



The Barleycorn Press

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Region a popular stop on 'Beer Trail'

By DOUG BLACKBURN Albany Times Union

Unlike the Appalachian and Long trails, two popular hiking routes that bisect the Green Mountain State, there is no official Vermont Beer Trail.

So we created one.

The trail runs from Burlington, sometimes called New England's west coast, to Brattleboro. It pays homage to the rich history of craft brewing in Vermont, where there are more small breweries per capita than any state in the union.

This trail is meant to be savored, not gulped. Don't even attempt to complete it in one day. If you plan it right, you can stay at the Norwich Inn, where a micro micro-brewery pumps tasty beers underneath the driveway to the tap

room.

Vermont's breweries tend to support one another. They have established an organization, the Vermont Brewers Association, to which a majority of the state's 18 licensed breweries and brew pubs belong. It is designed to promote tourism via breweries in much the same way as wine trails.

According to the VBA, Vermont-made beer accounts for 8 percent of the beer consumed in the state, one of the highest rates in the country. (Craft beers nationwide represent a mere 3 to 4 percent of beer sales.)

"I don't think any state has more pride in itself than Vermont," said Andy Pherson, owner of Long Trail Brewing Co. in Bridgewater. "Vermonters will always

consume Vermont products first. That includes beer."

Southern Vermont's breweries are prominent stops along the trail:

Long Trail Brewing Co., junction of routes 4 and 100A, Bridgewater, 672-5011. <http://www.longtrail.com/>

Located on state Route 4 halfway between Killington and Woodstock, Long Trail is the easiest brewery to find on the trail. It's also situated near where the Appalachian and Long trails intersect, making it easy for hikers to find, too.

Started in 1989, Long Trail moved to its current site on the banks of the Ottaquechee River in 1995. Owner Andy Pherson decided to add a restaurant to the brewery and, much to his surprise, it

has grown faster than the beer-making operation.

Long Trail specializes in German- and English-style ales, always offering four permanent beers and one seasonal. The flagship beer, Long Trail Ale, is patterned after the altbiers of Dusseldorf, Germany - a medium-bodied amber ale with mild bitterness. The second-most popular beer is Long Trail India Pale Ale, which is decidedly British, much milder than the heavily hopped American versions of this style.

Pherson is a cautious businessman with no intention of producing a lager, as the Otter Creek and Magic Hat breweries have done this year. "We're an alehouse, and we've always been an alehouse," he said. "There are lots of other

ale styles I'd like to see us make."

Norwich Inn/Jasper Murdock Ale House, 325 Main St., Norwich, 649-1143. <http://www.norwichinn.com>

This is a brewery of distinction. For starters, Timothy Wilson, brewmaster and co-innkeeper with his wife, Sally, claims it is the smallest brewery in America. His ales are available only at the inn, located across the driveway from the chicken coop he converted into a brewery. He bottles a mere 300 cases per year. Compare that to Magic Hat or Long Trail, which bottle more than 1,500 cases every day.

Second, it's believed to be the only brewery affiliated with an inn - an inn that serves gourmet fare, no less.

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Wilson's Whistling Pig Red Ale (named after an annual game dinner the inn hosts on Groundhog Day) is an Irish-style red ale that's full-bodied and malty with a long but mild hops aftertaste. The Old Slipperyskin India Pale Ale (named

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NEXT MEETING at the Magic Hat Brewery Monday Dec 1st

The next meeting of the Green Mountain Mashers will take place on Monday, Dec 1st at the Magic Hat Brewery in South Burlington. Arrive around 7:30pm and the meeting will start shortly after that.

As has become the case over the past few years, the brewers at Magic Hat will give a presentation on a topic relating to brewing/beer and the current activities taking place at Magic Hat. This is always very educational and enjoyed by all in attendance. No wonder the annual "Magic Hat Meeting" as it has become called is the most attended of the Masher mtgs.

