

Next club meeting

HVHB April 12 8:00 pm Mahoney's Irish Pub

Mahoney's Irish Pub

35 Main Street Poughkeepsie, NY 12601

8:00 pm

(Second Wednesday of the month)

mahoneysirishpub.com

Club officers:

President - Dann Gavaletz
Vice President - Phil Metty
Treasurer – Brian Jameson
Sargent at arms – Justin Lomas
Communications Secretary- Hilon Potter
Recording Secretary - Phil Van Itallie

Upcoming EVENTS on page 3



Mahoney's Irish Pub
Across from Train
Station

Minutes of March club meeting at The Derby

March 8, 2017 Hudson Valley Home Brewers meeting was held at The Derby. Vice president Phil Metty called the meeting to order at about 8:15pm. 15 people attended the meeting. Marco Dees was a first time attendee. Marco, while new to home brewing, has already done some all grain batches.

The signature cards for signing checks have not been updated to include Brian Jameson. \$350 has been received making a total of \$4090.26 in the treasury. The annual competition at the end of the week is expected to improve the club's fund balance.

Justin Lomas poured the evening's beers:

Beer 1- Eric Wassmuth brewed a pilsner with Munich hops and bock yeast

Beer 2- John Fry brought a saison which he brewed and added one pound of honey to five gallons after two weeks in the primary. John bottle conditioned his brew after adding coriander and orange zest. It had a 5.5 ABV.

Beer 3 - Phil Van Itallie brought a cyser based on the 2016 apple picking and pressing. It started with an OG of 1.060 and Lalvin EC1118 dry yeast. After three weeks, it had a gravity of 1.020 and was decanted to a different carboy. After three more weeks, the gravity had not changed but the mixture had clarified. Phil added 40 oz of honey, a trace of maple syrup and a teaspoon of potassium sorbate before bottle conditioning. There was more effervescence than expected after two more months.

Beer 4 - Kevin Drozenski brought an IPA brewed with Marris Otter that had a 7.5 ABV. He added 6.0 oz of Oddesy hops at the end of the boil and 4.0 oz of dry Oddesy hops was added after seven days.

Beer 5 - Rich Rang brewed a Founders Breakfast coffee stout with 3 oz of Sumatra coffee (cold brewed) and 3 oz of Kona coffee (cold brewed) at the end of the boil. Rich also added coconut and chocolate as well as Willamette hops. The beer was bottle conditioned.

Competition outlook

Josh Youngman said that there were 360 entries for the upcoming weekend's competition. Prejudging took place on Sunday and Tuesday with one more on Thursday to reduce the workload for Saturday's judging.

The competition is to start at 8:30 am on Saturday, March 11 at the American Legion Hall. Breakfast and lunch will be purchased and a chili contest will provide an afternoon snack while the best of show judging takes place. Samples of the judges trophy tasting glasses were displayed noting that there is no year written and the logo is the same as on the most recent T-shirts. A wealth of prizes has been assembled.

John Fry volunteered to take responsibility for the 2017 club picnic. Kevin Drozenski agreed to assist with the club picnic.

The 50-50 raffle drawing raised \$22 for John Fry and \$22 for the club. Josh Youngman, Brian Jameson and Rich Rang each won containers of PBW and StarSan.

The meeting adjourned at about 9:15 pm.

The Club has a number of PBW and Star San canisters available at a discount. Contact Josh Youngman or Phil Metty.

All of our events are publicized on Facebook - if you want to stay in the loop with club activities please visit <https://www.facebook.com/hvhomebrewers>

The club gets some money if you click on an Amazon link from the club website. www.hvhomebrewers.com

Upcoming Event(s):

May 6, 2017	Burlington VT Competition
May 6, 2017	Big Brew Day
September 2017	BJCP Exam sponsored by HVHB

2017 meetings and beers of the month (with 2015 style guideline identifiers)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	
April 12	27 Historical Beer	Mahoney's (or Dutchess Beer Dist)
May 10	22 Double IPA	Dutchess Hops
June 14	26C Belgian Tripel	Schatzi
July 12	17D English Barleywine	Tavern 23
August 9	4C Helles Bock	Schatzi
Sept 13	9C Baltic Porter	The Mill
Oct 11	24C Biere de Garde	Juan Murphy
Nov TBD	26D BDSA Anniversary Party-TBD	
Dec 13	17C Wee Heavy	Half Time

