



The Barleycorn Press

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Heaven on Earth at Ebenezer's Belgian Birthday Bash

By Ruth Miller

For those of you who attended the Masher Trub Trek in February, you've already been introduced to the wonders of Chris Lively's Belgian taproom in "the middle of nowhere" of Maine. For those of you yet uninitiated, here's your opportunity to experience the wonder that is Ebenezer's vicariously...and plan your own visit to Local Belgian Heaven at your leisure. By the looks of the crowds that frequent it for any of Chris' occasional special events, Ebenezer's certainly doesn't appear to be going anywhere soon. And, if you've noticed how the US dollar continues to be hammered by the Euro, like me, you'll get your Belgian fix closer to home if possible. After a visit to Ommegang's 2nd annual Belgium Comes to Cooperstown Festival, replete with a cruelly-short 4-hour session to taste over a hundred utterly stellar brews, overflowing porta-potties, lack of sufficient drinking water, and stifling heat, Ebenezer's has, for the second year in a row, become my solution for a very civi-

lized experience. Yes, a bit pricier but absolutely worth it!

Every year around his August 24th birthday, proprietor Chris Lively, ably assisted by his wife Jeni and an expanded staff, host a most amazing line-up of Belgian offerings on tap, in bottles, and whatever the obviously enamored BeerAdvocate/RateBeer crowd contribute to the birthday gifts. This year was no exception in terms of sheer depth of beers available, but was ultimately made more memorable by the presence of two brewing partners from the De Struise Brewery in Panne, Belgium. Carlo and Urbain, business partners & brewers, brewed a special beer just to commemorate the event. Dubbed "Black Albert," it was described as a "Belgian Royal Stout" (they don't much care for the term "imperial" in Belgium!) and although targeted to finish at 10% ABV, it ended up at a whopping 13%, with no detriment whatsoever. Put up in corked & waxed 4-liter bottles with a gorgeous label created by a Belgian tattoo artist depicting a Maori torso design, it was a much celebrated and appreciated addition to the outstanding line-up this year.

evening was capped by a special event of some sort - unusual vintage blendings, giveaways, and on Chris' birthday, an Iron Chef-style "cook-off" capped by an impromptu proposal of marriage made by Urbain to his girlfriend as the heat of the friendly competition subsided. What passionate brewers, these two! Also prominently featured was De Struise's dark, complex spiced ale, named "Pannepot" for the local fishing vessel depicted on the label taken from a painting that hangs in Carlo's home. There are 3 versions of Pannepot: the Reserve aged in oak casks, with only a few cases released to the US so far; the "Danish version" which is stronger and more flavorful; and the standard version which is garnering great reviews on the beer blogs, and I've so far only found for sale at Eb's or in specialty beer stores in Portland, ME.

On the two evenings I attended with several Lady-Mashers, one of which was the "Big Night" of

(Continued on page 3)



From August 18th through the 26th straight, the taproom featured traditional Belgian food specialties, including over a hundred pounds of authentic Belgian cheese lovingly cut and arranged on plates by Chris personally. A Belgian chef and assistant were recruited to round out the usual pub menu with some real Belgian specialties. Nearly every

In This Issue

Heaven on Earth	1, 3
Next Meeting Info	2
Staff Box	2
Cider Crush Info	2
Masher Calendar	3
Club Brew Pictures	4
A Cautionary Tale	5

NEXT MEETING

**Monday, October 1
Switchback Brewing
Company, Burlington**

The next meeting of the Green Mountain Mashers is Monday, October 1 at 7:30 pm at Switchback Brewing Company in Burlington. Bring any homemade beverages (especially ciders) along to taste and share with our gracious host Bill Cherry.

The Agenda is:

- 1) Upcoming Cider Crush.
- 2) Ideas for upcoming meetings
- 3) Discussion of potential Clone Beer Challenge
- 5) New business and announcements.
- 6) Tour brewery/Q&A with Bill Cherry.

Directions:

Switchback is at 160 Flynn Ave in Burlington. Take RT

7 north from I-189 toward downtown Burlington. Take a left onto Flynn Ave (5th left from Shaws/Price Chopper). Cross the railroad tracks and Switchback is the first building on your right and the entry door is close to Flynn Ave. Take your first right after crossing the tracks then park in the lot on your left. Walk back toward Flynn Ave past the fence on the walkway and along the building to the blue Switchback door.

