

# Malted Barley Appreciation Society

## FAIR AND BALANCED BREWS

BY ALAN RICE  
PHOTOS BY ALAN RICE

In August, the beer garden at Mugs Ale House was filled for **Brian O'Reilly** of **Sly Fox Brewing**. A few got up to leave, disappointed that Bill O'Reilly of Fox News would not be there. But they sat back down when they heard that there would be free beer.

Brian O'Reilly discovered good beer during a semester abroad in Austria while attending Franciscan University in Ohio. This inspired him to begin homebrewing. He moved to Boston after graduation, where he got a day job as a substitute teacher. He was the guitarist, singer, and lyricist for an alt-rock band, ScrapApple, and they even got a CD out.

But it was his hobby that led to his big break. He volunteered at a local microbrewery, and then was hired as assistant brewer at Brewers Bier Haus in Merrimack, NH. The head brewer was Phil Markowski, who became Brian's mentor. When Phil left for Southampton Publick House, Brian took over. After BBH closed, Brian went back to Ohio as head brewer at the John Harvard's in Cleveland.

He moved back east to start up the short-lived New Road Brew House in Collegeville, PA. He won a GABF Gold Medal in 2000 for his Perkiomen



Metting photos by Alex Hall



Pils. If you never heard of them, they were out in the sticks on the second floor of a mall-like building. He then went to Victory Brewing.

One of the regulars at New Road was Corey Reid, the bar manager at the nearby Sly Fox Brewhouse in Phoenixville (a guy's gotta go somewhere to relax). Corey helped get Brian into Sly Fox as Head Brewer in March 2002.

Sly Fox is currently distributed in parts of PA, NJ and NY. Production was up 29% in 2007 to 4600 barrels. They hope to continue that steady pace this year. They have no plans to enter any new markets, except maybe to fill in some areas in PA. Their goal is 10,000 bbls in 2010.

They have 13,000

square feet in Royersford, 6,000 for the 20 bbl brewhouse and the rest for the bar and restaurant. They also have a 7,000 sq. ft. warehouse and cooler offsite. It was originally used for receiving, and now also for storage. It's inefficient to truck supplies in and beer out for shipping. But they'll brew there as long as they can, until they're ready to jump to a 40bbl brewhouse. Spending money to move the current brewhouse and then outgrowing it in a couple of years is not worth it. Ideally, they will own the new brewery.

In the meantime, it's getting a bit cramped in the Royersford brewery.



**Cheers from the editor, Alan Rice**  
**Next Meeting:**  
**Wed., Sept. 10, 7:30pm,**  
**Mugs Ale House.**  
**Our guest: Brian Boak**  
**of Boak Brewing Co.**



In 2007 they added two 40bbl fermenters and three 40bbl brite tanks. Overall, there are now nine 40bbl fermenters and six 20bbl fermenters along with the three brites. The inkjet printer for date stamping was a nice little acquisition, too.

The new equipment is also used for contracting Southampton's 750ml corked bottles of Belgian-style seasonals. Brian's mentor **Phil Markowski** trusts him to brew his Saison Deluxe, Bier de Garde, Grand Cru, and Abbot 12. This arrangement continues, even though Southampton entered into a distribution agreement with Pabst. Also, **Volker Stewart** at the Brewer's Art brewpub in

Baltimore has no bottling line, so he contracted with Sly Fox for Brewer's Art Green Peppercorn Tripel, Le Canard Belgian Pale Strong Ale, and Ozzy Belgian Pale Strong Ale.

If you'd like to read more about Sly Fox, its origins, and their move into canning, take a trip to the MBAS archives. Co-founder John Giannopoulos visited us in September 2006 just after their NYC debut at Spuyten Duyvil. We sampled Pikeland Pils (any relation to Perkiomen Pils?) and Phoenix Pale Ale. The following month, Phil Richman brought us more Sly Fox to try, so I wrote about Ichor Quad and Saison Vos. Back issues of the newsletter are at: <http://hbd.org/mbas/archive.html>

Brian told us how he used to sell and deliver the beer, driving around in an overloaded van. Lots of people honked, but he never got a ticket. Their biggest account is the Standard Tap, the famed gastro-pub in the Northern Liberties section of Philly. Standard champions session beers, which have become as popular as Belgian styles in Philly. Brian was shocked when he saw New Yorkers downing goblets or even pints of strong beers like his 10% Ichor. Most of us don't drive home, so we have a different beer culture here.