April 2017 Beer of the Month

27. Historical Beer (one name, many styles)

The Historical Beer category contains styles that either have all but died out in modern times, or that were much more popular in past times and are known only through recreations. This category can also be used for traditional or indigenous beers of cultural importance within certain countries. Placing a beer in the historical category does not imply that it is not currently being produced, just that it is a very minor style or perhaps is in the process of rediscovery by craft brewers.

Currently defined examples: Gose, Piwo Grodziskie, Lichtenhainer, Roggenbier, Sahti, Kentucky Common, Pre-Prohibition Lager, Pre-Prohibition Porter, London Brown Ale.

Historical Beer: Gose

Overall Impression: A highly-carbonated, tart and fruity wheat ale with a restrained coriander and salt character and low bitterness. Very refreshing, with bright flavors and high attenuation.

Historical Beer: Kentucky Common

Overall Impression: A darker-colored, light-flavored, malt-accented beer with a dry finish and interesting character malt flavors. Refreshing due to its high carbonation and mild flavors, and highly sessionable due to being served very fresh and with restrained alcohol levels.

Historical Beer: Lichtenhainer

Overall Impression: A sour, smoked, lower-gravity historical German wheat beer. Complex yet refreshing character due to high attenuation and carbonation, along with low bitterness and moderate sourness.

Historical Beer: London Brown Ale

Overall Impression: A luscious, sweet, malt-oriented dark brown ale, with caramel and toffee malt complexity and a sweet finish.

Historical Beer: Piwo Grodziskie

Overall Impression: A low-gravity, highly-carbonated, light-bodied ale combining an oak-smoked flavor with a clean hop bitterness. Highly sessionable.

Historical Beer: Pre-Prohibition Lager

Overall Impression: A clean, refreshing, but bitter pale lager, often showcasing a grainy-sweet corn flavor. All malt or rice-based versions have a crisper, more neutral character. The higher bitterness level is the largest differentiator between this style and most modern mass-market pale lagers, but the more robust flavor profile also sets it apart.

Historical Beer: Pre-Prohibition Porter

Overall Impression: An American adaptation of English Porter using American ingredients, including adjuncts.

Historical Beer: Roggenbier

Overall Impression: A dunkelweizen made with rye rather than wheat, but with a greater body and light finishing hops.

Aroma: Light to moderate spicy rye aroma intermingled with light to moderate weizen yeast aromatics (spicy clove and fruity esters, either banana or citrus). Light spicy, floral, or herbal hops are acceptable.

Historical Beer: Sahti

Overall Impression: A sweet, heavy, strong traditional Finnish beer with a rye, juniper, and juniper berry flavor and a strong banana-clove yeast character.

What Is Cream Ale (and Is There Cream in It)?

bon appétit

March 16, 2017 By [Alex Delany](#)

<http://www.bonappetit.com/story/what-is-cream-ale-beer>

Cream ale is living a lie. This became clear shortly after I took my first sip of [Genesee Cream Ale](#), handed to me at some point during my blur of a sophomore year of college. There was, as far as I could tell, no creaminess in the beer whatsoever. I felt cheated, confused, and slightly worried. I hesitated. Then, I drank five more.

It turned out that cream ale was actually everything I wanted: a light, inoffensive beer that I could drink repeatedly. It was reminiscent of another nameless beer I was used to slugging, but it wasn't so...watery. It had better flavor. And more of it. But what the hell was it? And why was it called a *cream* ale?

Cream ale, the bastard son of German lagers and English ales, was actually born in America, unlike most styles of beer. In the mid-1800's, American ale brewers started losing business to German-inspired lager breweries, so, as any innovative business will do, they figured out a way to adapt. They invented an ale that drank like a lager, which later became "cream ale."

