



ALL ABOUT

BEEER

CELEBRATING THE WORLD OF BEER CULTURE

JULY.08
V.29 NO.3

WHERE TO DRINK

8 Beer Cities Under the Radar

Can German Brewers Create Something

NEW?

NOT Your Dad's Lawnmower Beer

MORE Great Places to Have the Last Beer—
READERS SPEAK OUT

The Open Source Beer Revolution

THE 2008 WORLD BEER CUP



BEER-PUBBING IN JERSEY



Ruled by the Reinheitsgebot?



*Drying malt over a beech wood fire
at the Schlenkerla malthouse*

German Brewers Search for Something New

BY SYLVIA KOPP

THE PANEL ABOVE THE ENTRANCE SAYS “BIER UND WEINSTUBE”—beer and wine lounge. Inside, in a neat antique setting, all the guests appear well off. Take the couple at the next table: the man in a tweed jacket with a small, straight-sided glass has already finished his white wine. The woman in a red vest and black blouse is sipping dark red wine from her balloon glass and nibbling cheese. At the corner table, two men and one woman have impressive glass mugs in front of them, filled with blond beer. The second woman at that table is drinking water—she is probably the driver.

“What would you like?” asks the woman who owns the pub.

“I would like to have a beer,” my friend says, his tone suggesting he’d welcome some suggestions. But the woman just nods and is about to rush back to her counter.

I capture her attention again. “What kinds of beer do you offer?”

She says shortly, “Krombacher.”

That’s the biggest pils brand in Germany: not a bad beer, but since it seems to be the only choice in this supposed wine and beer bar, I’m a bit disappointed: “That’s all you’ve got?”

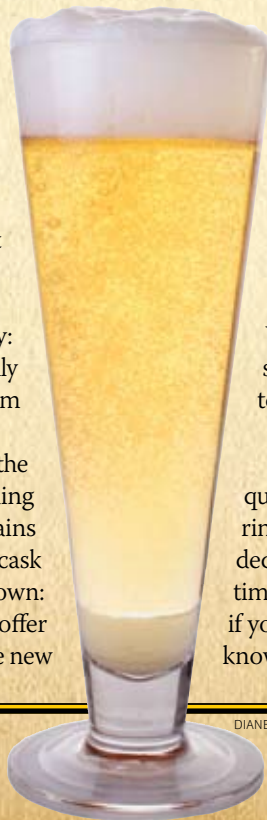
She is not amused. “Yes, that’s all. That’s the way we have it here. If you prefer something else you’ve got to go elsewhere.” She explains that she has a hard time finishing even one cask before it turns bad. Eventually she calms down: “Krombacher Pils and Weizen is all I can offer you on tap. Next week, we will also have the new

Krombacher Dark.” My friend and I order a small pils, served in a slim tulip glass. As we drink, I read through the wine list, which is two pages long. We decide to go elsewhere as soon as we’ve finished our beer.

The next bar is modern, more stylish. Honey-colored lights, some tables, many stools, and mirrors all over the wall. Not exactly a beer bar, but a place for good drinks. We choose a table. My friend again, in his seemingly helpless manner, says, “I would like to order a beer..”

The waitress, assertively: “0. 3?”

We must have looked confused, because she quickly adds: “We have 0.4, 0. 3, and 0.25,” referring to the liter sizes that are available. We each decide on a 0.3 and are served another pils—this time, Radeberger. It seems the only skill you need if you want to drink a beer in a German bar is to know the exact quantity you want.



DIANE DIEDERICH/ISTOCKPHOTO

Reinheitsgebot— Tradition or Straitjacket?

EARLY IN ANY BEER ENTHUSIAST'S education, he or she stumbles across the word "Reinheitsgebot," a German mouthful also known as the Bavarian Purity Law. Instituted in 1516, it was said to be the earliest piece of legislation regulating food quality. In particular, the law required that beer be made from only malted barley, hops and water (yeast, the essential fourth ingredient, was only discovered and added to the list later).

