956 (evenings)



"See you next month, weather permitting" Ludwig