Historically, ales were heavier beers than lagers, but ale breweries learned to lighten their beer by adding ingredients like rice, wheat, sugar, or corn in place of barley. "I still consider corn the best choice," explains [Jeff Alworthy](#), author of [The Beer Bible](#). "This is an American style, and a touch of corn gives it that signature of place."

The fermentation of this new process took about two-thirds the time a lager fermentation did, and it produced a beer of equal crispness and refreshment. That meant more beer more quickly, which meant more money.

"These were designed to be appealing, mass-market beers," says Alworthy. "In the 19th century, they would have used different malts and an old, kind of harsh hop called Cluster, but they were still shooting for something like what we know cream ales to be today." Light, refreshing, drinkable.

Still though, no cream. There's no evidence as to which brewery coined the term or in which city it officially originated. Information on cream ales is pretty hard to come by, as if someone didn't want us to know what's really going on (and thus starts the cream ale conspiracy theory...). What we can assume, says Alworthy, is the marketing reason they went with "cream", which is not unlike the history of [cream soda](#): "The word 'cream' suggests something rich or silky, but this was really just marketing gloss. They were also called—and I have never found an explanation for this—'present use' ale."

But these days, craft brewers are adopting the style in modern ways. Breweries like Denver's [Station 26](#) and Columbus, Ohio's [Wolf's Ridge](#) are brewing tributes: crisp, easy-drinking versions similar to Genesee's iconic cream ale. On the opposite side of the spectrum, breweries like [Carton Brewing Company](#) are moving away from the traditional recipe and redefining what a cream ale can be.

"My dad liked most of the regional cream ales when I was a kid," says [Augie Carton](#), co-owner of Carton Brewing Company. "I'd steal a **Ballantine XXX** or a **Genesee Cream** from the **fridge** just as much as anything else." His cream ale is a cold-fermented pale, meaning it's fermented at a lower temperature, the way lagers are. (Whereas ales are fermented at room temp.) "It's the simplest of pales, so it's an easy jump in many directions from there," he says.

Carton's series of high alcohol, imperial cream ales all relate back to coffee. The first beer in the

series, Regular Coffee, is brewed with dark-roasted coffee. Café y Churro adds cinnamon and vanilla to the mix, and Caffé Corretto goes with an Italian-inspired addition of anise. The result is an ale that does taste a little creamy. With flavors of coffee and a little sweetness, calling these a cream ale could finally be justified.

Now, I might be sipping them slowly, instead of chugging. Regardless, the cream ale is an American classic, and I am a patriot. This beer is ours, so let's crack another.

DRAFT

Crafted in Kigali March 13, 2017

<http://draftmag.com/crafted-in-kigali/>

Rwandan entrepreneur Fina Uwineza will open her country's first craft brewery as a tool for female economic improvement. She just might create a national beer along the way.

Rwanda is called the land of a thousand hills. Its lowest point is still some 3,000 feet above sea level, and the volcanic Virunga mountain range in the country's northwest region eventually tapers into rolling savannah and plains toward the east. Just a few degrees below the equator, the country's climate is stable and warm, with daily highs around 80 degrees year-round. A third of the world's gorilla population lives in Rwanda. It is a beautiful country with a hole in its heart.

In 1994, as a result of ethnic genocide, more than 500,000 Rwandans were killed in the blink of 100 days. Refugees fled while those who remained—mostly women and children—were left with a broken country and crushing grief. The economy ceased to function. More than 20 years later, much has changed as President Paul Kagame modernizes Rwanda's economy, elevates women's rights and takes a hard line against corruption.

Josephine "Fina" Uwineza was a Rwandan refugee from an earlier civil war in 1973 that killed her father. She has lived in Burundi, Kenya, Geneva and Canada since fleeing her native country when she was just nine years old, but her "whole spirit" stayed in Rwanda. After the 1994 conflict ended, she wanted to return to the country to be a leader in its rebuilding. She plans to do it through beer.

She came back to Rwanda's capital city, Kigali, with her husband and children in 1998 and opened the country's first Chinese restaurant, Flamingo Restaurant, in 2000. She ran it for 13 years.