Although the Reinheitsgebot is no longer German law, German brewing and German beer culture as a whole has not strayed from its requirements, leading many German beer drinkers to regard any beverages that deviate as "not beer."

The Reinheitsgebot has protected German drinkers from certain undesirable adulterants, and serves as a minimum guarantee of quality. It also rules out ingredients, such as spices, sugars or fruit, that are in common use in other traditional brewing cultures, and yet others that have been the source of innovation and consumer excitement.



A Beer is a Beer is a Beer

Germany has more than 1,300 breweries (half of them situated in Bavaria) that brew at least 20 different styles and about 7,000 brands. However, in this country a beer will always be a beer. When you order one, you will get the main local brand that is on tap. It may vary from place: a Kölsch in Cologne, a helles in Bavaria, a Bavarian weißbier at the Karg Brewpub in Murnau near Munich, an alt in Düsseldorf and a smoked lager at Brauerei Spezial in Bamberg. But in most of the bars and restaurants in Germany, you will be served a pils from one of the big domestic brands like Krombacher, Bitburger, Beck's, Veltins, Radeberger or Warsteiner. The only ritual you have master is to find a quick answer to the short question: "0. 3?" The rest is out of your hands.

Even though, after the Czechs and the Irish, Germans drink the most beer per capita, most German consumers don't seem to think twice about it: a beer is a beer is a beer. It is as simple as that. Beer quenches the thirst and goes with almost all the food in your everyday life. (As soon as the meal becomes elaborate, wine is served.) In Bavaria, beer is even considered to be a staple food, which, of course, is to say that beer belongs to Bavaria like bread on the table.



Frank Winkel (center) and Matthias Kliemt (right) founded Bierclub to give German drinkers access to unusual specialty beers.



The fifth and sixth generations of the Trum family, owners of the Schlenkerla Brewery.

However, most Germans, when asked what beer they prefer, will answer, passionately, with a brand name. This is the German paradox: we love beer dearly, it is an integral part of our culture, yet it has become a commodity.

Against this background, young people who seek excitement and diversity are drawn to wine, spirits or beer mixes—the German equivalent to American “malternatives” or British “alcopops.” These colorful drinks first appeared in the late nineties, and became very popular with young drinkers. While overall German beer sales fell about 3 percent last year, more and more beer mixes were being sold. The category gained 18 percent in 2007.

Putting the Beer First

Sebastian B. Priller, the junior owner and manager of Brauhaus Riegele, the foremost independent brewer in Augsburg, holds a clear opinion: “When it comes to beer, Germans focus more on marketing, branding, sponsoring, pricing and all that, instead of talking about the product itself. I think it is high time to put the beer first: its taste, its ingredients, the way it is brewed, the food it pairs with. And we need to live this culture and celebrate beer like they do with wine.”

It’s his mission that every customer in the bar makes a conscious decision about what kind of beer to drink. “Of course, people need help there,” says 32-year-old Priller, who holds a Diplom-Biersommelier—a certificate in all aspects of beer service—from the Doemens Akademie in Munich. Priller enumerates the requirements: the landlord, the waiters or a sommelier should know the beer list and be able to give recommendations. The beer list should be elaborated and contain a good description including style, alcohol content and food references. The right glass with the right beer should be obligatory.

Priller points out: “Consumers won’t ask for beer culture by themselves. We have to celebrate it and show them how much fun it is to enjoy beer like this.”

The Riegele in Augsburg does just that: recently, the brewery offered various beer cultural events, including brewery tours, beer tastings, brewing courses and challenging “expert events” for beer lovers who wanted to experience professional beer judgments. By midyear, Riegele will also be equipped with a pilot brewery to make specialty beers year round, “to show the people the variety of styles that are possible within the Reinheitsgebot,” Priller says.

