

Malted Barley Appreciation Society

November, 2000 Newsletter

Jimmy, the Yankee Brewer by Jim Simpson

I was home on Thursday which was very unusual for me. As some of you know already, my mother-in-law had passed away the day before, October 18th, so when I got a call from FOX Channel 5, I was in no mood to talk. I told them I wasn't interested in talking, but when I discussed it with Iggy, my wife, she said that her mother would have wanted me to do the interview.



So, I called them back and they were interested in me brewing a beer for the World (Subway) Series. I had to break the news to them that it would be impossible for me to brew a beer that could be ready to drink for a game seven. Not a problem, I had a beer already brewed and I could just walk them through the process and through the miracle of television (voila!), instant beer.

They wanted to know the name of the beer. I had to think fast. Being a Yankee fan I came up with "Pinstripe Ale." They liked the name and we agreed to meet at my store on Tuesday after 5PM. They also wanted to find a local bar to get some fan reaction after the game. They called that day and wanted to show up early. I started to freak out. The place was such a mess, I had nothing ready and I was all covered with soot. I got back a little early, cleaned the store, cleaned myself and tried to get ready.

The camera man and field reporter arrived at my shop about an hour early. They took some footage of the store, the beer posters and bottles, and me getting ready to brew beer. I started to grind some grain and heat up some water for mashing. I mixed in the grain and water. As the water

was heating, I was interviewed. They asked the basic questions: How and why did I get started homebrewing? How do you make beer and how long does it take? Then I got one out of left field. Since I only had some scotch ale on hand, they wanted to know why I was brewing this beer and calling it "Pinstripe Ale." Luckily, I came up with an answer that kind of made sense at the time. Being a big Yankee fan, I came up with "I brewed a scotch ale since the Yankees used to be called the Highlanders, which is a Scottish term. Yeah, I know it's very obscure and kind of corny, but I had very limited resources with which to work.

This Month's Guest Speaker Steve Deptula



Park Slope Brewing Company

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 8th.

Well, if you stayed up late when the Mets actually won a game or got up early and had Good Morning New York on your television you got to see the footage that actually aired. They used footage of the store, me grinding grain from about 50 feet away. From the interview they pulled the stupid Highlander comment and had nothing about brewing beer. The best footage is of me tasting the beer and saying "Ah, sweet ... sweet like victory." Of course it figured the Yankees would lose that night prompting the anchorman to comment that maybe I should make a beer for the Mets. I don't think so! We all know how that story ended.



Trip Report: Drie Fonteinin By Kevin Winn, President, MBAS

In late August and early September I traveled to Ireland, Belgium, and Germany. This was my first trip to Europe, and it was quite an experience. My goals were to meet lots of family in Ireland (I have 5 aunts and uncles and

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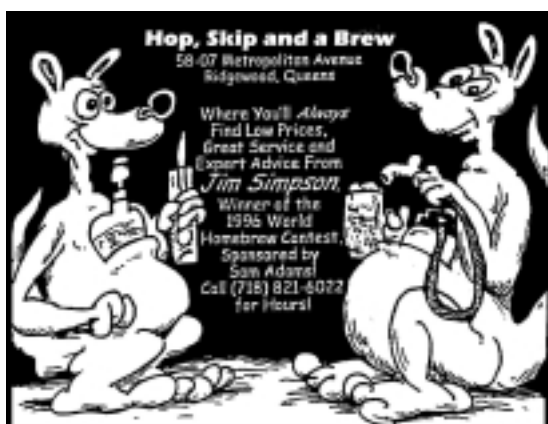
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27 cousins there) and drink lots of beer in Belgium. Both goals were accomplished successfully. Ireland is a beautiful country! I went to a family wedding, which was quite festive, and toured much of the countryside. The Guinness was delicious and plentiful. That said, I'll move on to Belgium.



During my week in Belgium I visited the cities of Brussels, Brugge, Gent, Oostende, and Antwerp, and a few interesting places in between. One of the more interesting breweries I visited was the lambic brewer and blender Drie Fonteinen in Beersal, just outside of Brussels. Lambic is the spontaneously fermented sour, tart beer that has been produced in the Zenne River valley of Belgium since the middle of the last millennium. Lambic is generally made with 40% unmalted wheat and 60% malted barley. It is traditionally brewed with aged hops, cooled in a shallow "cool ship" which is open to the air and associated wild yeast, and fermented in wooden barrels. Lambic of different vintages, usually one, two, and three years old, is blended to form gueuze. Various types of fruit including cherries, raspberries, and grapes can also be added.