After the restaurant closed, Uwineza met Nancy Coldham, a Canadian consultant who was mentoring female entrepreneurs and working on redevelopment in Rwanda. Coldham wanted to help more Rwandan women access capital in industries like manufacturing, and she had the seed of an idea for Rwanda's first craft brewery, run by a woman. "I needed someone who understands the hospitality sector, tourism, hiring and firing—and that was Josephine," she says.

Coldham approached the Ontario Craft Brewers Association seeking a craft brewery partner, and Beau's All Natural Brewing CEO Steve Beauchesne answered her invitation to advise the Rwandan project. She introduced Uwineza to the team at Beau's in Vankleek Hill, Ontario, who had volunteered to offer logistical guidance and technical assistance to the nascent Rwandan

brewery project. Momentum built quickly. Uwineza enjoys beer (“in a moderate way,” she says) but her real interest in opening a brewery is motivated by the lack of a Rwandan beer scene and by a brewery’s opportunity to employ women in both production and growing of raw materials.

“In our [Rwandan] magazines, I’m on the cover page. Everyone is talking about it; people are calling me and congratulating me. Others are asking me about jobs before we even start,” Uwineza says. “When I entered this venture, I was interested in it mostly because of the impact on employees, on women. Right now, our government and parliament and cabinet have more than 50 percent women. But still, we cannot deny that women are behind in so many ways, especially in rural areas. If I can employ women in growing the raw materials, I know it will have a big impact not just on those women but on families.”

When you hire a woman or educate a woman, you educate a whole village.”

After a successful Kickstarter campaign in November 2016 raised more than \$80,000 USD for the project, Beauchesne and his team flew to Rwanda this past December to work with Uwineza on the next phase. Beau’s has no ownership stake in the Rwandan brewery, a point Beauchesne says is crucial. He explains, “All of Africa has suffered from colonialization, and us going in to open a brewery so we can profit doesn’t help the Rwandese people. We’re here to help and then we step back. Even a one percent ownership stake would change the dynamics of this project.”

The December visit was energetic, focusing on practical steps for the brewery: scouting building locations, meeting with a banana-growing co-op that might supply some of the brewery’s raw materials, learning Rwandan homebrewers’ process for traditional banana- and sorghum-based brewing. But each night, Beauchesne and his team returned to their lodging at Hotel des Milles Collines, the setting for the movie “Hotel Rwanda.” “It cemented what happened here,” Beauchesne says.

The way Uwineza, Beauchesne and Coldham describe the brewery-in-planning imbues it with a purpose beyond just making beer. “As Rwandans try to emerge from the stench of colonialism and define themselves, how better than to have a national beer?” Coldham says. “Imagine Rwandans being able to raise a glass of their first Rwandan beer ever and cheer to their own independence.”

Currently, the country doesn’t have a brewery to truly call its own. The two main breweries that operate in Rwanda now, SKOL and Bralirwa, are owned in majority by foreign companies, the latter by Heineken. Their lagers are ubiquitous in the country’s pubs and are what most drinkers there associate with beer. But Rwanda does have a history of traditional **homebrewed sorghum- and banana-based beverages** (the Kinyarwanda word for the finished, fermented liquid translates to both beer and wine). To make the **banana beer**, bananas are buried underground for five days, then removed, peeled and spread into a long, hollowed-out log where they’re pressed down by hand with cut grass until they become a liquid. The liquid is then boiled; afterwards, sorghum is added to the liquid and the mixture is transferred to a clay pot. After a few days in the pot, it’s fermented to a sweet, strong, nearly rum-tasting beverage that’s consumed through straws straight from the pot. The **sorghum beer**, by contrast, is less alcoholic, maybe around 3-4% ABV, Beauchesne estimates, and has a noticeable tartness.

He and Uwineza hope to combine these traditions with North American beer styles to create something pleasing to Rwandan drinkers. At a beer tasting with Kigali restaurateurs during Beauchesne’s visit in December, the two most popular beers among a diverse spread were a traditional banana-based brew and, to some surprise, a 10.5% Belgian quad.

“The two things that got people really excited were local flavors and unique flavors, and that’s exactly the promise of craft beer,” Beauchesne says.

