



The Barleycorn Press

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Baltimore Turns on the Charm: "Charm City" is for Beer Lovers!

by Ruth Miller



In a recent business trip to Baltimore in January, I was blessed during my 10-day stay with both "sultry" weather (for January!) and the most delightful places to drink beer at nearly every turn. A bit of research before I left afforded me the ability to find and enjoy the very best of what the area had to offer, specifically in a 1.5-mile radius of our Inner Harbor Hotel. Walk to everything, cool neighborhoods, and friendly people - must be why they call it "Charm City!" First off, I contacted Volker Stewart, brewer/partner at **The Brewer's Art** in the historic Mt. Vernon neighborhood to tell him I was planning a visit to his establishment, and he replied with a list of nearby must-visits for micro-brew lovers. And so, for the next 10 days (well mostly evenings, but one Sunday all-day!) I trod the historic sidewalks of Fells Point, Federal Hill, the Inner Harbor and Mt. Vernon seeking out Volker's recommendations. Here is an account of my discoveries...

First visit was just up the street to the **Capitol City Brewing Company**, situated right on the Inner Harbor on the upper level of the Light St. Pavilion, with a nice view of the USS Constellation docked there. (It's also right next door to Hooter's, so if you have a non-beer-drinker in tow, send them next door to check out the "merchandise" while you enjoy what Capitol has to offer!) On a Friday night it was surprisingly quiet at dinner hour, but they do a huge daily lunch business and are jammed in the summertime. This brewery has 4 different locations: in Baltimore, VA, and two in DC. The beer here is brewed on-site in a 25-bbl. system, visible behind huge glass windows at the front. Brewer Mike Morris has been at this location for one and a half years. I enjoyed a sampler of 5 beers for \$5.24, and a delicious grilled "Gaucho Steak" with garlicky Argentine-style chimichurri sauce, yam fries and grilled endive for only \$14. The line-up: "Pale Rider": the best of the bunch - American-style pale ale using 2-row pale, Vienna & Munich malts; and Ahtanum & Horizon hops. "Prohibition Porter": English-style with light body and a dry finish. "Amber Waves Ale": termed a "CA-style" red ale, nice balance of malt & No. Brewer/Ahtanum hops. "Capitol Kolsch": clean, light body with biscuity notes from pilsener malt and 10% wheat malt. The seasonal "Strawberry Tart": not as bad as it sounds - the fruit tasted real and wasn't reminiscent of Body Shop products. The 200 lbs. of fresh fruit incorporated post-

fermentation gives it its cloudy, but rosy complexion. Also on the list, but not on tap that time are an oatmeal stout, British bitter, Alt, and a nut-brown ale.

After a side trip to Little Italy the next night, I was back on the beer-track on Sunday, my day off. Nice long walk along the waterfront over to the funky & historic Fell's Point neighborhood. The ghosts of drunken sailors lurked everywhere, and saloons were doing a bang-up business at 10am! I ate brunch at the infamous Bertha's Mussels to fortify myself for a long afternoon at **Max's Taproom**, universally recommended by everyone for it's outstanding tap offerings, huge bottle selection and knowledgeable "Beer-tenders." At high

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NEXT MEETING Sunday, March 5 American Flatbread

The next meeting of the Green Mountain Mashers will take place on Sunday, March 5th at American Flatbread located at 115 St. Paul St. in Burlington. Plan on arriving around 4:00 pm. Some additional special details will follow later.

There will be a brief meeting for any necessary updates but otherwise the afternoon will be focused on chatting with brewer Paul Saylor, trying his Zero Gravity brews or any of the other incredible guest beers on tap or in bottle, and just hangin' out. Paul expects to have some Alt and Doppelbock on tap. As a special treat, he may also let us try a beer or two that are not yet on tap beers.

If you need directions call American Flatbread at (802) 861-2999.



Staff Box



The Barleycorn Press is a monthly publication of the Green Mountain Mashers Homebrew Club. The Barleycorn Press appears in the final week of each month. **Contributions are due by the 25th of the month of publication or two Thursdays prior to the next meeting (which ever comes first).** Please send contributions via e-mail (preferable) or send on a 3.5" IBM compatible diskette (hard copy as a last resort) to:

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Note: The yearly dues of \$20 should be paid by the end of January. Please mail your check or money order made out to the "Green Mountain Mashers" to Treasurer Anne Whyte at the following address:

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Homebrew Competitions

It's that time of year again. Plan now to judge at the Ninth Annual Eastern Connecticut Homebrew Competition on Saturday, March 11, 2006. The competition will be held at the VFW, 1415 Main St., Willimantic CT, 06226. Judges should report by 9:00 AM for coffee, bagels, and assignments. Judging begins at 9:30. As always, the competition is sanctioned by the AHA and the BJCP and judging points will be awarded accordingly. Please pass the invitation to your judging buddies. Send your intent to judge (include BJCP #, rank, phone, categories entered) to Bruce Stott at tbonestott@snet.net. (860) 871-9111.