In a bold step, he is also establishing a cellar in order to introduce vintage beers, which thus far are unknown to German audiences. Brauhaus Riegele, a mid-size

brewery founded in 1386, offers 14 different styles, including festbier, kellerbier, weizen and strong beer. In addition, Priller also promotes northern German styles or Belgian specialties in his tasting classes, just to illustrate the enormous variety of beer.

Besides his Biersommelier education, what has most influenced Priller is the Slow Food movement and its attitude: “The enjoyment of good beer does not only depend on its taste. It is also due to where the beer comes from and who made it. It is due to the brewer’s philosophy and his commitment to the region as well as what he does to celebrate beer culture,” he says.



Dr. Wolfgang Stempfl conducting a Biersommelier seminar.

Bier-Sommelier School

WITH RESPECT TO GERMAN BEER CULTURE, there is one project that really makes a difference: the Biersommelier School offered by the Doemens Akademie in Munich and the Austrian consumer organization Bier IG is probably the most sought-after advanced training for brewers, culinary professionals and retailers alike. This sold-out seminar has been offered twice a year since 2004. Attendees learn all about beer, the brewing process, the ingredients, the styles, tastes and pairings with food. After many challenging tests, they leave the school with a diploma.

“Our desire is to make people ambassadors of beer to promote the culture and diversity,” says sensory expert, chief executive and headmaster of Doemens Akademie Dr. Wolfgang Stempfl. The class has raised the awareness among brewers that they need to embrace diversity, rather than conform to mass taste. Stempfl sees good chances that this will have its effect on the product range as well: “We need beers that are more elaborate, complex and costly, that create a higher value to the consumer, so that they are willing to pay more.”

“In Germany, beer is a thirst quencher, not a drink to be savored. We have to work hard to change this image.”

Bucking Tradition

“The variety is there, but it is not apparent to consumers,” states Frank Bettenhäuser, owner of the north-Hessian Hütt Brauerei in Baunatal near Kassel. Hütt is a mid-size brewery: with the recent purchase of the smaller Hessische Löwenbier Brauerei in the nearby village Malsfeld, it has become the biggest brewery in the region, with an annual production of about 69,000 hectoliters (about 59,000 barrels). The portfolio consists of two pils styles, a kellerbier, a black lager, several weizen styles and beer mixes.

The 50-year-old brewery manager goes on to say, “In Germany, beer is a thirst quencher, not a drink to be savored. We have to work hard to change this image.” As with most of his fellow independent brewers, he hopes to cultivate a new approach to beer: on his agenda this year are events to raise the sophistication of his employees and other culinary professionals, and beer seminars for the general public.

German beer drinkers might be conservative, but Bettenhäuser knows from events that his customers love to learn more: “People have a good time when they get more insights into beer production, and they love to explore the different tastes.” The Hessische Löwenbier Brauerei, with its small batches of 120 hectoliters (102 barrels), offers him new creative possibilities, like the malty



Private Weissbierbrauerei G. Schneider & Sohn in Kelheim

Brauer Schorsch's Haustrunk (a Märzen-styled house beer), which is only available at the site in Malsfeld.

But Bettenhäuser points out the pressures of a shrinking market: “Independent mid-size brewers have to think about quality and quantity likewise,” he states, “and bringing out a new beer is always a major effort.” Besides, he adds, beer is too cheap in Germany—creativity would not pay off.

Invention and Tradition

Brewing creative beer? Matthias Trum, owner of Bamberg's Schlenkerla Tavern, is not too optimistic that brewers' creativity would be welcomed by German beer drinkers at the moment. “The consumer is not ready for it,” the 32-year-old states. Yet, he is happy to see that beer variety has become an international trend and that craft beer is more and more sought-after, even in Germany. He points out that, with his rauchbier, he offers a niche product within the specialty niche, of which he would never be able to sell high quantities. Thus, it doesn't make sense for him to expend effort on an ongoing invention of new beers.