Before any beer can roll out the door, though, there are the usual hurdles: securing a location

(which, due to Kigali's strict zoning laws, may require government approval) and hiring and training a brewer, who likely will come either from the Rwandan diaspora community or from a graduating class at the university in Kigali. If all issues are settled smoothly, the brewery could produce its first beers by summer 2018.

The brewery also needs a name. The current front-runner is Kweza, a Kinyarwanda word with two meanings: The first is 'to ripen' and the second is 'to build someone up through compliments.' It encapsulates the dual beer-making and community- building goals of Uwineza's dream.

"Someone told me 'Fina, you must be a very courageous woman. I thought breweries were just for men.' I want to give confidence to young ladies; there's nothing you can't do," Uwineza says. "Even if I can impact 20, 30, 100 families, that would be an achievement in my life. If you impact a woman here, you impact all of Rwanda and all of Africa. This is global."

Not (Just) for Tourists: Patagonia's Beer Boom



[Beer Without Borders](#) by [Robert Kidd](#) | Mar 2017 | [Issue #122](#)

<https://www.beeradvocate.com/mag/15350/not-just-for-tourists-patagonias-beer-boom/>



Brothers Guido, Bruno, and Franco Ferrari, founders of Bariloche brewpub Cerveza Berlina. Photo courtesy of Cerveza Berlina

Bariloche doesn't feel like Argentina. Surrounded by mountains and hugging the shore of the imposing Nahuel Huapi, a 23-mile-long glacial lake, the picturesque Patagonian city famed for its Swiss and German influence is full of half-timbered buildings, chocolate makers, and fondue restaurants.

More than 900 miles southwest of Argentina's frenetic capital Buenos Aires, there's another reason San Carlos de Bariloche feels different than the rest of the country: beer.

In Malbec-mad Argentina, robust red wine has pride of place. Argentine beer offerings have historically been limited, with the company that owns Quilmes, the ubiquitous but uninspiring national lager, commanding 71 percent of the market. But while red wine may still be king, beer is no longer the court jester.

Craft brewing sales grew 50 percent in 2015 and in pockets across the country close to 400 microbreweries are quenching Argentina's newfound thirst for artisan brews.

Bariloche is one such hotspot. It has at least a dozen brewpubs—serving a population of roughly 150,000—that cater to thirsty tourists and locals embracing a new taste.

Martin Boan, a beer sommelier from the Centro de Cata de Cerveza (Beer Tasting Center), says there has been a recent boom in craft brewing. “The change in the consumption of beer in Argentina has been noticeable for 10 years,” he says. “First it was gradual and in the last five years it has been exponential.”

According to Boan, Bariloche's location gives it a natural edge in beer production. “Bariloche has very pure water sources and is next to the largest hop-producing area in the country (El Bolsón), which are two great advantages for brewing,” he says.

German immigrant Otto Tipp is credited with introducing hops to the region in 1900, adding to a cultural legacy in Bariloche that includes Bavarian architecture and food (as well as Nazis—some of whom found refuge in the city after World War II). But while some brewers have looked to Europe for inspiration, a focus on local ingredients makes much of the beer here distinctly Argentine.

Bruno Ferrari, brewmaster at [Cerveza Berlina](#), discovered his passion after trying a friend's homebrew. “I understood that beer was made by man and not by machine,” he says. “And that it was as possible as making bread in my own home. From there I never stopped.”

Ferrari studied brewing at Berlin's VLB-Technische Universität before returning to Bariloche to set up a brewpub with brothers Guido and Franco. Their business utilizes “the purest water on the planet” to create beers like a Strong Golden Ale made with juniper, a Nitro Foreign Stout, and a Pumpkin Ale in a nod to his daughter's favorite food. With a lakefront beach on one side and a vast carpet of forest stretching up a mountain slope on the other, Berlina's brewpub is one of the more spectacular spots to stop for a drink.

In general, Bariloche's brewpubs are set up for a climate that lures Argentine high school graduates and hikers in the summer, skiers in the winter, and backpackers en route to the Patagonian wilderness year-round.