Speaking of the NYC market, Brian knows about our taste for cask ale. (Hmm, whom do we blame for that?) He wants to make true cask ale the traditional way, but they need the time and money to buy enough firkins. They have handpumps in place in the Phoenixville pub, and they tap a cask the third Friday of each



month. But he'd like to build up the home customer base.

O'Reilly's Stout (3.6%) has been selling well on nitro taps, and they want to can it. With some difficulty, they were able to get a half pallet of the 16 oz. widget cans. They've been testing but they're not always getting the correct amount of nitrogen into every can. Even when they achieve that, it will take a large investment to move forward.

At Sly Fox, Tim Ohst is the Director of Brewing Operations, and Ricky Yerkes, Dave Bronstein, and Steve Jacoby are Staff Brewers. For Brian, the best thing about growth is that he doesn't have to brew the wort. He lets his brewers experiment, and Steve



formulated a **RENARD D'OR** **Schwarzbier.**

For this new beer they got roasted Weyerman malt and polished off the husks to reduce astringency. It's a medium bodied dark German lager that balances smooth, roasted malt flavors with moderate hop bitterness. It's a nice session beer that could substitute for a dry stout at 4.7% and 25 IBUs.

Brian loves Saison Dupont,

and he uses a yeast strain that is similar to theirs. When Sly Fox brewed a batch of Grissette Famhouse Ale with first generation yeast, they needed to keep the culture going. They sell a lot of Saison Vos in Phoenixville, but they had enough of it at the time. Instead, they used some dark malt and a bit more fermentables and morphed it into **Saison Brune**. The funky yeast dominates the nose. It has a dry, spicy character with a touch of fruit. It's similar to Dupont's Moinette Brune but a bit hoppier at 32 IBUs. The hops produce citrus up front, with dark fruit from the malt in the finish. We were among the first to try it, and I'm hoping a keg is shipped up here so that I can get a full serving. In the meantime, I haven't had a Moinette in a while.

As of last month, Berliner Weiss was in the tank. They brought it to a boil and then shut off the heat. They were aiming for 3.4%, but it might come out a full point higher. He didn't bring any because the lactobacillus were still chomping away and it wasn't sour enough. Separately, Brian would like to brew an Imperial Stout. And Mike "Scoates" Scotese of the Grey Lodge figures he's sold enough Sly Fox for them to brew him a Smoked Weizenbock.

**Renard D'or** was brewed last November and is really hitting its stride. It's a Belgian-style Golden Strong Ale (7.9%) brewed with German Pils malts, candi sugar, coriander and a secret spice. Maple and ginger are apparent in this spicy brew. The yeast was propagated by a local homebrewer, probably from LaChouffe. He's a microbiologist at Glaxo with this related hobby. He traded the yeast for malt and hops.



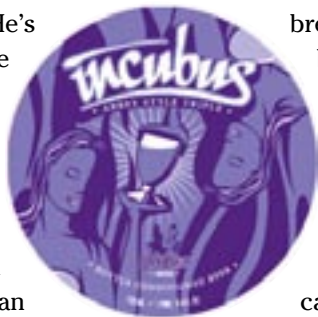
One batch of Renard went on draft, and another was hand bottled in Jeroboams (3 liters). There were lots of bloody knuckles but it was worth it. Bottle conditioning with the house yeast has developed the taste, and the special packaging makes for a great party presentation. Less than 200 bottles were put up for sale – call ahead to see if there are any left.