Trum's world-famous brewery, which has operated since 1405, produces 13,000 hectoliters a year (11,000 barrels), with less than 20 percent shipped abroad. With the barley dried over an open fire like in ancient times, Schlenkerla's is an historic approach to brewing.



Brooklyn brewmaster Garrett Oliver, brewery owner Georg Schneider and brewmaster Hans-Peter Drexler toast a collaborative U.S.-German specialty beer.

Other German Breweries to Watch

The Weihenstephan-trained brewmaster remains faithful to this heritage even when it comes to new products: three years ago, Trum released a new fasting beer brewed in the smoked beer tradition and based on an historic recipe. It has less smoked malt than the renowned Schlenkerla Märzen and tastes refined and elegant. "It's a beer dedicated to our local customers in Bamberg," Trum states, as it is only available during Lent when not many tourists are in town. In terms of beer culture, Trum believes that the Reinheitsgebot can ensure the quality of German beer, and hopes to see the beer mix category fade.

Reaching Across Borders

Georg Schneider, owner of the Private Weissbierbrauerei G. Schneider & Sohn in Kelheim, doesn't mince words: "The German beer market is deadly boring," he says. "It is all very much the same. The tendency towards sameness is encouraged, for example, by our domestic beer tests rating beer only by its typicality and flawlessness. Creativity is only acted on in the beer mix category."

The 42-year-old Georg Schneider IV, the sixth generation of his family to lead the business, is among the most eminent independent entrepreneurs in the country. In terms of beer culture, he is one of the most active German brewers: thanks to his efforts, Schneider Weisse has been recognized for leadership and sustainable management. With the brewery celebrating its 400th anniversary in 2008, Schneider Weisse is clearly one of the most traditional specialty brewers in Germany.

And yet, Schneider has embarked on one of the most forward-looking brewing projects in the country. Through the friendship between Schneider brewer Hans-Peter Drexler and Garrett Oliver of the Brooklyn Brewery in the U.S., the Schneider house hosted a collaborative brewing, probably the first in its history. Oliver came to Kelheim last May to concoct the Schneider & Brooklyn Hopfen-Weisse, a hoppy weizenbock, with Drexler. Most of the Hopfen-Weisse was shipped to the U.S. after its release in June, with only 200 cases sold in Germany. The unusual creation delighted the few German beer lovers and insiders who took notice of the event and tasted it. However, some customers who expected a regular weißbier were unenthusiastic.

Schneider is happy about this experience: "If you brew a beer that not everybody likes, you have the wonderful effect that people talk about it," he says. His brewmaster adds, "We've got to take people by the hand and lead them to new worlds of taste. Customers, as well as chefs, culinary staff and traders, are searching for innovations."

Schneider wants to continue brewing tasteful beers that are far from the mass market profile, one being

Continued on page 84

Bräuhaus Ummendorf

Bachstraße 10
88444 Ummendorf
www.braeuhaus.de

This small brewery and pub near Ulm surprises beer lovers with unique brews year round. Besides standard seasonals like Christmas- and festbiers, brewer Stefan Dobler also offers rarities including a mildly hopped and softly sparkling summer ale. Each year on the third Friday in November, Dobler invites locals to an adventurous beer night under the open sky, featuring exotic creations such as a red ale with ale and Wiener malt. He also introduces food pairings. The Bräuhaus Ummendorf works together with ten other small brewers in the region to promote craft beer. Their organization, Die Kleinbrauer, stages a small-brewer's market (Kleinbrauermarkt) each spring in Ulm. www.kleinbrauer.de

Kronenbrauerei Tettnanger

Bärenplatz 7
88069 Tettnang
www.krone-tettnang.de

The Tauscher family's brewpub and restaurant is situated in the middle of the hop growing area of Tettnang near Lake Constance. They brew great organic beers as well as big seasonals. The brewery is a member of *Brauer mit Leib und Seele* ("Brewers with Body and Soul"), an association of ten small brewers from Baden-Württemberg who work together to promote craft beers. On April 23, Germany's "Day of the Beer," each releases a beer brewed with the same recipe, ingredients and technique, matured for 120 days, yet each of the ten beers tastes different. (www.ggtb.de)

Landwehr-Bräu

Reichelshofen 31
91628 Reichelshofen
www.landwehr-braeu.de

This midsized brewery in Frankonia (with restaurant and hotel) offers many seasonals, including a dark bock during Lent, and a festbier in the summer. In October/November, look for a harvest lager called "Hopfen Hell" brewed with fresh hops from the garden. Tours and tastings on site.