Ask Mr. Lager by Greg Noonan

Every month (give or take) Greg Noonan will answer one or two questions from members of the Green Mountain Mashers. Anyone who has questions for this column should email them to me at t_cropley@yahoo.com.

1) Is bittering hop selection important in brewing to style guidelines?

My answer to this question is yes, for styles in which it matters, and no, for styles in which it doesn't.

Some beer styles really require a specific hop, even for bittering-hop additions. For example, Northern Brewer for Steam Beer. Just about any bittering hop can be used for other styles - e.g. Russian Imperial Stout. For most beer styles, however, varieties of hops within family

Also, club elections will be discussed and anyone who desires a club office or position of responsibility should be prepared to campaign for the position, or, anyone wanting to avoid being elected to an office or position of responsibility should be sure to attend the meeting. You must be there in person to decline the nomination, or else you may be elected!

If you need directions call Magic Hat at 802-658-2739 or visit their web page: http://www.magichat.net/elixir_printmap.html

**Don't Forget to
Bring Some
Snacks and 3
Homemade
Beverages to the
meeting. If You
Don't Have Any
Homemade Bevs,
Please Bring
Three Good/
Unique
Commercial
Beers.**

groups can be pretty freely substituted for bittering hops that are being boiled for an hour or more.

Beer judges would find just about any British hop appropriate in a Scottish 'Heavy', but Cascade entirely inappropriate.

For European styles in general, cohumulone levels are a significant consideration. Most continental hop varieties, in-

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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:

Tim Cropley
235 East Main St., Richmond, VT
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t_cropley@yahoo.com

Contributions on any subject even remotely associated with the brewing and/or enjoyment of beer and related beverages are happily accepted by the editors. The editors reserve the right to edit any contribution as a function of available space, while making every attempt to maintain its integrity. The views expressed by contributors to the Barleycorn Press are not necessarily those of the editors or of the Green Mountain Mashers Homebrew Club.

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 \$10 should be paid by the end of January. Please mail your check or money order made out to the "Green Mountain Mashers" to Treasurer Lewis Greitzer at the following address:

Lewis Greitzer
33 Harbor View Road #1201
South Burlington, Vermont 05403
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<http://www.mashers.org>

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Green Mountain Masher Calendar of Events

Date	Event	Information
12/1/03	GMM December Mtg @ Magic Hat	Anne Whyte (h) 879-6462 (w) 655-2070 (email) vtbrew@together.net
	MORE ITEMS ARE NEEDED	FOR THE MASHER CALENDAR

Please contact Tim at the phone # or email address noted below to add items to the Masher Calendar

Please contact Tim Cropley at (802) 434-7293 or by email at t_cropley@yahoo.com if you have any beer events that you think the membership would like to know about. It is our hope that we will also list other regional competitions as they are announced. We also hope to list AHA sponsored Club Only competitions in an effort to remind people to consider bringing beers that fit the competition style to club meetings so that the membership can pick one for entering.

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 cluding Perle and the high-alpha Magnum, can be freely substituted. Some American hops (Mount Hood, Sterling) and some American-grown European varieties (Hallertau, Tettnang) work, but not high-cohumulone Cluster, Cascade, Eroica, Centennial, Chinook or Galena. British hops should not be used - the flavors they carry over are just inappropriate.

2) Will stirring the mash during sparging help extraction? Can this practice create problems?

Yes, and no.

Stirring the mash during sparging usually greatly increases extraction efficiency, but it must be balanced against the risk of setting the filterbed and ending up with a stuck mash.

The goal of cutting the grain bed is to disrupt any vertical channels that may have opened in it, and thus even out the percolation of the sparge down through the grain bed. The process may be better thought of as gently shifting the grain around rather than really stirring it. Generally this only needs to be done two or three times during runoff to pretty well maximize extraction efficiency.

If at any time you feel the bottom of the grain filterbed giving stiff resistance to your paddle or spoon, stop immediately, hope you get lucky, get down and beg for deliverance, crack a brew, and don't touch anything. Stuck mashes suck more than any amount of extra extract efficiency is worth.



