

The OVHA Tap

Vol 12 No. 10

October 2008

Meeting Wednesday, October 29th 7:00 pm
at 25th at Germania Mannerchor

Featured Beer: Belgian

Upcoming events

Big Turkey Hombrew Contest

We will be having our annual Big Turkey Homebrew Contest at our November meeting. This year we are changing the contest a bit to more closely resemble a standard beer judging. Entries will be limited to a single style, American Pale Ale. Entries are limited to current club members. Please bring three unmarked bottles for each entry (no need to black out caps, etc, but don't put your name on the bottle, please!).

We will be judging the beer to BJCP standards, using one of the usual judging sheets. Depending on the number of entries, we will probably have two panels, with the best one or two beers from each panel submitted for best of show.

Prizes to be announced.

Spirits in Harmonie At New Harmony

We have been invited to return to the post-Thanksgiving party at New Harmony again this year. Reports were that it was a great time last year. Nov. 29th 5 pm. The beer cart fits into the freight elevator, so it will be featured there, too!

Officer Nominations

We will be nominating officers for our annual election starting at November meeting.

Dues

Dues for 2009 can be paid starting at the November meeting. \$25 for an individual membership, \$35 for a family membership. Five year memberships are \$100.

Brewer's Musings

Ha, what a year! Just about the time I think I've got things under control, something else crops up and I'm out of sync again. This time it's a trip to Cleveland for a memorial service at just about the worst time. Needless to say, I'm still getting the yard under control and it's nut season again -- there is a wheelbarrow of walnuts waiting for me to knock the hulls off to start them drying so I can crack them, and it's raining pecans. Nice exercise, but the trees are half a mile away.

My cider looks pretty good. Did a quick titration and the acidity seems OK, so it will go into the secondary soon for clearing and when completely clear I'll bottle it and see how it comes out. The press was nice and clean of rust by the second weekend, so likely the iron taste will not be so bad anyway.

No activity at the barn yet, but that should change in a couple weeks -- I think I'm gonna go on strike this year and refuse to go anywhere or do anything. That way I can get a weekend to brew set up once in a while!



www.ovha.net

Meeting Schedule 2008

September 24th 7:00 pm Germania

October 29th 7:00pm at Germania

November 26th 7:00 pm at Germania

December 17th 7:00 pm at Germania

Beer Evaluation Schedule

September: Oktoberfest/Marzen

October: Belgian Beers

November: Big Turkey Contest

Meeting Subject Schedule

16. BELGIAN AND FRENCH ALE

16A. Witbier

Aroma: Moderate sweetness (often with light notes of honey and/or vanilla) with light, grainy, spicy wheat aromatics, often with a bit of tartness. Moderate perfumy coriander, often with a complex herbal, spicy, or peppery note in the background. Moderate zesty, citrusy orangey fruitiness. A low spicy-herbal hop aroma is optional, but should never overpower the other characteristics. No diacetyl. Vegetal, celery-like, or ham-like aromas are inappropriate.

Spices should blend in with fruity, floral and sweet aromas and should not be overly strong. **Appearance:** Very pale straw to very light gold in color. The beer will be very cloudy from starch haze and/or yeast, which gives it a milky, whitish-yellow appearance. Dense, white, moussy head. Head retention should be quite good.

Flavor: Pleasant sweetness (often with a honey and/or vanilla character) and a zesty, orange-citrusy fruitiness. Refreshingly crisp with a dry, often tart, finish. Can have a low wheat flavor. Optionally has a very light lactic-tasting sourness. Herbal-spicy flavors, which may include coriander and other spices, are common should be subtle and balanced, not overpowering. A spicy-earthly hop flavor is low to none, and if noticeable, never gets in the way of the spices. Hop bitterness is low to medium-low (as with a Hefeweizen), and doesn't interfere with refreshing flavors of fruit and spice, nor does it persist into the finish. Bitterness from orange pith should not be present. Vegetal, celery-like, ham-like, or soapy flavors are inappropriate. No diacetyl.