Weldebräu

Brauereistraße 1
D-68723 Plankstadt
www.welde.de

Located between Heidelberg and Mannheim, this midsized brewery has made an art of beer marketing. Their annual art competition, *WeldeKunstpreis*, attracts international participants every year, with the winner's creation printed on labels of Welde No. 1 pils in a limited edition. Every January, Weldebräu releases a single batch of their pils brewed with a special regional malt, then in November, another special brew of Welde No. 1 made with fresh hops from Sandershausen, the last local hop growing village in the region. Watch for Welde's great brewery tour experience.

Brauereigasthof Drei Kronen

Hauptstraße 19
96117 Memmelsdorf
www.drei-kronen.de

The brewery, restaurant and hotel of the Straub Family near Bamberg features specialty beer year round: smoked beer, kellerbier, a red weizen. The house is known for its various bock beers during Lent and a Christmas bock that, unfortunately, is always finished before the fest. Owner Hans-Ludwig Straub is the head of the organization *Private Brauereigasthöfe*: 60 pubs and restaurants across the country that are related to a brewery, and promote beer culture and hospitality. www.braugasthoefe.com

Schloßbrauerei Unterbaar

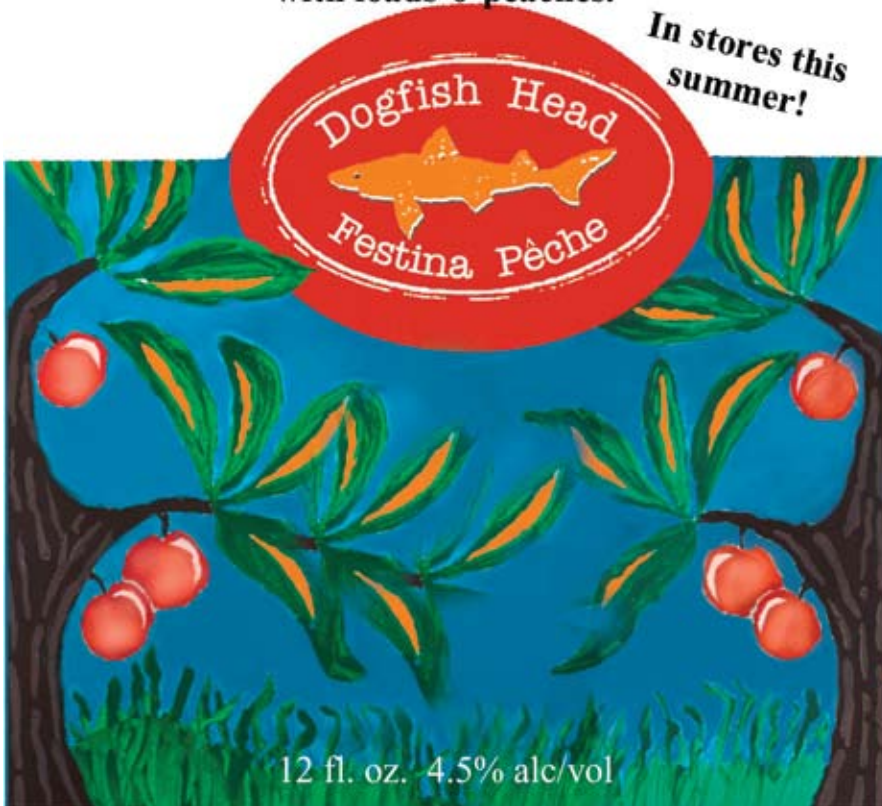
Hauptstraße 18
86674 Baar/Schwaben
www.unterbaarer.de

On the occasion of their 400th anniversary this May, the brewery released a bock beer that is supposed to last a for hundred years. This adventurous long-term project is meant to document the Unterbaarer's faith in their brewery business—even more so since most of the people involved will not survive the maturation of the beer.