(Continued from page 1)

for a mythical bear it's said terrorized Vermont's early settlers) is also first-rate.

Wilson began as a home-brewer. In 1993 he wanted to supply the inn with beer, not realizing what he was committing himself to.

Word got out, and beer mavens began showing up from as far away as California to sample his ales.

He was making just five gallons at a time and was forced to brew an unheard-of 981 batches the first two years. Then he built a four-barrel system and was able to pump the beer under the inn's driveway to tap handles in the restaurant.

"This was not supposed to be a job," Wilson said. "It was supposed to be for kicks. But it took off in a big way."

Harpoon Brewery, 336 Ruth Carney Drive, Windsor, 674-5491.
<http://www.harpoonbrewery.com>

A lot of Vermonters still call this Catamount, the state's first brewery since Prohibition. But Catamount, which started up the valley in White River Junction in 1987, went under in 2000 after overexpanding and building a new brewery at just the wrong time. Boston-based Harpoon purchased the state-of-the-art facility from the bank that same year.

The brewery is located a stone's throw from the Connecticut River. Some visitors come by canoe, walking under a railroad bridge to sample a UFO Hefeweizen or Harpoon IPA. This seems to be an ideal way to visit any brewery.

The Windsor brewery makes the same beers that are produced at the main plant in Boston. The one exception is the "100 barrel series" in which the different brewers make one vat of an ale of their choosing every three months. A few days before we arrived they had just finished bottling a Belgian-style

abbey ale, a robust, malty drink with many of the same characteristics of Omegang in Cooperstown.

McNeill's Bar & Brewery, 90 Elliott St., Brattleboro, 254-2553.

This iconoclastic public house is as distinct as its owner. Ray McNeill may be the best brewer in America. Beer aficionados - including beer hunter Michael Jackson, of public TV fame - come from all over the world to sit at the counter here and savor what the master has produced.

McNeill is also one of the most opinionated and knowledgeable folks you will ever run across, a combination that can be overwhelming. Then there are his hobbies. McNeill is a concert-level cellist and a devoted cyclist, pedaling between 40 and 60 miles on a good day, averaging 300 miles a week.

His bar is technically a brew pub - a term

he despises. "Brew pubs belong in malls," he said. But there is usually a crock pot plugged in somewhere. "We have food if you need it," McNeill said. "Food if you must."

His bar at one time was a fire station. When he bought it in the mid 1980s he served mostly European draft beers. He started making and selling his own beer in 1991, primarily to save money. Soon he was serving only his beer. It's available only in Vermont and in select places in Massachusetts.

There are always a dozen or more selections on tap from McNeill's portfolio of 40-plus beers, all recipes he developed. The cask-conditioned ESB, or extra special bitter, is an English-style ale that you want to sip all night long. The Champ Ale, named in honor of Lake Champlain's mythical mascot, is full-bodied and teeming with hops that you will taste long after the glass is empty.

McNeill lives above his bar, and the beer is made one floor below the bar. He could use more space, to be sure. The lines running from his beer tanks to the bar are a confusing mess only he and his brewers understand.

"The problem is, how big is too big?" McNeill asked. "I don't want to incur any debt. I don't know what to say about my living situation. If I was going to buy a house, I'd buy a brewery."

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Washington's Whiskey Recreated

by Nancy Zuckerbrod
 ASSOCIATED PRESS
 MOUNT VERNON, Va., Oct. 21

G

George Washington's estate on the Potomac River hasn't been home to a working distillery for about two centuries, but that changed Tuesday as whiskey makers toiled on the founding father's popular recipe.

"FOR ME, it's like standing on hallowed ground," Jim Beam master distiller Jerry Dalton said as he took a break from re-creating the 18th-century recipe to survey the scene, three miles from the main house where Washington lived

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from 1754 until he died in 1799.

Washington started his whiskey business in 1797, after leaving politics. It was a thriving enterprise that yielded 11,000 gallons of whiskey and a profit of \$7,500 — or about \$105,000 in today's dollars — in one year.