Mouthfeel: Medium-light to medium body, often having a smoothness and light creaminess from unmalted wheat and the occasional oats. Despite body and creaminess, finishes dry and often a bit tart. Effervescent character from high carbonation. Refreshing, from carbonation, light acidity, and lack of bitterness in finish. No harshness or astringency from orange pith. Should not be overly dry and thin, nor should it be thick and heavy.

Overall Impression: A refreshing, elegant, tasty, moderate-strength wheat-based ale.

History: A 400-year-old beer style that died out in the 1950s; it was later revived by Pierre Celis at Hoegaarden, and has grown steadily in popularity over time.

Comments: The presence, character and degree of spicing and lactic sourness varies. Overly spiced and/or sour beers are not good examples of the style. Coriander of certain origins might give an inappropriate ham or celery character. The beer tends to be fragile and does not age well, so younger, fresher, properly handled examples are most desirable. Most examples seem to be approximately 5% ABV.

Ingredients: About 50% unmalted wheat (traditionally soft white winter wheat) and 50% pale barley malt (usually pils malt) constitute the grist. In some versions, up to 5-10% raw oats may be used. Spices of freshly-ground coriander and Curaçao or sometimes sweet orange peel complement the sweet aroma and are quite characteristic. Other spices (e.g., chamomile, cumin, cinnamon, Grains of Paradise) may be used for complexity but are much less prominent. Ale yeast prone to the production of mild, spicy flavors is very characteristic. In some instances a very limited lactic fermentation, or the actual addition of lactic acid, is done.

Vital Statistics: OG: 1.044 – 1.052

IBUs: 10 – 20 FG: 1.008 – 1.012

SRM: 2 – 4 ABV: 4.5 – 5.5%

Commercial Examples: Hoegaarden Wit, St. Bernardus Blanche, Celis White, Vuuve 5, Brugs Tarwebier (Blanche de Bruges), Wittekerke, Allagash White, Blanche de Bruxelles, Ommegang Witte, Avery White Rascal, Unibroue Blanche de Chambly, Sterkens White Ale, Bell's Winter White Ale, Victory Whirlwind Witbier, Hitachino Nest White Ale

16B. Belgian Pale Ale

Aroma: Prominent aroma of malt with moderate fruity character and low hop aroma. Toasty, biscuity malt aroma. May have an orange- or pear-like fruitiness though not as fruity/citrusy as many other Belgian ales. Distinctive floral or spicy, low to moderate strength hop character optionally blended with background level peppery, spicy phenols. No diacetyl.

Appearance: Amber to copper in color. Clarity is very good. Creamy, rocky, white head often fades more quickly than other Belgian beers.

Flavor: Fruity and lightly to moderately spicy with a soft, smooth malt and relatively light hop character and low to very low phenols. May have an orange- or pear-like fruitiness, though not as fruity/citrusy as many other Belgian ales. Has an initial soft, malty sweetness with a toasty, biscuity, nutty malt flavor. The hop flavor is low to none. The hop bitterness is medium to low, and is optionally complemented by low amounts of peppery phenols. There is a moderately dry to moderately sweet finish, with hops becoming more pronounced in those with a drier finish.

Mouthfeel: Medium to medium-light body. Alcohol level is restrained, and any warming character should be low if present. No hot alcohol or solventy character. Medium carbonation.

Overall Impression: A fruity, moderately malty, somewhat spicy, easy-drinking, copper-colored ale.

History: Produced by breweries with roots as far back as the mid-1700s, the most well-known examples were perfected after the Second World War with some influence from Britain, including hops and yeast strains.

Comments: Most commonly found in the Flemish provinces of Antwerp and Brabant.

Considered "everyday" beers (Category I). Compared to their higher alcohol Category S cousins, they are Belgian "session beers" for ease of drinking. Nothing should be too pronounced or dominant; balance is the key.