—S.K

A tart & refreshing Neo-Berliner Weisse fermented with loads-o-peaches.

In stores this summer!



12 fl. oz. 4.5% alc/vol

www.dogfish.com



Ruled by the Reinheitsgebot?

German Brewers Search for Something New

Continued from page 31

the anniversary release Georg Schneider 1608, a full-bodied weizen with nutmeg and clove flavors and a grassy note from the hops. The beer is only available in a limited edition. Further, says Schneider, “We are looking for fellow brewers who are interested in doing a guest brewing with us. We are looking for them all over the world.” He insists on working together with foreign breweries because he expects the cultural exchange to be more fruitful than with a German brewer.

Diversity in taste does not, as one might think, contradict the Reinheitsgebot—Schneider and Drexler, like all other German

When early beermakers wrote of the “art and mystery of brewing,” it was largely the process of fermentation that imposed the “mystery.” Although Louis Pasteur gets well-earned credit for his studies on the nature of yeast, it was his colleague, Emil Christian Hansen, whose discoveries began to reveal the deepest secrets of fermentation. While working at the Carlsberg Laboratory in Denmark, Hansen theorized that a pure yeast strain grown from a single cell would bring a new level of control and consistency to beermaking.

Initially, Hansen’s ideas met with strong skepticism from brewers, including his own employer – Captain Jacobsen, head of the Carlsberg Breweries.

But science ultimately proved Hansen correct, and his findings have been at work in breweries ever since. The groundbreaking research of Emil Christian Hansen is just one chapter in beer’s epic saga. Find them all at BeerBooks.com.



Emil Christian Hansen

BeerBooks.com

Know your beer.™



A class in the Biersommelier program emphasizes cooking with beer



tries, perhaps the future of German specialty and craft beer will surprise us yet. **B**

Sylvia Kopp is a German freelance writer, specializing in beer and beverage writing for consumer and professional audiences. She relaunched and edited the monthly magazine Getränke Markt, she holds a Diplom-Biersommelier from Doemens Academy, and she served as a judge at the 2008 World Beer Cup.

brewers and brewmasters, claim to remain true to these premises. “The Reinheitsgebot is our unique selling point,” Schneider argues. But there is downside to it as well: The purity law not only helps sell the beer, it also reinforces the average German beer drinker’s conservatism. The first thing Germans object to when they hear about great beers from other countries is “But these beers are not brewed after the Reinheitsgebot, are they?” In this respect, the Reinheitsgebot leads them to make a quick but safe choice and insulates them from new beer experiences.

This is the German paradox: we love beer dearly, it is an integral part of our culture, yet it has become a commodity.

Things might change, though, as the taste for diversity is growing. One symptom of this trend is the great success of Bierclub.de. Frank Winkel and Matthias Kliemt founded the commercial beer subscription service in 1996. They started out with 200 subscribers. Today they count 5,500 customers who receive a package of nine regional beers each month, including beer descriptions as well as cultural and culinary information about the beers’ origins. The number of subscribers is constantly growing. According to Winkel, the motivation to become a member is a growing interest in specialty beers to which consumers otherwise would only have limited access. And subscribers to Bierclub.de do not only live in Germany. The Bierclub has to send out care packages to beer lovers in the U.S., Italy, England, Holland and Denmark.

With a German club helping provide beer diversity to enthusiasts in other coun-



IMPORTED BY WETTEN IMPORTERS,
STERLING, VA

703-444-9420

WWW.WETTENIMPORTERS.COM