Brian popped a couple bottles of **Incubus** Tripel, which was brewed again this year in June. It's their biggest beer at 10.3%. He's been tweaking the recipe and used a different yeast stain to get it drier and hoppier, more like a Belgian pilsner. The name was inspired by a regular at the Cleveland John Harvard's. This man pounded several every day at lunch, but he was a German that was used to lagers. After too many tripels, he passed out and dreamt that he was visited by a succubus. When he later disappeared for a month, everyone thought that he was sick, but he was just on vacation. In Phoenixville, they tap a keg of Incubus for lunch on the first Friday of the month. It usually kicks by 6 or 7 o'clock. If you miss it, wait until next month or pick up a bottle, while they last.

The **IPA Project** started in 2004. SlyFox created a series of eight varietal IPAs, each brewed with a different single hop but with the same 7% base beer. They used the same 5 additions for all of the beers – there was no hopback or dry hopping. All eight of the hops were then used to brew Odyssey, Sly Fox's first Imperial IPA. Like their other specialties, they were all brewed at the Phoenixville pub. The event culminated in an all-day festival there in December where the brewery's flagship Rt. 113 DIPA, all eight varietal

IPAs, and Odyssey were available on tap.

The IPA Project grew every year and by 2007 it was out of control. The celebration started at 10am with the release of Odyssey on draft and for sale to go in 22oz bottles, this time brewed with 11 hops. The 11 single hop IPAs were on tap, plus casked versions of Rt. 113, and both Odyssey '06 and '07. That was a total of 15 IPAs poured, making this the largest IPA event ever held by a single brewery with only its own beers (breaking their own record from 2006).



The idea for Rt. 113 DIPA came from a regular who wanted a beer as hoppy as the road they were on. IBUs that high can't be achieved, but it comes in somewhere between 80 and 100, just like the beers in the IPA project.

Brian and the rest of the brewing staff are getting tired of all the hops. Next year, the style will likely be pale ale. Yes, there is a hop shortage, but that is cause for restraint, not suspension. After 5 years, palate fatigue is causing disinterest. If you are a hophead, don't miss out now.

This year they're back down to 8 varieties. Only sixtels are available NYC in deference to low hop supplies. This Tuesday Sept. 9, they will be

tapped at Spuyten Duyvil. Taster glasses are available, so you can try them side-by-side. Since Spuyten has only 6 taps, you won't get to try Galena and Mt. Ranier now. Look for them at other bars in the coming weeks, and Odyssey in December.

Here is the skinny from Brian on the 2008 batch:

Cascade, this „workhorse of craft brewing“ hop is quite versatile with a bold, fruity spiciness that has moderate bittering capabilities and a signature citrusy aroma.

Cluster is an American hop with pronounced floral and spicy characteristics.

Fuggle offers a citrusy aroma and flavor with strong notes of lemon zest.

Galena is a high alpha hop with a pungent aroma and great bittering capacity.

Horizon is a domestic hop, grown commercially in very small quantities, although prior to the current hop shortage it was gaining in popularity amongst craft brewers. It is a dual-purpose hop with significant bittering potential along with a spicy aroma and floral flavor.

Mt. Ranier is a new domestic hop variety with excellent floral/noble aromas similar to German Hallertau with more bittering strength.

Sterling is a fairly new domestic variety of hop introduced in the late 90's exhibiting many characteristics of German Mt. Hood & Czech Saaz. It has an herbal spicy profile with a hint of orange citrus reminiscent of other US varieties. It has been gaining popularity as the availability of Saaz hops has decreased.

Styrian Golding hops grown in Slovenia have a unique bold, fruity spiciness, but they're not citrusy like most American hop varieties.





# Calendar

Underlined text indicate hot link.

**Tue Sept 9, 6pm**, Sly Fox IPA Project continues at Spuyten Duyvil. On tap: the 7% base beer is single hopped with Cascade, Cluster, Fuggle, Horizon, Sterling, or Styrian. Cask TBA.

**Tue. Sept. 9, 7pm**, Dogfish Head Shelter Pale Ale at East Village Tavern. The only keg in NYC.

**Tue. Sept. 9, 7pm**, Franzispaten at Bar Great Harry. Franziskaner Hefe-Weisse and Hefe-Weisse Dunkel; Spaten Oktoberfest and Optimator.