Drie Fonteinen is both a brewery and an excellent restaurant. Armand Debelder is a second-generation gueuze blender who recently began to brew his own lambic. He has been blending lambic for many years. Drie Fonteinen uses Boon, Girardin, and Lindemans lambic to blend gueuze. They also add fruit to blend a kriek (cherry) and framboise (raspberry). Armand walked me through the cellars where the lambic is aged in traditional casks, and explained the specifics of his process. I sampled the gueuze and kriek, which are served at the restaurant. The

gueuze is lively and well carbonated, with a nice sour aroma and flavor. The kriek has a lovely sour aroma, and the sweetness of the cherry balances the tart lambic character.

In 1998 Armand invested in a 250 gallon brewery and began to make lambic. The brewery is modern and clean with lots of stainless steel. The brewery cellar is over 120 years old and contains some of the wild yeast that ferments the wort. Doors to the cellar are opened while the wort cools. Armand has been satisfied with his product, and will begin using Drie Fonteinen lambic to blend this year. His business is not driven by money, but by a passion for carrying on the traditional lambic brewing process. Armand is currently training Karel Godeau, a younger man with a degree in biology, to brew and blend lambic. He is proud to have someone to pass the tradition on to. American importers have approached Armand, but he is concerned about quality issues if he tries to significantly increase output and is content to produce lambic for local consumption.



Trip Report: New Hampshire Brewpubs, Ommegang Brewery (no baseball for us!), and the Oldest Bar in Ontario

by B.R. Rolya, Contributing Editor

Two recent trips (leaf peeping in New Hampshire and a wedding in Ontario) allowed for some local beer sampling (and a few disappointments). Here's what your intrepid travelers found: After a colorful drive through Connecticut and Massachusetts, we paused at **Martha's Exchange** in Nashua, New Hampshire. This brewpub, in BJCP Northeast representative Bill Slack's hometown, had a selection of about 6 beers (of which we sampled 5). Although the bar was full of sports fans on a late Saturday afternoon, we managed to grab a table in the restaurant area and proceeded to try their beers. The ale-like **Volstead**, although allegedly a lager, had a light, fruity peach nose and a moderately grainy flavor with a corn note and lots of hops in the finish. Overall, very flavorful. Their **Oktoberfest** wasn't a bad example of the style but while it tried hard to get the sweet, malty component, it didn't succeed completely. The aroma was fruity with a faint hint of malt and the flavor had a grainy, mildly vegetal aspect with the finish becoming dull and astringent as it warmed.



nose mixed with a moderate banana note. There was a

The Harvest had a very nice malt profile but also a tinge of grain and fruitiness like the previous beers. It had a pleasant hop bitterness that wasn't overwhelming. The extremely murky **Dunkel Weisen** [sic] had a big sulfuric

touch of bitterness up front and a hint of grain. This highly carbonated beer was very full-bodied with a medium banana flavor. The **Oatmeal Stout** (our favorite of the lot) with its creamy head was very roasty and was on the borderline of acridness but a big dollop of sweetness pulled it back into the realm of enjoyment. It was very smooth and drinkable with delicious licorice and molasses notes.

For dinner, we went to the **Barleyhouse** in Concord, being under the impression that it was a brewpub. It turns out that while the restaurant has been open for several months, they've yet to start brewing! They did have a nice selection (on the menu) of regional and German Oktoberfest beers but unfortunately they were out of the more interesting ones. Atmosphere-wise the place is pleasant enough but if their food is any indication of what their beers will be like our verdict is to stay away! Bob's minuscule salmon filet was a mere step above food service quality and would have looked forlorn on the large plate if there weren't a few token vegetables thrown on and a pound of plain, white rice. My "spicy" shrimp with chipotle peppers was not spicy nor did it have any chipotle peppers. Atop 2 pounds of white rice were a few shrimp, plenty of green bell peppers and bland, unseasoned canned tomatoes. After this experience, I don't think that we'll go back to try the beers once they start brewing.