You can also visit this web page for a map of the location:

http://national.citysearch.com/profile/map/37567009/burlington_vt/switchback_brewing_co.html

Switchback Brewing Co
160 Flynn Ave
Burlington, VT 05401-5401
(802) 651-4114

Call or email Tim on Monday if you have any questions at t_cropley@yahoo.com or 244-1683 (hm) 578-0565 (cell).

**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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This publication is made available free of charge to all dues paying members of the Green Mountain Mashers. Subscriptions are available to all other interested parties at \$7.00 yearly (US funds).

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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10 School St.
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(802) 879-6462 (hm)
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View the Official Web Page of the Green Mountain Mashers at:

<http://www.mashers.org>

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Cider Crush 2007

October 27th at the Chapin Orchard

Please sign up at Vermont Homebrew Supply. Price will be the same as last year: \$4.25/gallon. There is a Friday afternoon option for a limited amount. Saturday morning after 9:30 am is the time to be at the orchard. You can call the store or sign up at the October meeting. I need to know ahead of time if you would like liquid yeast. Otherwise you can take your chances. I'll probably have some at the store to pick from. Last year some Mashers did not pick up the yeast, grrrrrrrrrr. So please, call to cancel for yeast (or cider for that matter) if you change your mind.

Green Mountain Masher Calendar of Events

Date	Event	Information
10/1/2007	October Meeting, Switchback Brewing, Burl.	Switchback Brewing, 651-4114
10/27/2007	Cider Crush, Chapin Orchards	Vermont Homebrew Supply, vtbrew@verizon.net

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

(Continued from page 1)

Chris' b-day, we were treated to the usual friendly, attentive, but rather rambunctious atmosphere that is the keynote of a trip to Ebenezer's. Either it's you & Chris alone chatting about beers on a quiet Sunday afternoon, or it's 70 of his nearest & dearest enjoying mass-jubilation as the taps flow, rare kegs kick, and turn over as new beers seamlessly debut. A variety of large-format bottles are opened (sometimes with great difficulty!) and shared by the crowd. The service staff gets a bit fried after several days of this, but they really hang in there, to their considerable credit! This year we made arrangements to stay just down the road at the very pleasant Old Saco Inn, but during Belgian week everyone is invited to camp out nearby on the edge of the golf course property with facilities nearby. Frankly, I was glad for a soft bed, hot shower, and breakfast cooked-to-order each day - I learned my lesson at Cooperstown! The crowd is a crazy mix of: well-to-do retired folks with vacation homes on nearby Kezar Lake; local regulars who have forsaken their Bud and become addicted to Belgians; beer geeks & bloggers from all over the US who come to join the party and swap bottles of coveted brews; regional & national beer writers (like me) wishing to share the experience with their readerships; golfers who drift in off the Kezar Lake Golf Course for a post-round drink (often wine rather than beer); and the assorted distributor or bar owner/manager looking to broaden their own horizons on the Belgian beer front. And everyone in between, of course! This year's attendees included several Vermont commercial craft-brewers, likely looking for immediate pleasure and future inspiration as the possibility of amending VT's 8% ABV this legislative session beckons them to expand their own.

Some of the highlights occurring over several nights, piloted by Chris, Carlo & Urbain included: the custom blending of Westverleten 12 vintages (really!); a custom blending night of geuze & lambics from the taps & selected bottles; and a limited release of the last of 3

cases in the world of De Struise's coveted "Earthmonk" flown in direct from the brewery via FedEx, a sour ale aged in oak balsamic casks with Thomas Hardy yeasts aged over 3 years. We enjoyed a custom blending session of 25-year old Westmalle dubbel (graciously donated by local Eb's fan & BA "Kwakhead") blended with a newer vintage 2-to-1. As for the aforementioned cook-off, Carlo & Urbain described to the crowd the warm egg custard known as *sabayon* they recall eating on frigid winter days before leaving for school that their mothers made with great effort. Carlo and Urbain were set up behind the bar with a Coleman camp stove, given separate saucepans, eggs, cream, sugar, and a bottle of Pannepot for Urbain, and some Black Albert for Carlo. They commenced to rapidly hand-whisk the ingredients for over 30 minutes, while myself and another volunteer assisted by slowly drizzling the respective beer into each batch at their directive. After all that prolonged whisking, I was sure someone would end up with a case of carpal tunnel syndrome, but at last the competing concoctions were poured into shot glasses, and passed to the cheering crowd for their verdict. It was deemed Carlo, using the more richly-flavored Black Albert, had the winning batch. Then, Urbain decided to pop the question to his love as she accepted tearfully, to which the crowd went wild! Having a chat with Carlo, I realized these guys were really enjoying themselves and pledged to return next year. What do they like to drink here in the States? Super IPA's, of course! The huge bottles of deep, dark roasty Black Albert will be put away to age and become a reserve version, for enjoyment at a future Ebenezer's event. Myself, I'll be back long before then (in fact I already have this summer a couple of times!) and look forward to the quieter and more limited hours over the winter-time when my bi-monthly kayak trips to Maine phase out to twice-a-season ski weekends in the White Mountains. If there is a visit to Ebenezer's Pub in your future, get psyched by going to their website and checking out the tap & bottle lists at www.ebenzerspub.net or call them at (207) 925-3200.