Ingredients: Pilsner or pale ale malt contributes the bulk of the grist with (cara) Vienna and Munich malts adding color, body and complexity. Sugar is not commonly used as high gravity is not desired. Noble hops, Styrian Goldings, East Kent Goldings or Fuggles are commonly used. Yeasts prone to moderate production of phenols are often used but fermentation temperatures should be kept moderate to limit this character.

Vital Statistics: OG: 1.048 – 1.054

IBUs: 20 – 30 FG: 1.010 – 1.014

SRM: 8 – 14 ABV: 4.8 – 5.5%

Commercial Examples: De Koninck, Speciale Palm, Dobble Palm, Russian River Perdicion, Ginder Ale, Op-Ale, St. Pieters Zinnebir, Brewer's Art House Pale Ale, Avery Karma, Eisenbahn Pale Ale, Ommegang Rare Vos (unusual in its 6.5% ABV strength)

16C. Saison

Aroma: High fruitiness with low to moderate hop aroma and moderate to no herb, spice and alcohol aroma. Fruity esters dominate the aroma and are often reminiscent of citrus fruits such

as oranges or lemons. A low to medium-high spicy or floral hop aroma is usually present. A moderate spice aroma (from actual spice additions and/or yeast-derived phenols) complements the other aromatics. When phenolics are present they tend to be peppery rather than clove-like. A low to moderate sourness or acidity may be present, but should not overwhelm other characteristics. Spice, hop and sour aromatics typically increase with the strength of the beer. Alcohols are soft, spicy and low in intensity, and should not be hot or solventy. The malt character is light. No diacetyl.

Appearance: Often a distinctive pale orange but may be golden or amber in color. There is no correlation between strength and color. Long-lasting, dense, rocky white to ivory head resulting in characteristic "Belgian lace" on the glass as it fades. Clarity is poor to good though haze is not unexpected in this type of unfiltered farmhouse beer. Effervescent.

Flavor: Combination of fruity and spicy flavors supported by a soft malt character, a low to moderate alcohol presence and tart sourness. Extremely high attenuation gives a characteristic dry finish. The fruitiness is frequently citrusy (orange- or lemon-like). The addition of one of more spices serve to add complexity, but shouldn't dominate in the balance. Low peppery yeast-derived phenols may be present instead of or in addition to spice additions; phenols tend to be lower than in many other Belgian beers, and complement the bitterness. Hop flavor is low to moderate, and is generally spicy or earthy in character. Hop bitterness may be moderate to high, but should not overwhelm fruity esters, spices, and malt. Malt character is light but provides a sufficient background for the other flavors. A low to moderate tart sourness may be present, but should not overwhelm other flavors. Spices, hop bitterness and flavor, and sourness commonly increase with the strength of the beer while sweetness decreases. No hot alcohol or solventy character. High carbonation, moderately sulfate water, and high attenuation give a very dry finish with a long, bitter, sometimes spicy aftertaste. The perceived bitterness is often higher than the IBU level would suggest. No diacetyl.

Mouthfeel: Light to medium body. Alcohol level can be medium to medium-high, though the warming character is low to medium. No hot alcohol or solventy character. Very high carbonation with an effervescent quality. There is enough prickly acidity on the tongue to balance the very dry finish. A low to moderate tart character may be present but should be refreshing and not to the point of puckering.

Overall Impression: A refreshing, medium to strong fruity/spicy ale with a distinctive yellow-orange color, highly carbonated, well hopped, and dry with a quenching acidity.

History: A seasonal summer style produced in Wallonia, the French-speaking part of Belgium.

Originally brewed at the end of the cool season to last through the warmer months before refrigeration was common. It had to be sturdy enough to last for months but not too strong to be quenching and refreshing in the summer. It is now brewed year-round in tiny, artisanal breweries whose buildings reflect their origins as farmhouses.