Wesley Brewery, a short walk uphill from the Civic Center, has an open fireplace for the colder months and picnic tables with views of the lake for when the sun shines strongly enough to sit outside. The brewery produces about 1,056 gallons (4,000 liters) a week and its five regular beers include an intense Double IPA that somehow becomes more drinkable with each sip.

Like Berlina, it's a family operation, run by brewer Santiago Wesley, his father, and two brothers. The business is named for Santiago's grandfather Eduardo Wesley who came to Bariloche in the 1950s and began brewing at home.

“When we started brewing eight years ago we used all his old equipment,” Santiago says. “Now we are growing about 50 percent every year. Our main customers are local people. We brew first for locals ... tourists are important, but locals drink beer all year round.”

Both demographics can be found at Cerveza Manush, a popular two-story gastropub housed in one of Bariloche's oldest buildings. And with up to 16 beers on tap, from an Irish Cream Ale to a Pale Ale with local Mapuche hops, visitors will need to be more specific than “Dos cervezas por favor.”

When it opened in 1989, [Blest](#) was not only the first brewpub in town, it was also the first in the country. So as a pioneer, it has witnessed a sea change in drinker attitudes. “At first it was really difficult because beer meant Quilmes, people didn’t know there were different styles and colors,” says manager Leonardo Brizuela. “[Then] people began to taste different kinds of beer, and understand that lager is not the only beer you can drink. We had to teach the customers they don’t just buy ‘a beer,’ they must choose it.”

Martin Boan acknowledges that neighboring Brazil, which has also embraced the craft brewing movement, has won more international awards and offers the most variety on the continent, but points out that its population of more than 210 million is four times that of Argentina. Besides, he says, Argentine cervecedores don’t mind a challenge, and the first is in their own backyard.

“I think Argentine beer can become as popular as wine,” Boan insists. “The Argentine is a great consumer of wines by tradition, but today, if you look at the range of beers on the market, [we are] also [becoming great consumers] of beer.”

This Is The Beer Drinkers Are Most Loyal To : Coors

FOOD & WINE

<http://www.foodandwine.com/news/beer-drinkers-are-most-loyal>

By [Mike Pomranz](#) Posted March 06, 2017

As anyone who’s ever watched their uncle bring his own six-pack of Busch pounders with him wherever he goes can attest to, beer brands – even mediocre ones – can inspire shocking amounts of loyalty. A recently released report has tried to quantify just where that loyalty comes from and which beer brand does it best.

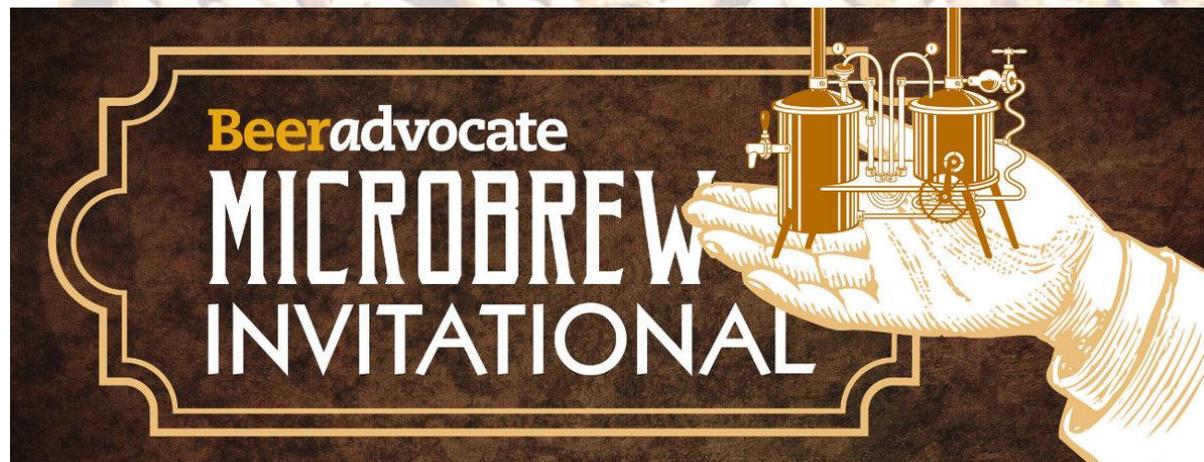
According to its 22nd annual [2017 Customer Loyalty Engagement Index](#), brand research consultancy Brand Keys says that when it comes to getting a buzz on, currently no beer inspires more brand engagement and loyalty than **Coors**. This year marks the first time the Rocky Mountains-inspired brew has topped the beer category, [knocking off last year’s number one, Sam Adams](#).