**Tue. Sept. 9, 6:30pm**, Kelso and Cheese at Bierkraft, free. Guest speaker Kelly Taylor.

**Wed. Sept. 10, 4pm**, Sixpoint at Blind Tiger. The largest assemblage of Sixpoint beers under one roof: Belgian

Rye, Belgian IPA, Gemini Double IPA, Belgian Double IPA, Carob Porter, Gorilla Warfare, Diesel, Emasculator, Sweet Re-Action, Triple, Hop Obama, Apollo Wheat, Brownstone, Bengali Tiger (Draft & Gravity Keg), Sweet Action, Righteous Ale, Belgian Rye w/chocolate shavings (Cask), Dry-Hopped Pale Ale (Cask). BT's remaining taps will pour NY State beers at this "pre-week kickoff" to New York Craft Beer Week.

**Fri. Sept. 12, 3<sup>rd</sup> New York Brewfest at Pier 17**, \$54. Presented by Heartland Brewery for the benefit of the NY State Brewers Assoc. Over 50 breweries from NY and elsewhere, live music, Spanky's BBQ.

**Sept. 12-14, 11am-2am**, Max's 1<sup>st</sup> German Bier Fest, Baltimore. 50 drafts,



75 bottles, choose your serving size, pay as you go. List at <http://hbd.org/mbas/calendar.html>

**Sept. 12-Sept. 14, 13<sup>th</sup> Madison County Hop Fest**, Oneida. Celebrate the 200th anniversary of the introduc-

## Homebrew Events

**OCTOBER 18, 2008**

### 24<sup>th</sup> Best Of Philly Homebrew Competition

At Nodding Head Brewery

Hosted by Homebrewers of Philadelphia and Suburbs (HOPS)

Entries accepted Oct.1 – Oct 13

[http://www.hopsclub.org/HOPS-BOPS\\_2008/details.html](http://www.hopsclub.org/HOPS-BOPS_2008/details.html)

**OCTOBER 19, 2008**

### 19<sup>th</sup> Southern New England Regional Homebrew Competition

At Edmond Town Hall, Newton, CT

Hosted by Underground Brewers of Connecticut (aka YA-HOOS)

Entry deadline Oct. 11

<http://undergroundbrewers.org/snerhc/>

**OCTOBER 25, 2008**

### 4<sup>th</sup> Valhalla: The Meading of Life

At Iron Hill Brewery, West Chester, PA

Entry deadline Oct. 17

<http://www.valhalla-mead.com>

*Congratulations to **Fritz Fernow** (3<sup>rd</sup>) and **Phil Clarke** (9<sup>th</sup>) for placing in the **2008 New York State Homebrewer of the Year** standings. <http://www.nyshoty.org/>*

*Start planning now for the first of seven competitions to score points for the 2009 honors:*

**NOVEMBER 8, 2008**

### 13<sup>th</sup> Knickerbocker Battle of the Brews

At C. H. Evans Brewing/ Albany Pump Station

Hosted by Saratoga Thoroughbrews

Entries accepted Oct. 24-Oct. 31

<http://www.moonbrew.com/kbotb/>

PLEASE PARTICIPATE. ALL ENTRIES WELCOME.  
JUDGES AND STEWARDS NEEDED.

# Calendar

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tion of commercial hop growing in NY State by James Coolidge of Madison County. Events include presentations on hop culture, hop field and kiln tours, a brew dinner, a beer fest with over 50 styles, food and brew pairing session. Following link for details.

**Sept. 12-Sept. 21, New York State of Mind at Dive Bar.** Only NY State beers will be served during NY Craft Beer Week: Blue Point No Apologies, Blue Point Oatmeal Stout, Brooklyn Reserve Grand Cru, Brooklyn Oktoberfest, Butternuts Moo Cow Thunder, Captain Lawrence Freshchester Pale Ale, Captain Lawrence Liquid Gold, Chelsea Black Hole XXX Stout, Coney Island Albino White Python, Defiant Tripel, Defiant zIrish Amber, Defiant Pale Ale, Doc's Hard Cider, Kelso Hop Lager, Ithaca Nut Brown, Ithaca Cascazilla, Keegan's Old Capital Blonde, Middle Ages Swallow Wit, Ommegang Rare Vos, Ramstein Revelation Golden Lager, Saranac Pilsener, Saranac Kolsch, Sixpoint Brownstone, Sixpoint Gorilla Warfare, Southern Tier Pumpking, Southampton IPA.