Comments: Varying strength examples exist (table beers of about 5% strength, typical export beers of about 6.5%, and stronger versions of 8%+). Strong versions (6.5%-9.5%) and darker versions (copper to dark brown/black) should be entered as Belgian Specialty Ales (16E). Sweetness decreases and spice, hop and sour character increases with strength. Herb and spice additions often reflect the indigenous varieties available at the brewery. High carbonation and extreme attenuation (85-95%) helps bring out the many flavors and to increase the perception of a dry finish. All of these beers share somewhat higher levels of acidity than other Belgian styles while the optional sour flavor is often a variable house character of a particular brewery.

Ingredients: Pilsner malt dominates the grist though a portion of Vienna and/or Munich malt contributes color and complexity. Sometimes contains other grains such as wheat and spelt. Adjuncts such as sugar and honey can also serve to add complexity and thin the body. Hop bitterness and flavor may be more noticeable than in many other Belgian styles. A saison is sometimes dry-hopped. Noble hops, Styrian or East Kent Goldings are commonly used. A wide variety of herbs and spices are often used to add complexity and uniqueness in the stronger versions, but should always meld well with the yeast and hop character. Varying degrees of acidity and/or sourness can be created by the use of gypsum, acidulated malt, a sour mash or Lactobacillus. Hard water, common to most of Wallonia, can accentuate the bitterness and dry finish.

Vital Statistics: OG: 1.048 – 1.065

IBUs: 20 – 35 FG: 1.002 – 1.012

SRM: 5 – 14 ABV: 5 – 7%

Commercial Examples: Saison Dupont Vieille Provision; Fantôme Saison D'Erezée - Printemps; Saison de Pipaix; Saison Regal; Saison Voisin; Lefebvre Saison 1900; Ellezelloise Saison 2000; Saison Silly; Southampton Saison; New Belgium Saison; Pizza Port SPF 45; Lost Abbey Red Barn Ale; Ommegang Hennepin

16D. Bière de Garde

Aroma: Prominent malty sweetness, often with a complex, light to moderate toasty character. Some caramelization is acceptable. Low to moderate esters. Little to no hop aroma (may be a bit spicy or herbal). Commercial versions will often have a musty, woody, cellar-like character that is difficult to achieve in homebrew. Paler versions will still be malty but will lack richer, deeper aromatics and may have a bit more hops. No diacetyl.

Appearance: Three main variations exist (blond, amber and brown), so color can range from golden blonde to reddish-bronze to chestnut brown. Clarity is good to poor, although haze is not unexpected in this type of often unfiltered beer. Well-formed head, generally white to off-white (varies by beer color), supported by high carbonation.

Flavor: Medium to high malt flavor often with a toasty, toffee-like or caramel sweetness. Malt flavors and complexity tend to increase as beer color darkens. Low to moderate esters and alcohol flavors. Medium-low hop bitterness provides some support, but the balance is always tilted toward the malt. The malt flavor lasts into the finish but the finish is medium-dry to dry, never cloying. Alcohol can provide some additional dryness in the finish. Low to no hop flavor, although paler versions can have slightly higher levels of herbal or spicy hop flavor (which can also come from the yeast). Smooth, well-lagered character. No diacetyl.

Mouthfeel: Medium to medium-light (lean) body, often with a smooth, silky character. Moderate to high carbonation. Moderate alcohol, but should be very smooth and never hot.

Overall Impression: A fairly strong, malt-accentuated, lagered artisanal farmhouse beer.

History: Name literally means "beer which has been kept or lagered." A traditional artisanal farmhouse ale from Northern France brewed in early spring and kept in cold cellars for consumption in warmer weather. It is now brewed year-round. Related to the Belgian Saison style, the main difference is that the Bière de Garde is rounder, richer, sweeter, malt-focused, often has a "cellar" character, and lacks the spicing and tartness of a Saison.