Here's yet another link for the Montreal Homebrew Competition on March 25th: http://www.homebrewers.ca/MiM%202006_Conf.pdf or just www.homebrewers.ca

Green Mountain Masher Calendar of Events

Date	Event	Information
3/5/2006	March Mtg - American Flatbread	American Flatbread
4/3/2006	April Mtg - Tom Ayers and Anne Barrett - Hoops n Hops & Masher Challenge Judging Irish Red Ale	Tom Ayres and Anne Barrett, Winooski (h) 655-5587 (email) tom.ayres@verizon.net
5/1/2006	May Meeting—Ernie Kelley—To Be An- nounced	Ernie Kelley.

Please contact Melissa at 482-7400 or melissa@vt.bitxbit.com to add items to the Masher Calendar

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noon, I introduced myself to Jamie the Beer-tender, and expressed my desire to do a sample tour of all the MD beers on tap. Behind him was a glass-front cooler about 30 feet long, floor to ceiling, filled with the most amazing selection of local & imported bottles I've ever seen. List of 70 beers on tap; 4 beer engines, and over 220 bottles in house - yikes! OK, I had all day here, so needed to take my time. I had to start with two out-of-town curiosities first, though. House beer of the day was a "Bavik Pils," aka a Belgian pilsener - but we aren't talking Stella Artois here! Very pale yellow like a wit; citrusy notes but no coriander or spices, 5% - awesome. Next I tried the River Horse "Belgian Frost" from NJ - 7.5% Belgian brune - tasty! Then on to the business of the local beers: Oxford Brewing's "Hefeweizen": brewed by MD brewer Hugh Sisson was not that cloudy, but had all the banana & clove thing going on. Then Oxford's "Raspberry Wheat": at 4.7%, a pale

amber with subtle fruit. On to Clipper City's "premium label" seasonals that go under the moniker of Heavy Seas Brewing: "Loose Cannon" Imperial Pale Ale @ 7% - the winner of the Maryland Governor's Cup brewing competition - as big & hoppy as they come, but well-balanced. Then "Below Decks": a full-bodied barleywine that scored big points with me. Next - Wild Goose Brewing of Frederick's "IPA": super-long hoppy finish that lasts forever! Couldn't ID the hop variety, but not floral at all. Packs a punch at 6%. Was hoping to taste some DeGroen's, but it closed down in '05 and the brewer returned to his native Austria. I'd always enjoyed his primarily German-style beers when I could find them, so a great loss to the local brewing scene. On to two beers from an outfit called Whitmarsh Brewing based in Baltimore's Red Brick Station. "DPM": a dark lager on cask at 5% that utterly reeked of toffee and tasted of Werther's butterscotch candies - can you say diacetyl? Then tried their High-

lander Heavy Scotch Ale @ 7% on cask and experienced the exact same problem - had to turn both in with merely sips missing - a big disappointment. Beverage manager Casey Hard showed up, heard I was from a homebrew club, and proceeded to regale me with tales of their weekly homebrew club "special tastings" held upstairs on Tuesday nights. I was invited to come and enjoy the offerings from Jolly Pumpkin brewery but failed to make it back - alas! He sent me home with a bottle of rare T'smitje Calva Reserva and a bottle of Bala-din "Noel" which I spotted on the bottle list and is really hard to get. I had hand-carried a bottle of Bala-din "Doppio Malto" home on the plane from Florence (it's brewed in Italy.) I carried the precious cargo in my arms like a baby this time, on to my next brew-stop before trundling home to my hotel.

Three blocks away was **Du-**

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Trub Trek Montreal Photos





Masher Meeting Minutes Submitted for Ernie Kelley by Tim Cropley

The Monday Feb 6th meeting was moved to Dan Hament's house because Ruth Miller unfortunately had to work and could not host. Mashers trickled in due to snow that night (which was I'm sure the last snow storm between then and Feb 24th). The meeting was called to order sometime after 8pm.