In Memoriam

The Malted Barley Appreciation Society extends deepest sympathy to Jim and Iggy Simpson on the passing of Iggy's mother. She labored in the background each year to make sure that Best of Brooklyn staff ate well.

The next day, after a moderately strenuous hike up (and back down) Mount Sunapee, we were in need of some refreshment so we headed to the **Flying Goose**, a small brewpub with a large selection of interesting beers that we have enjoyed in the past. Since it was mid-afternoon, there weren't too many people but we still had to wait a good 15 minutes before we were informed that food was no longer being served and that there was no table service (our table was right across from the bar; why the bartender didn't tell us this right away, we don't know). Then, we waited and waited (and waited some more) at the bar while the bartender decided to clean things up instead of serving us. (I must commend her for her exceptional lack of eye contact.) Then another bartender showed up for her shift change and we thought that we would finally get some service. Bartender #1 then suggested to Bartender #2 that she serve the waiting customers, nodding to us, but Bartender #2, standing 3 feet away from us, said that no, she'd rather wash glasses! Several more minutes elapsed before Bartender #1 sullenly and impatiently asked what we

wanted (and shot me the most withering look for having the audacity to ask what the "Harvest" ale was). At this point, we decided that this establishment did not need our patronage. Every time we've been there, we've had bad service, but never to this extent (and the beers are so good that a little lapse in service was forgivable). But this time they went too far and we doubt we'll go there again unless we make arrangements in advance with the extremely friendly and talented brewer, Scott.

In Portsmouth, we made our usual trip to the Portsmouth Brewery for some refreshment. Among old favorites such as **Old Brown Dog** and **Black Cat Stout**, we also enjoyed a malty **Oktoberfest** as well as a Belgian-style wit which was a bit over spiced for our palates. The bottled version that we brought back, however, is much more pleasantly balanced.



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L' Train from Manhattan)

The following weekend, we were off to Hamilton, Ontario for our friend A.J.'s wedding. We were looking forward to trying some new (to us) beers but unfortunately didn't have much time to go on beer adventures. On our drive up, however, we made a slight detour in order to visit the Ommegang Brewery in Cooperstown.



BREWERY OMMEGANG

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They have a large facility on a former hop farm and offer an informative tour with samples at the end. The light-filled brewhouse is very spacious and is the cleanest, shiniest brewery we've seen in the US. Our guide gave us the basic "how beer is brewed" tour through the brewhouse, past the open fermenters, into the bottling area, and the conditioning room. But afterwards, assistant brewer Kevin was kind enough to answer all of our more technical questions and let us examine all of the brewing equipment, including a very unique brew kettle that heats the wort from the a column in the middle instead of a jacket on the outside. He also berated us for not bringing homebrew (so make sure that you bring him some if you ever visit!).

Once across the border, we spent the night in Saint-Catharines where a friend, not realizing how much this would please us (or what he was getting into) took us to the **Merchant Ale House** brewpub for dinner. Our notes became a bit sparse after the first few beers, but we enjoyed their balanced, soft ESB which had a somewhat

grainy aroma mixed with floral hops and a sweet malt flavor followed by a mild bitterness which was very refreshing. The **Pumpkin Ale** had a subtle pumpkin spice aroma and a solid malt body.



They also had beers from other area breweries but the waitress and bartender were so quick (take note, Flying Goose!) that we barely had chance to ask, "Who brews the cask-conditioned XXXB?" when a pint of it would appear on the table. One beer that we remember having sampled (at the recommendation of our friend, a recent transplant from Calgary) was a bottle of buttery, malty **Warthog Ale** from Big Rock.



Our next stop in St-Catharines, **The Mansion Tavern**, was not noteworthy for its beer selection (although we did enjoy a few non-offensive pints of Sleemans) but for its historic context since it is the oldest bar in Ontario.

At the wedding, we did our best at searching out the beer at the festivities and were quite impressed with the malty, flavorful **Creemore Springs** from a small brewery that makes all of its deliveries itself and encourages patrons to wave to the truck drivers when they see them on the road.