**Sept. 12-Sept. 21, New York State of Mind at Amsterdam 106.** Only NY State beers will be served during NY Craft Beer Week: Blue Point Blueberry Ale, Blue Point Oktoberfest, Brooklyn Pennant Ale, Brooklyn Post Road Pumpkin, Butternuts Snapperhead IPA, Captain Lawrence Brown Bird, Captain Lawrence captain's reserve, Chelsea Black Hole XXX Stout, Coney Island Sword Swallower, Defiant Muddy Creek, Doc's Hard Peary, Kelso Pilsner, Ithaca Apricot Wheat, Ithaca Flower Power, Keegan's Mothers Milk Stout, Ommegang Witte, Ramstein Munich Amber, Saranac Black Forest, Sixpoint Apollo Wheat, Sixpoint Bengali Tiger, Southern Tier Chautauqua Brew, Southern Tier Pumpking, Southampton Secret Ale. NOTE: New bar, no website, guess the location.

**Sept. 13-Sept. 21, 1st New York Craft**

**Beer Week Neighborhood Bar Crawls**, \$13-\$22. Pick your night and any or all of 9 neighborhoods in Manhattan and Brooklyn. Choice of 3 area beers at each of the 60 bars. Follow the link for participants, maps, brew lists and tickets.

**Sat. Sept. 13, Sixpoint Tour and Beer Dinner at Added Value Farm**, \$100. Meet at the Sixpoint Brewery for a tour at 4:30pm. Enjoy a 4-course dinner prepared by The Good Fork, al fresco in the 2.75-acre community garden from 6-10pm. The proceeds from this family-style event benefit AVF, and it's tax deductible.

**Sat. Sept. 13, 3rd Brass City Brewfest**, Waterbury, \$30. Located in Library Park across from the Metro North station. CT's biggest fest with 50 domestic and 50 int'l brewers serving 250 beers.

**Sun. Sept 14, Empire Brewing Beer Dinner at Lansdowne Road.** Details TBA.

**Mon. Sept. 15, 6pm, Captain Lawrence Beer Dinner at Jimmy's No. 43.** À la Carte menu paired with suggested drafts.

**Mon. Sept. 15, 6:30-9pm, The Art of Beer and Cheese Pairing Sail, Chelsea Brewing**, \$75. Brewery tour and 2 hour cruise in NY Harbor.

**Tue. Sept. 16, Captain Lawrence at Beer Table.** List TBA. Scott Vaccaro will be on hand.

**Tue. Sept. 16, 7pm, Ithaca at David Copperfield's.** List TBA.

**Tue. Sept 16, Sly Fox Beer Dinner at Paloma.** Details TBA.

**Wed. Sept. 17, 6pm, Victory at Barcade.** Abbey 6, Baltic Thunder, Braumeister Pils, Dampf Bier, Gold Rush ESB, Hop Devil, Old Horizontal '05, Prima Pils, Scarlet Moon, Storm King (cask).

**Wed. Sept. 17, Heartland Brewery Beer Dinner at Heartland Chophouse,** \$65. 4 courses, 7 beers.

**Wed. Sept. 17, Uinta NYC Premiere at Blind Tiger.** List TBA.

**Thu. Sept. 18, 6pm, Schmaltz at East Village Tavern.** He'Brew Barrel-Aged Messiah, Lenny's R.I.P.A., Rejewvena-



# Calendar

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tor; Coney Island Lager and the premiere of Barrel-Aged Human Blockhead.

**Thu. Sept 18, 6pm, Bear Republic at Standings.** 5 drafts (TBA) and free Paul's burgers.

**Thu Sept. 18, 6-10pm, The Beer Experience at Terrace on the Park,** Flushing Meadows, Queens, \$55. Follow link for participating brewers.