An update on the Trub Trek was given by Dan Hament. McAuslan Brewery has been dropped from the itinerary and will be replaced with another brewpub (this turned out to be La Taverne du Sergeant-Recruteur).

The March Meeting will be on SUNDAY March 5th at 4pm at American Flatbread. See details on Page 2 of this newsletter and a follow-up email a few days before Sunday.

Tim mentioned that Flatbread is having an Allagash night which will feature 2004 & 2005 Grand Cru, 2004 & 2005 Dubbel, and their White. There will also be some

flatbread pairings for the Allagash beers. A few of the Mashers at the meeting were hoping to attend.

The Masher web page was briefly discussed. The Recipe-of-the-Month on it is from October 2001. If anyone has some recipes to send in to get this going again that would be great. If not that we could name it Recipe-of-the-Year or perhaps even Recipe-of-the-Decade.

The 2006 Green Mountain Homebrew Competition is on for Saturday May 13th at the Champlain Senior Center (same location as last year). The deadline for entries is Friday April 28th and Entry log in will start at 9am on Saturday April 29th at Rich Frog in South Burlington. Competition Czar Dave Blumenthal needs volunteers for all the regular jobs and at least one person other than him to be server trained by the Dept. of Liquor Control (DLC) and not drink or judge. Contact Dave ASAP if you want a specific job or want to NOT do what you did last year. His email address is dave@studiozoic.com.

Andy Hunt spoke briefly about the Poor Richard's Ale tasting that he attended at Rock Art in honor of Benjamin Franklin's birthday on January 17th. He brought a bottle of it to share with those in attendance. John Eustis mentioned that the person who developed the recipe that was selected for this was his former brewing partner Tony Simmons. He discussed some of the details of the development and selection of the "winning" recipe. This recipe was brewed by breweries across the country.

(Note - see the recipe and the rationale behind it at:

http://www.beertown.org/homebrewing/pdf/Poor_Richards.pdf)

Lastly, there were numerous gadgets shown off including a conical fermentor, thermometer devices, a grain mill, etc.

The meeting was ajourned at some point after the grain mill changed hands from Dan Hament to Andy Ferko.

Green Mountain Mashers Dues have been raised to \$20 per year to help cover the added costs of being a non-profit corporation. Dues are due ASAP. Please bring your checkbooks to the next meeting so that we don't need to keep pestering members to pay their dues after January. Thanx - The Management.

Also, please bring beers and some munchies to the next meeting to share with the rest of the Mashers.

(Cont. from Charm City - Page 3)

Claw Brewing Co.'s big, new and very industrial-chic brewpub and restaurant. All wood, glass & steel, it's located in an old mill building of some sort with an outdoor patio right on the Waterfront Promenade. It's part of a small chain and they brew in Abingdon, MD. Now ready to re-fuel for my next tasting round, I order a huge burger & coleslaw and a sampler of everything in the house - a total of 9 beers! Fortunately they are served in very small glasses, but I'm just there to taste anyway. First the seasonals: "Black Jack Stout": a Russian Imperial that was thick & tasty but just too young (was released only a month earlier.) "Old Flame": an English Old Ale that also needed more time - very strong but still harsh around the edges. "Devil's Milk": Imperial IPA, extremely hoppy, hot with alcohol and super floral - good but deadly. "Repent": a super-sweet barleywine, more like sherry than beer - might be good with dessert. Then the regulars..."Kangaroo Love": a Foster's Lager clone, not terribly interesting. "Bad Moon Porter": thin in body but big on the coffee finish. "Misfit Red": won two local Best of Baltimore awards - a red ale big on color, light on body and no real finish at all. Beer neophytes must've stuffed those ballot boxes! "Venom": now we're getting somewhere! Kick-ass American pale ale @ 5.6% with a perfect balance of hops to malt - citrusy grapefruit notes made my mouth water and the nose was lovely. This one got the People's Choice Award at the MD Craft Beer Fest - apparently those folks know their beers! "Bare Ass": blonde ale - everyone's gotta have a "girly beer", and this is theirs. Good hot-weather, crab-shucking beer -

this IS Baltimore after all...