Club Brew—June 2, 2007, Monk's House



A Tale of Two Brewers: A Cautionary Tale

By Petey O'Caucus



Once upon a time, not so long ago, lived two neighbors. Chin Uk and Chuck Saws. Chin Uk and Chuck Saws were both homebrewers.

Chin Uk worked in the city all day long. She was happy to be home with her family on the weekend. She liked to brew her own beer and share with her friends and family. She liked to brew something different each time she brewed so she could have many choices.

Chuck Saws also worked in the city. He used numbers all day long and liked to solve problems. He had less time to do things by himself since he had a couple of kids and started working on his house. Chuck Saws had started out using pre-hopped kits and had quickly advanced to all-grain brewing. He loved to make gadgets. As he became more proficient he liked to brew exactly to style. He entered his beers in many competitions and won many prizes.

One day in early summer the neighbors met while mowing their lawns. "Guess what?" said Chin Uk. "I just learned how to use specialty grains! My beers are tasting even richer and better than ever! My stout and brown ale are really smooth. Why don't we have some after the yard is done? What are you drinking now?"

"I've been drinking Magic Touque since I haven't had time to do an all-grain brew. Really, you just learned about crystal malt? I'm sure your brew *is* better now," he sniffed. "As soon as I can find the time I'm going to make a *real* Irish stout with a 5% sour mash added to it. It'll be really good...but in the meantime, no sense in letting yours go to waste." And so the friends enjoyed Chin Uk's brews under the shade of a maple while they admired their tidy yards.

Later that year, on a crisp autumn day, the neighbors met while raking leaves.

"Guess what?" called Chin Uk to his neighbor. "I just started using liquid yeast. Wow...my beers are getting even better! And since I can re-use it I'm brewing even more."

"Oh, really," replied Chuck Saws. "Yes, that's all I use too. I keep forgetting to get one started during the week so I haven't been able to brew this fall."

After many hours of hard work raking, the neighbors sat on Chin Uk's front porch and drank cool, clear bitters and pale pales.

Winter came and one frosty morning Chin Uk knocked on her friend's door.

"Good afternoon, neighbor, I was wondering if I could borrow your capper since mine has finally worn out."

"Oh no, I don't mind a bit. I haven't used it since I started kegging. What are you bottling?" asked Chuck Saws.

"Well since I got a wort chiller and I can boil all 5 gallons my beers are so clear and light! I've been repitching a Bavarian yeast and I have a lovely Pilsner all ready to bottle. Next week my Bock will be ready." Chin Uk was happy to share news of her brewing.

"Well, as it happens, since I can filter my beer, mine come out just like commercial beers. As soon as I replace my filter I'll be ready to make a Pilsner too. But right now I'm out of homebrew." Chuck Saws could just picture the beautiful pale gold lager and began to get thirsty. "Let's say I help you cap your pilsner and we could try that brown ale you mentioned last week." and so the two friends capped and enjoyed Chin Uk's fine brews.

One the way home Chuck Saws began to wonder why he never brewed anymore. All-grain brewing did take more time than he had these days. Chin Uk spent 2-1/2 hours brewing and could even do it after work during the week.

"I have a big pot and a wort chiller so I could do a full-wort boil just like an all-grain brewer. I know how to use liquid yeast too. I can bottle even quicker than Chin Uk since I have a keg." And upon further reflection, the once disdainful brewer resolved to get out his dusty equipment. If I brew this weekend I can bring a keg of my special red ale to the spring yard sale."

And so the two neighbors brewed and mowed and raked and shoveled for many, many years. They shared good times and recipes and they all brewed happily ever after.

The end



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