One regret of this trip is that we didn't get a chance to visit the Niagara Brewing Co. of which we've heard good things. Unfortunately our visit to Niagara was early in the morning so a Tim Horton's doughnut and coffee were a more appropriate accompaniment to the legendary falls than an Eisbock but we did raise a toast to Father Henne-pin.



Travels on the Whisky Trail: The Isle of Islay

By Andrew Schlein, MBAS Newsletter Editor

Being in need of some time off, time away from the stresses of living and working in New York, I sought a spot that was pretty much the polar opposite. At the same time, I wanted to expand my knowledge of single malt whiskies and so I chose to spend a week on the Isle of Is-



lay (pronounced Eye-lah) off the west coast of Scotland. Islay is about 75 miles from Glasgow and is the southernmost of the Inner Hebrides Islands. It is the historic home of clan MacDonald, the hereditary Lords of the Isles. It is also the home to six working whisky distilleries. A seventh, **Bruichlad-**

dich (pronounced Brook-laddy) has been closed since 1994 and is looking for a buyer.

The island is generally pastoral with rolling hills, peat bogs (see below), fishing villages, free ranging sheep, and a wildlife refuge. It is about 20 miles by 20 miles and the population is slightly under 4,000. The main town is Bowmore which is situated on Loch Indaal which is a sea loch. Port Ellen, Port Askaig, and Port Charlotte are the other villages of note.

Because Islay is an island, all non-local food has to come in by ship. Therefore, I was not surprised that the beer selection is fairly unexciting. All the bars have Guinness, of course. Stella and Carlsberg are common. In the bar I frequented, Calder's Cream Ale (yawn) and Calder's 70/- (malty but with a nice balance). I have not been able to find any information on Calder's ... not even in Michael Jackson's latest little book. The Harbour Inn, with the best food on the island, also serves McEwan's Tartan Ale – a very nice bitter and the only beer I had there where the hops were evident! But, of course, one does not go to Islay for the beer.



The process of creating a single malt whisky is very similar to making beer. In fact, the first steps are exactly the same. As far as ingredients are concerned, they are the same as with beer with the exception of the hops. Malted barley, water, and yeast. No adjuncts at all. Two of the Islay distilleries (**Bowmore** and **Laphroaig**) do some of their own malting but most malt comes from a commercial maltings on the island run by United Distillers and Vintners.

Because much of the flavor of the final product comes from the amount of peat smoke used in the drying process, each distillery will have its own particular recipe for how much peat is to be used in the kiln. For example, **Bunnahabhain** (Boona-hahvin) uses malt with 1 PPM peat while **Lagavulin** uses 35 PPM malt and Laphroaig's malt has 57 PPM peat.



Mashing is done in the same manner as in brewing beer with the same result. Fermenting is accomplished with distiller's yeast but there seems to be much less concern with the qualities contributed by the yeast. Only one distillery tour guide knew anything particular about the yeast and insisted that they always use the same two strains. The others just said "we buy it." The fermented wort is called wash and comes in at about 8% ABV. I had the opportunity to taste the wash at Lagavulin – not as sweet as I'd have expected. Appar-



ently, the fermentation is pretty complete without significant residual sugar. In the past, drinking wash by the pitcherful was a perk of being a distillery worker.

The distilling process involves two different stills. The first is the wash still which takes the wash and produces a result of about 23% ABV. The output of the wash still is called "low wines" which are then redistilled in a spirit still. The spirit still's output can be separated into three parts: The first is the foreshot and is almost pure methanol and is directed into a holding tank. The middle is the "heart of the run" and becomes whisky. The heart of the run usually starts at about 72% ABV and continues until it is about 60% (depending on the distillery). The end is the "feints" and join the foreshot to be added to the next batch of low wines from the wash still.



Now comes the good part. The result of the distillation process is a clear liquid which is stored in casks – the color of the whisky is imparted by the wood. Scotch whisky must be aged for a minimum of three years and the maturation must be in Scotland. Most single malts are aged from 10 to 30 years. Aging is done in used white oak bourbon casks from America. Casks are broken down and then

reassembled in Scotland. At some time in the past, American coopers got a



law passed that casks for aging bourbon could only be used once – thus assuring themselves jobs and a large availability of old slats to be used in Scotland. During the maturation process, the casks lose about 3% of their volume each year – known as "the angels' share." At the time of bottling, the whisky is adjusted to 40% or 43% ABV.