Of course, we’re left with the old question: What exactly is “brand engagement”? If you’re reading this from an open office plan somewhere, I’m sure your company’s social media team has a lot of fancy PowerPoint presentations full of screengrabs from Twitter that can explain it, but everyone seems to have their own definition. According to Brand Key president Robert Passikoff, “‘Brand engagement’ is a measure of how well a brand meets expectations consumers hold for the path-to-purchase drivers in a given category.” To put that jargon in plain English: Customers have expectations when it comes to why and how they buy beer; according to Brand Key, Coors did the best job in meeting those expectations. Frankly, it’s not the most exciting victory: A “Best Met Expectations” ribbon sounds like the participation trophy’s illegitimate brother. Still, as Passikoff points out, “Brands that cannot meet expectations lose customers and market share.”

But keep in mind, [according to The Motley Fool](#), Brand Keys only looked at a handful of the

thousands of beer brands out there, focusing on only the largest (and apparently lager-focused) names. Rounding out the top ten (which actually included twelve beers thanks to ties) are Corona, Yeungling and Samuel Adams (tie), Michelob, Budweiser, Dos Equis, Busch, Heineken, Stella Artois and Miller (tied) and Pabst. And even then, a failure to engage and retain customers doesn't really say much about a beer itself, only its marketing. In many ways, inspiring loyalty isn't about having the best product, but giving customers what they want.

So in the end, you could say that Coors is currently the beer brand that knows beer customers best. I guess beer drinkers really like cans that change colors.



BeerAdvocate Microbrew Invitational: A Celebration of Old-School, Small-Batch Brewing

We're proud to announce the return of our Microbrew Invitational at the Seaport World Trade Center on June 2–3, 2017 in Boston, Mass. "Last year's event was far more popular than we imagined. People were stoked to try all of the new brews that debuted exclusively at the fest," says Todd Alström, founder of BA. "The lineup of beer, cider, mead, kombucha and sake from over 70 small producers was one of our most diverse lineups yet. We're excited to do it again and improve on this unique event," adds founder Jason Alström.

Lineup

We're expecting over 70 microbrewers, pouring over 250 offerings; many of which you'll be tasting for the first time. Here's the current lineup of confirmed brewers:

<https://www.beeradvocate.com/micro/beer/>

Tickets

Join us! Tickets are on sale now: <https://www.beeradvocate.com/micro/tickets/>

Beer festivals around the world

<http://awol.junkee.com/around-the-world-in-10-beer-festivals/14458>

The Year European Beer Lost Its Hold on America

PUNCH

A half-decade ago, European beer reigned supreme on top lists

http://punchdrink.com/articles/the-year-european-beer-died-beeradvocate-top-beers/?cdi=3B77F6AEE9B47E2FE0534FD66B0A9766&ref=PRH1F42411657&aid=randohouseinc38421-20&linkid=PRH1F42411657&utm_campaign=punchnewsletter,punchnewsletter&utm_source=Crown,Crown&utm_medium=Email,Email&cid=41954&mid=391820265

February 21, 2017

By [Aaron Goldfarb](#) in Punch

still have the email from late 2008 in my archives: “A friend that now lives in Germany is coming back for the holidays, and told me he has an empty suitcase he is planning to fill with beer for me. He’s asked what I’d like... I told him Westy if he can somehow get it.”

He could. And in the summer of 2009, after months of planning, four dudes met in a midtown Manhattan hotel room to drink Beer Advocate’s then-No. 1 beer in the world, Westvleteren 12, aka “Westy,” alongside other highly regarded Belgian beers of the time, like Rochefort 10 and St. Bernardus Abt 12.

