

Malted Barley Appreciation Society

October, 2001 Newsletter

What's In A Name? Belgian-style Strong Ale

by George de Piro

What does the name "Belgian-style Strong Ale" mean to you? Frequent guests of the Albany Pump Station may be well-acquainted with our summer seasonal. Those of you who were sad to see it go last year have cause to rejoice: it will be back on line within the week!

What does "Belgian-style strong ale" mean to the rest of you? Belgian strong ales are a diverse family of strong beers brewed in Belgium. Some are as dark as molasses while others are as golden as a Caribbean dawn. Some are spicy and sweet while others are fruity and dry. The range of flavors is tremendous!



Thou shalt not spill a drop! - Trappist brothers at Westvleteren

The Belgian-style Strong Ale we brew here at the Pump Station fits into the substyle of strong ale known as "Tripel." Beers of this category are expected to be golden with bright white foam that laces the drinker's glass. They are not particularly sweet, but have a notable malt character. They are not very bitter, but the presence of hops is often noted, especially in fresh samples. While Tripels are usually 8-10% alcohol by volume, the flavor of al-

cohol should be well-hidden. This, along with the beer's pale color and relatively light body, make it a deceiving brew worthy of respectful consumption.

The history of this style is quite interesting. It is a very young style, in beer terms; the first examples of light-colored tripels were brewed after World War II. The exact origins of the style are disputed, but it is likely that its roots are within one of Belgium's Trappist monasteries.

Trappist monasteries are financially self-sufficient. Some abbeys support themselves making cheese and bread, others train dogs, and six brew beer. Five of these are in Belgium, with the other nearby in the Netherlands. Only beers that are brewed in Trappist monasteries can be legally labeled as "Trappist." Others are simply called "Abbey beers." The most famous Tripel produced today is also one of the oldest: Westmalle Tripel. It is brewed at the Trappist monastery of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, near Antwerp in the village of Westmalle.

**This Month's Guest Speaker
George DePiro, Chief Brewer**



**C.H. Evans Brewing Co
at the Albany Pump Station**

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 10th. Mugs is three blocks from the Bedford Ave stop on the L train.

Just after the second World War, the brothers at Westmalle brewed their first golden-colored strong ale. It was an instant success, and now has many

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secular imitators, including the well-known Duvel (brewed by Moortgat brewery in Belgium) and the C.H. Evans Brewing Company's "Belgian-style Strong Ale." Our Tripel, like all, uses a fair amount of [adjunct](#) in place of the malt to help keep the body light without compromising alcoholic strength. This year, we used unrefined organic cane sugar and locally produced honey as the adjuncts. While these sugars are completely consumed by the yeast, leaving the beer dry rather than sweet, a detectable honey and molasses flavor remains in the brew.

Our new batch of Belgian-style strong ale should be on tap by August 3rd, so be sure to come by for a glass. This year's formulation was inspired by homebrewer Bob Craft's recipe, which won the Saratoga Thoroughbrews' annual homebrew competition last April. A taste of this freshly brewed beer is much more informative than this article. A sip is worth a thousand words!



Contests, Festivals, and Other Goings On

October 13 - Eastern Invitational Microbrew Festival, Stoudts Brewing Company, Adamstown, PA

October 13-14 - Grand Old Portsmouth Fall Brewers Festival, Portsmouth NH 603-422-7503

October 14 - Maryland Craft Beer Festival, Federal Hill, Baltimore 410-377-5523

October 17 - Midwest Beer Festival, Blind Tiger. Beer (and sausage) from Wisconsin including New Glarus, Lakefront Brewery, Sprecher

October 20 - Brooklyn Loves New York More Than Ever Fundraiser of victims of WTC disaster, Brooklyn Brewery .

\$50 admission, with 100% of proceeds to be donated to the Brooklyn-based Independence Community Foundation's 9/11 Fund. Admission includes beer, food and music from Black 47, 5 Chinese Brothers and Dem Brooklyn Bums--the last band to play at the World Trade Center's Windows on the World. Space is limited, so reserve early by calling 718-486-7422. The bands and brewery workers are volunteering their time for this event, and the brewery is donating food and beer.

October 23 - Whiskyfest, Marriott Marquis, Times Square NYC 800-610-MALT

October 25 - Ale Street News' Octoberfest Beer Dinner, Oscars American Brasserie, Waldorf Astoria 212-872-4920

October 31 - Costume Party, Blind Tiger

November 9 - Great Northeast Beer & Cider competition, Trinity Brew House, Providence RI 203-834-0800

November 18 - Great Brews of America Classic Beer Festival / homebrew competition- Resort at Split Rock, Lake Harmony PA



With Respect

The Malted Barley Appreciation Society extends sympathy and condolences to the thousands of families who suffered so greatly in the tragedies of September 11, 2001.



We salute the heroism of those who continue to work courageously and tirelessly in rescue and relief efforts in New York, Pennsylvania, and Washington, DC.