Comments: Three main variations are included in the style: the brown (brune), the blond (blonde), and the amber (ambree). The darker versions will have more malt character, while the paler versions can have more hops (but still are malt-focused beers). A related style is Bière de Mars, which is brewed in March (Mars) for present use and will not age as well. Attenuation rates are in the 80-85%

range. Some fuller-bodied examples exist, but these are somewhat rare.

Ingredients: The “cellar” character in commercial examples is unlikely to be duplicated in homebrews as it comes from indigenous yeasts and molds. Commercial versions often have a “corked”, dry, astringent character that is often incorrectly identified as “cellar-like.” Homebrews therefore are usually cleaner. Base malts vary by beer color, but usually include pale, Vienna and Munich types. Kettle caramelization tends to be used more than crystal malts, when present. Darker versions will have richer malt complexity and sweetness from crystal-type malts. Sugar may be used to add flavor and aid in the dry finish. Lager or ale yeast fermented at cool ale temperatures, followed by long cold conditioning (4-6 weeks for commercial operations). Soft water. Floral, herbal or spicy continental hops.

Vital Statistics: OG: 1.060 – 1.080
IBUs: 18 – 28 FG: 1.008 – 1.016
SRM: 6 – 19 ABV: 6 – 8.5%

Commercial Examples: Jenlain (amber), Jenlain Bière de Printemps (blond), St. Amand (brown), Ch`Ti Brun (brown), Ch`Ti Blond (blond), La Choulette (all 3 versions), La Choulette Bière des Sans Culottes (blond), Saint Sylvestre 3 Monts (blond), Biere Nouvelle (brown), Castelain (blond), Jade (amber), Brasseurs Bière de Garde (amber), Southampton Bière de Garde (amber), Lost Abbey Avante Garde (blond)

16E. Belgian Specialty Ale

Aroma: Variable. Most exhibit varying amounts of fruity esters, spicy phenols and/or yeast-borne aromatics. Aromas from actual spice additions may be present. Hop aroma may be none to high, and may include a dry-hopped character. Malt aroma may be low to high, and may include character of non-barley grains such as wheat or rye. Some may include aromas of Belgian microbiota, most commonly *Brettanomyces* and/or *Lactobacillus*. No diacetyl. Appearance: Variable. Color varies considerably from pale gold to very dark. Clarity may be hazy to clear. Head retention is usually good. Generally moderate to high carbonation.

Flavor: Variable. A great variety of flavors are found in these beers. Maltiness may be light to quite rich. Hop flavor and bitterness may be low to high. Spicy flavors may be imparted by yeast (phenolics) and/or actual spice additions. May include characteristics of grains other than barley, such as wheat or rye. May include flavors produced by Belgian microbiota such as *Brettanomyces* or *Lactobacillus*. May include flavors from adjuncts such as caramelized sugar syrup or honey.

Mouthfeel: Variable. Some are well-attenuated, thus fairly light-bodied for their original gravity, while others are thick and rich. Most are moderately to highly carbonated. A warming sensation from alcohol may be present in stronger examples. A “mouth puckering” sensation may be present from acidity.

Overall Impression: Variable. This category encompasses a wide range of Belgian ales produced by truly artisanal brewers more concerned with creating unique products than in increasing sales.

History: Unique beers of small, independent Belgian breweries that have come to enjoy local popularity but may be far less well-known outside of their own regions. Many have attained “cult status” in the U.S. (and other parts of the world) and now owe a significant portion of their sales to export.

Comments: This is a catch-all category for any Belgian-style beer not fitting any other Belgian style category. The category can be used for clones of specific beers (e.g., Orval, La Chouffe); to produce a beer fitting a broader style that doesn’t have its own category; or to create an artisanal or experimental beer of the brewer’s own choosing (e.g., strong Belgian golden ale with spices, something unique). Creativity is the only limit in brewing but the entrants must identify what is special about their entry. This category may be used as an “incubator” for recognized styles for which there is not yet a formal BJCP category. Some styles falling into this classification include:

Blond Trappist table beer
Artisinal Blond
Artisinal Amber
Artisinal Brown
Belgian-style Barleywines
Trappist Quadrupels
Belgian Spiced Christmas Beers
Belgian Stout
Belgian IPA
Strong and/or Dark Saison
Fruit-based Flanders Red/Brown

The judges must understand the brewer’s intent in order to properly judge an entry in this category. THE BREWER MUST SPECIFY EITHER THE BEER BEING CLONED, THE NEW STYLE BEING PRODUCED OR THE SPECIAL INGREDIENTS OR PROCESSES USED. Additional background information on the style and/or beer may be provided to judges to assist in the judging, including style parameters or detailed descriptions of the beer. Beers fitting other Belgian categories should not be entered in this category.

Ingredients: May include herbs and/or spices. May include unusual grains and malts, though the grain character should be apparent if it is a key ingredient. May include adjuncts such as caramelized sugar syrup and honey. May include Belgian microbiota such as *Brettanomyces* or *Lactobacillus*. Unusual techniques, such as blending, may be used through primarily to arrive at a particular result. The process alone does not make a beer unique to a blind judging panel if the final product does not taste different.

Vital Statistics: OG: varies
IBUs: varies FG: varies
SRM: varies ABV: varies

Commercial Examples: Orval; De Dolle’s Arabier, Oerbier, Boskeun and Stille Nacht; La Chouffe, McChouffe, Chouffe Bok and N’ice Chouffe; Ellezelloise Hercule Stout and Quintine Amber; Unibroue Ephemere, Maudite, Don de Dieu, etc.; Minty; Zatte Bie; Caracole Amber, Saxo and Nostradamus; Silenrieu Sara and Joseph; Fantôme Black Ghost and Speciale Noël; Dupont Moinette, Moinette Brune, and Avec Les Bons Voeux de la Brasserie Dupont; St. Fullien Noël; Gouden Carolus Noël; Affligem Noël; Guldenburg and Pere Noël; De Ranke XX Bitter and Guldenberg; Poperings Hommelbier; Bush (Scaldis); Moinette Brune; Grottenbier; La Trappe Quadrupel; Weyerbacher QUAD; Bière de Miel; Verboden Vrucht; New Belgium 1554 Black Ale; Cantillon Iris; Russian River Temptation; Lost Abbey Cuvee de Tomme and Devotion, Lindemans Kriek and Framboise, and many more

The Ohio Valley Homebrew Association
Peter Frederick
15805 Darmstadt Rd
Evansville, IN 47726

Hop of the Month: Cascade

Cascade was one of the first US Aroma varieties developed to compete with traditional European varieties. It has a uniquely American aroma and has found wide-spread acceptance throughout the brewing industry. This variety is popular because of its mild but very distinctive flavor and aroma, which can be described as pleasant, floral, and spicy.

Cascades were released in 1972, the result of the open pollination of a Fuggle type seedling, derived from crosses between Fuggle and the Russian hop Serebrianka. Over the years alpha acid content has varied between 4 and 6%. Storage characteristics are relatively poor -- keep hops frozen to preserve aroma and flavor.

Malt of the Month: Pale Malt

Pale malt is the backbone of ale brewing. It is a very fully modified malt (no steely ends allowed!) that is fully dried before being lightly roasted. Slightly darker than lager or pilsner malts, it will produce a straw to dark gold beer unless specialty malts are used, although very lightly colored beers from pale malt are the exception. Moderate enzymatic strength allows the use of considerable quantities of adjuncts, although not as much as can be used with lager malts. The full modification will usually produce clearer beers and less chill haze than lager malts as well.

Pale malt, being fully modified, does not require a protein rest and is usually mashed in a single step infusion mash. Mashout can be accomplished by adding boiling water or by direct heating of the mash if desired.

Pale malt may be made from 2-row or 6-row barley. The 2-row will produce a less astringent and fuller flavored beer, while the 6-row has more enzyme activity for use of large amounts of adjunct.