The notion seems comical these days. No one would beg a Europe-bound buddy to bring back Belgian beers—unless they were limited lambics like Cantillon—and a group of beer geeks would never meet in a Courtyard by Marriott to drink some quadrupels. But there was a time, just about a half-decade ago, when European beer still owned beer geek affections.

BeerAdvocate’s Top Beers on Planet Earth from [August 28, 2010](#) lists four Belgians in its top 11, and 17 in its top 100. Only two of those were lambics; the rest were boozy tripels, quads and strong ales, including many beers that are now definitive shelf turds, like Chimay Grande Réserve and Westmalle Trappist Tripel. Additionally, that 2010 list includes four German beers, four English, two Danish and three Canadian.

Today, Westy 12 has plummeted to No. 19 on the Top Beers list, and there’s only three other non-lambic Belgian beers in the top 100. There are no German, English or Canadian beers. There is, however, a single Danish beer: Mikkeller Beer Geek Vanilla Shake (Bourbon Edition), a vanilla bean-infused coffee stout aged in bourbon barrels that is Americanized in both name and profile. It’s a perfect example of what happened as we entered the second decade of the new millennium—old-fashioned European beers very quickly became usurped by these sorts of extreme beers.

When Did Rarity Start to Equal Greatness in Beer?

What can we learn from looking at 15 years of the Beer Advocate “Top Beers” list? Aaron Goldfarb mines the Wayback Machine to look at how beer geek affections changed between 2001 and 2016.

The ’90s and early aughts were about American beer locating flavor—any flavor—after decades of U.S. consumers subsisting on watery macro-swill. This often meant mimicking European styles, which you see in early industry successes like Boston Lager and Allagash White. But the evolving American beer palate began to push the limits of flavor as far as humanly possible, eschewing the simple four-ingredient beers that defined *Reinheitsgebot* Germany, [CAMRA](#)

England and monk-brewing Belgium. At the same time, Europe was asleep at the wheel, refusing to buck its longstanding traditions and, in turn, hurting its standing in the American beer geek firmament. (Shockingly, in the if-you-can't-beat-'em camp, 150-year-old Duvel just announced plans to release [a bourbon barrel-aged variant](#), but it might be too little, too late.)

Why did this change happen in 2010, exactly? Though it's difficult to point to one event specifically, a few keys things happened around this time. In May of 2010, Hill Farmstead opened in Greensboro Bend, Vermont, creating the model for producing small-batch, world-class beer that could only be acquired by traveling to far-flung lands (Hill Farmstead has a stunning 16 beers in today's top 250). Just under a year later, in early 2011, The Alchemist (also located in Vermont) began canning Heady Topper, their state-of-the-art IPA; it soon became the new No. 1 beer in the world, dethroning the indomitable Westy. The most popular American beers went from new-world takes on old-world beers—put in European-style corked-and-caged bottles, no less—to pounder cans of hours-fresh IPA.

Finally, on December 12, 2012, Westvleteren 12 was released for the first time in America. People lined up at retailers in 21 states, but in many ways that release was already its death knell, the lines akin to visitors paying final respects to a dead dignitary lying in state.

I remember it well. I avoided the lines at Top Hops on the Lower East Side, as did most of my friends. And when I was eventually gifted a single bottle from that release, I didn't call any one to meet up and drink the beer in quiet reverence. Instead, I spent the afternoon at a bar in Queens drinking a vertical of rare, adjunct-packed anniversary beers from [Stone](#), a California brewery that had just begun filling up the top 100.

Competition summary -- See Facebook for pictures

<https://www.facebook.com/hvhomebrewers/photos/>

High Score:	45 (Imperial Stout)	Top 5 Beers:	Outstanding (>45):	1
Low Score:	15 (German Pils)	Imperial Stout (45)	Excellent (38-44):	62
Average Score:	31.35	Doppelbock (43)	Very Good (30-37):	171
		Wee Heavy (43)	Good (21-29):	123
		Wee Heavy (43)	Fair (14-20):	11
		Scottish Export (43)	Problematic (<14)	0
			Total Entries:	368
			Very Good or Better:	235 (64%)
			Good or Worse:	133 (36%)



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