Today's top whiskey makers spent hours Tuesday mixing, heating and cooling Washington's "mash bill," or recipe, of rye, corn and malted barley. They then ran their creation through a copper still atop an open fire.

Dalton looked relieved after sipping the creation, which he called spicy and aromatic.

"I had concerns about it. I mean, this is so primitive," Dalton said eyeing the outdoor flame and ancient-looking pots. "I thought it would be a little murky, but that's not the case at all."

They're planning to age the whiskey in two barrels for a couple years, and when they think it's ready, they will auction off an estimated 96 bottles of it to benefit the Mount Vernon estate.

MANY A SLIP

The distillers did hit a couple of snags with their brew. A special yeast that was shipped to Virginia from the Woodford Reserve distillery in central Kentucky died en route, so the whiskey makers had to pick up ordinary yeast at a suburban Washington grocery store.

Also, the team apparently used too much heat during a test and produced a sample that "tasted like burnt toast, burnt rye bread toast," said Joseph Dangler, who makes Virginia Gentleman bourbon.

Just adjacent to the outdoor area where the distillers re-created Washington's whiskey are the rocks and bricks that

make up the foundation of the first president's distillery. The Distilled Spirits Council, the industry's trade group, is spending more than \$1 million to excavate the site and rebuild the distillery. The project is expected to be completed in two years.

Mount Vernon Associate Director Dennis Pogue said officials would not distill liquor at the site but would explain to visitors how Washington did it back in the late 1700s.

As schoolchildren ran around on a class trip, Pogue talked about the careful "balancing act" of explaining Washington's life to visitors without promoting alcohol.

The association has been helpful to the industry, said Phil Lynch, vice president of Louisville, Ky.-based Brown-Forman, which makes top whiskey seller Jack Daniels.

"George Washington, he was the one that won the Revolutionary War. He was the first president," Lynch said. "It helps put into perspective that there's nothing wrong with the distilling process."

Washington's whiskey recipe

The recipe, or "mash bill," calls for 65 percent rye, 30 percent corn and 5 percent malted barley.

- First, grind the grains into a coarse meal. Then, mix the rye and corn in a wood vessel called a "hog's head." Add hot and cold water. Stick your hand in the mash to make sure it isn't too hot. If it doesn't burn, the temperature is just right. Add barley and stir.
- Cool the mixture down a bit more, and add yeast. Let the mixture ferment for a few days.
- Pour the mixture into a copper still, and let it boil. The alcohol will vaporize and condense, flowing out

of a tube, also known as a worm.

- Collect the liquid and run it through the copper still one more time. Now you have finished whiskey.
- Washington barreled his whiskey and sold it immediately. These days, distillers age it for a few years to improve its taste.

Recipe Source: Jim Beam master distiller Jerry Dalton / The Associated Press

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Distillers follow first president's recipe for test at Mount Vernon

David Pickerell, master distiller for Maker's Mark, carries water to be boiled as he and other master distillers gather on the archaeology site of George Washington's distillery on Tuesday October 21st.



Kevin Wolf / AP

If you ever happen to find yourself at Chesuncook Village, Maine, stop in the store for a fabulous homebrewed rootbeer. The "village" is a tiny outpost of camps where the West Branch of the Penobscot River empties into Chesuncook Lake. We came upon it while on a week-long canoeing trip last August. It is possible to get there by driving a high clearance 4WD vehicle a heck of a long way, but most people get there by boat. The store/brewer/mayor? sells fudge, homebrewed rootbeer, and rootbeer floats, period. We had several of each to ensure quality control.
Cheers - Dave Blumenthal 🍻

Hundé Bar



Hundé Bar Owner



Someone needed to bring entries to Boston

The deadline for entries for the Boston Competition is Jan 23rd. If anyone is going that way during the week before up until Jan 23rd and is able to help get entries to the area, please contact Anne Whyte at the store (655-2070), at home (879-6462) or by email at:

vtbrew@together.net



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