Occasionally, a distillery will bottle "cask strength" whisky which will weigh in at anywhere between 53% and 60% ABV – a distinctly strong drink and best served with a splash of water.

Only 5% of whisky made in Scotland is bottled as single malts. The rest goes into the various blends. For example, 93% of the output of **Bunnahabhain** goes off to become Cutty Sark and almost all of **Caol Ila**'s product ends up in Johnnie Walker.

Where do the unique flavors of single malt whisky come from? It seems that the major contributors are the water, the amount of peat in both water and kiln, the shape of the stills, and the aging process. For transportation reasons, the distilleries on Islay are all located on the water. It is believed that during the aging, in warehouses on the shore, the casks are acted on by the unique Scottish weather and especially the winds that come off the ocean. Each distillery uses the same type of stills but no two shapes are the same. Stillmen believe that every part of the still influences the taste of the final product. The length and angle of the return do affect the character of the distillation by varying the ratio of water/alcohol and the types of alcohols in the mix. Certainly, there are distinct differences among the various single malts but whether these differences come from one factor or another doesn't really matter.

Slainte



Accomplishments

Congratulations to MBAS member George De Piro for winning a Gold Medal in the American-style Brown Ale at this year's GABF for the C.H. Evans Brewing Company's Kick Ass Brown Ale!



Two Winners: George and Phil

The Malted Barley Appreciation Society would also like to congratulate the following local brewers:

Phil Markowski and the Southampton Publick House, gold medal - Other Strong Ales and Lagers: Double Ice Bock
Rob Mullin and the Commonwealth Brewing Co., gold medal - Belgian and French-style Specialty Ale: Cherry Lambic

Garrett Oliver and the Brooklyn Brewery, bronze medal - American-style Brown Ale: Brooklyn Brown

Paul Saylor and the Colorado Brewing Co., bronze medal - English Old Ale & English and American Strong Ale:

Old Hand

Contests, Festivals, and Other Goings On

Dec 2. The Valley Fermenters of Greenfield MA present the New England Fall Regional Homemade Beer Competition at the White Church, Old Deerfield, MA All Information for entries can be found online at:

<http://www.crocker.com/~jwallace/NEHBOTY/NEFRHBC.html>

The Return Of The Son Of Spirit Of Belgium

The Spirit of Belgium is returning to the Nation's Capital. Brewers United for Real Potables is proud to announce two days of beer, food, discussion and fun are scheduled for Arlington Virginia over the Martin Luther King Day Weekend, **January 13 -14, 2001.**

The third SOB will feature the best parts of the two previous SOB's. There will be tasting sessions, lectures on Belgian beer styles and the brewing process, a homebrew competition and the weekend will culminate with a Belgian banquet and award ceremony featuring keynote speaker Michael Jackson.

Saturday, January 13 will feature educational seminars followed by a reception and tasting of imported Belgian Beers. Sunday will feature the homebrew contest, a tasting of American-brewed Belgian-style beer, and the banquet featuring food prepared by a Belgian chef and an address by renowned beer writer Michael Jackson.

Saturday's events will take place at the George Mason University, Arlington Campus professional Center, and Sunday's events will be held at the nearby American Legion Banquet Hall.

Tickets for the event go on sale November 1 and cost \$100. Beginning December 1 the ticket price will rise to \$120. One-day tickets will be available for \$70, which will increase to \$75 beginning December 1.

A block of hotel rooms has been reserved at the Comfort Inn in the nearby Ballston area. Price is \$59 per night for 1-4 people and may be reserved by calling 703.247.3399. Please remember to mention BURP's Spirit of Belgium (group #1306) and make reservations by December, 31 2000 to obtain the special rate.

For more information please refer to the official Spirit of Belgium web site at

[http:// www.burp.org/SoB2001/index.html](http://www.burp.org/SoB2001/index.html).

You may also call BURP President John Dittmann at 703.641.9760 or Steve Marler at 703.527.4628, or email SoBinfo@burp.org.