**Fri. Sept. 19-Sun. Sept. 21, Noon-Mid., 2<sup>nd</sup> Manhattan Cask Fest at Chelsea Brewing.** About 45 ales and lagers, most tapped on Fri. and poured until they're dry. Choose 8 or 16 oz., pay as you go. Participating breweries: Arbor, Blue Point, Brooklyn, Buckeye, Captain Lawrence, Chelsea, Dark Horse, Flossmoor Station, Kelso, The Livery, Milly's Tavern, Ohio, Pittsfield Brew Works, Rocky River, Sierra Nevada, Sixpoint, Smuttynose, Three Floyds, Voodoo, and more.

**Fri Sept. 19, Allagash at Royale.** List TBA.

**Sat. Sept 20, Andy's World Famous Oktoberfest.** Details TBA.

**Sun. Sept. 21, 4pm, "Brewing Battles" Signing at Beer Table.** Amy Mittelman will discuss her new book. Click link for details. Please RSVP: info@beertable.com

**Tue. Sept. 23, 6:30pm, Oktoberfest Tastings at Bierkraft,** free.

**Thu. Sept. 25, 7-9 pm, Dogfish Head Beer Dinner at Barrette,** \$25. 4 courses and 5 beers – vintage and current favorites.

**Sept. 26-Sept. 28, Stoudt's Oktoberfest,** Adamstown, PA. The Stoudt family is proud to carry on their heritage in the Gemutlichkeit Bier Garden. Live music, German food. The party continues every Sunday in October.

**Fri. Sept. 26, 6-9:30pm, Night of the Funk at the Cyclorama,** Boston, \$50. Lambics, Gueuzes, Brett beers, wood-aged and blended, sour and wild ales, and other funk-a-licious offerings.

**Sat. Sept 27, 2 sessions, Return of the Belgian Beer Fest at**

**the Cyclorama,** Boston, \$40. Over 100 Belgian and Belgian-style beers.

**Sat. Sept. 27, 1pm, Oktoberfest Kick-off at Zum Schneider.** Live Oompah, food specials, Oktoberfest beers. The party continues with live music or DJs on 9 days through Oct. 12. Click link for dates/times.

**Sat. Sept. 27, 2-9pm, 3<sup>rd</sup> Fall Fest at Victory Brewing,** Downingtown. A community celebration with German flair. Food, live music, activities for kids, brewery tours. Hotel and transportation package available, reserve now.

**Sun. Sept. 28, 3pm or 5pm, Chew N' Brew at The Diamond,** \$20. Your donation at the bar now, to East New York Farms, secures your place at a homebrew and homemade snack pairing competition. Pick your favorite of 6 teams.

**Mon. Sept. 29, 6:30-9pm, The Art of Beer and Cheese Pairing Sail, Chelsea Brewing,** \$75. Brewery tour and 2 hour cruise in NY Harbor.

**Tue. Sept. 30, Beer, Cheese and Chocolate Tasting at Jimmy's No. 43.** Hosted by Anne Saxelby, details TBA.

**Wed. Oct. 1, The Great Pumpkin at Blind Tiger.** List TBA.

**Sat. Oct. 4, 2-6pm, 11<sup>th</sup> Kennett Brewfest, Kennett Square,** PA, \$35. Connoisseur tasting entry at Noon, \$60. 50 craft breweries.

**Sun. Oct. 5, 10am-6pm, 34<sup>th</sup> Atlantic Antic.** 10 blocks of food, vendors, and entertainment on 10 stages. Drink local beers such as Sixpoint Atlantic Amber as you stroll on Atlantic Ave. from Hicks St. to Fourth Ave. Stop by Waterfront Ale House, Brazen Head, Chip Shop, etc.

**Tue. Oct. 7, 6:30pm, Beer and Tumbador Chocolate Tasting at Bierkraft,** free.

**Thu. Oct. 16, 6pm, Barcade's 4<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration.** Allagash Curieux (cask), Allagash Hugh Malone, Dogfish Head Burton Baton, Flying Dog Barrel-Aged Gonzo, Green Flash Grand Cru, Smuttynose Brett & I, Southampton Abbot 12, Southern Tier Cherry Saison, and more.