Couple nights later, it's off to the infamous **Wharf Rat**, an English-style pub right near Camden Yards and the Convention Center. Everyone told me its companion pub in Fell's Pt. is much more authentic, but this was closer and a safer walk after dark. It had the whole UK pub thing going on - looked like the real deal. All the beers there are made by Oliver Brewing, and there are 14 of them on tap at any one time, with 3 on cask. Before 7pm you can get three 8oz. beers for \$4, so I asked the waitress to fill them only halfway so I could get through two rounds without stumbling home. I order the sausage sandwich du jour (duck with orange peel) and off I went. "Scottish Ale": a bit light in body,



5.2%, slightly smoky but pleasant overall. "Hot Monkey Love": not sure what's up with the name but was described as a "British Winter Ale", at 9% it was warming, rich with a heavy malt body akin to a barleywine with sherry notes. "Blackfin Stout": at 4.9% an opaque, well-hopped sharp roasty stout with a dry finish. Next

round...Biere de Garde": not Belgian or French by any means - described as a Northern Euro style...whatever that is...not impressive. "Old English Ale": at 5.7% was a basic brown ale - not sure how they figure the "old" into it. "Pagan Porter": a thin-bodied brown porter with a dry finish. The overall concept I was left with is that, for some reason, all the beers here had the same peculiar vegetal after-taste - was it the house yeast, dirty lines, what?? A mystery - cute place but only so-so beers. They do have a big list of UK beers in case you need something else.

Saved the best for the end of my visit - **The Brewer's Art**. Utterly worth the after-dark cab ride through dense traffic on toney Charles St. with its gorgeous Victorian row-houses. I'd had a preview of two of their beers in our hotel's bar, and I knew this could be the great one. Belgians are the specialty there, and the food menu was the most upscale I've encountered in a brewing establishment. It's in a renovated, turn-of-the-century rowhouse with all the original interior wood, floors, stained glass, bookcases, marble fireplaces and fixtures - wow. First impression: you walk into what used to be the front parlor with its small but ornate bar, and all the young hipsters are quaffing beer out of goblets - not a martini in sight! We stepped forward through a gigantic set of pocket doors into the beautiful diningroom and are seated in what feels like someone's enormous livingroom - I keep looking for a 20-foot Christmas tree! At the end of the room is a glassed-off porch with ornate windows in what looks to be the brew room. We order dinner - fried oysters, Belgian steak frites, a goat cheese salad, crab bisque - lots to share. I order the

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house sampler and am rewarded with 6 exquisite beers. "Ozzy": a Duvel-clone that is clean, bright and packs a discreet wallop at 7.25%. "Resurrection": the beer on tap at our hotel, an Abbey-style brown ale made with 5 malts & lots of candy sugar. Rich, fragrant and strong at 7%. "Proletary": like a porter almost, a deep garnet brown at 5%. "House Pale Ale": a Belgian pale ale with an exquisite floral nose at 5%. St. Festivus: Winter Ale using 5 malts, noble hops and spiced with curacao and ginger - warming & spicy at 8%. "Cerebrus Tripel": very strong but light in color, this was the overall winner, and at 10% demanded the respect it rightly deserved.

Last night in town, and a few small pubs to knock off my list, all located just a few blocks away in

Federal Hill. I went to **SoBo Cafe**, where they have a crazy menu ("Meat Muffins" seemed the wildest) and several beers on tap from Dominion Brewing of Ashburn, VA. Had a tasty black & tan and moved on to **The Thirsty Dog** where pooches are welcome in the bar, and all the beers are named after dogs. They make personal pizzas to order and I believe their beers also come from Dominion. In the "Small World" category, who sits next to me at the bar but Shelly Williams, former PR assistant to Stacey at Magic Hat and recently-relocated rep for MH in the Baltimore & DC area. We had fun chatting about the brew scene in Burlington and Baltimore. She suggested I go over to **Ropewalk Taproom** which I'd cruised by mistakenly thinking it was a pool hall. Enjoyed another of the Heavy Seas

series there - the "Uber Pils" - think Pilsner Urquell on steroids! - and then on to my final destination at **Metropolitan**, a very chic little neighborhood winebar & grill with a hefty local beer list and bistro menu of local & seafood specialties. Only seat I could find was in the dark, corner end of the bar, and the service reflected my invisibility, but I did enjoy a pint of Blue Tractor Ale from Claypipe Brewing of Westminster, MD. I ordered a big plate of 3 kinds of smoked fish with capers, red onions and creme fraiche to go with, and it was a perfect match. For some reason, Otter Creek beer was all the rage that night - a promotion perhaps? I grinned to myself about the conundrum of a Vermonter enjoying all the great Baltimore beers, while everyone around me is grooving on a VT beer. Hey, such is life in "Charm City"!



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