

Malted Barley Appreciation Society

November 2007 • Volume 14 • Number 11



PHOTO BY ALAN RICE

Cheers! From the editor's desk. —Alan Rice

NEXT MEETING:

Wed. Nov. 14, 7:30pm, Mugs Ale House.

**Our guest will be Shane Welch
of Sixpoint Craft Ales.**

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Merchant du Bière?

BY ALAN RICE

A break in the weather allowed us to have our October meeting in the beer garden at Mugs Ale House. But it was stormy in Chicago, and our scheduled guest, Joe Lipa of Merchant du Vin, got stuck at O'Hare. Fortunately, **Scott Kowalski** was available, and he did a fine job filling in at the last minute.



Scott has been with MdV for three years as their NYC rep, and he recently picked up NJ as well. He was previously in PA at a beer wholesaler. It was a great place to work, but they primarily sold Miller products, and Stella was their best beer. Scott jumped at the chance to sell fine beer in the big city.

He stocked a secret stash of Samuel Smith Nut Brown and Lager, and also Orval at his wedding. Somehow the word got out, and the back room was raided. Scott found a group of his friends and relatives draining the case of Orval, drinking from the bottles!

Charles Finkel was born in NYC in 1947. His family moved to Oklahoma, where they endured 3.2 beer until 1959. While at college in OK, he managed a liquor store and learned about fine wines and spirits. Later, he traveled throughout Europe

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and discovered the fine beers there.

He met his future wife, Rose Ann Martin, at a wine tasting he was hosting. In 1968 they founded Bon Vin, America's first boutique wine distributor. A few years later they sold Bon Vin and moved to Seattle. Among other things, he marketed Yuengling, and he founded Cold Spring Export as the first modern contract brewer (it was brewed to the Rheinhheitsgebot in MN).

Michael Jackson published the World Guide to Beer in 1978. Inspired by it, the Finkels founded Merchant du Vin and became the agents for Ayinger, Lindemans, Traquair House, Melbourn Bros., Orval, Pinkus, and Samuel Smith. They worked with these independent breweries to revive forgotten styles. Charles helped with

their packaging and marketing, and educated consumers as he had with wine in the '60s and '70s. (They finally got Samuel Smith to use brown bottles instead of clear ones last year – now if only they would send us their kegs and casks...)

In 1989, they founded Pike Place Brewery in Seattle's famous Pike Place Public Market. They specialized in British styles. For a while, we got the



Pale Ale, IPA, and XXXXX Stout here in NYC. For the time, they were amazing Northwest interpretations of classic British styles. They were contract brewed at Cata-mout in VT for the east coast. Unfortunately, this arrangement ended 10 years ago. Recently, I sampled their Old Bawdy Barleywine. It may not be the same recipe as when it won GABF medals in the early '90s, but this 10% ale packed with 90 IBUs

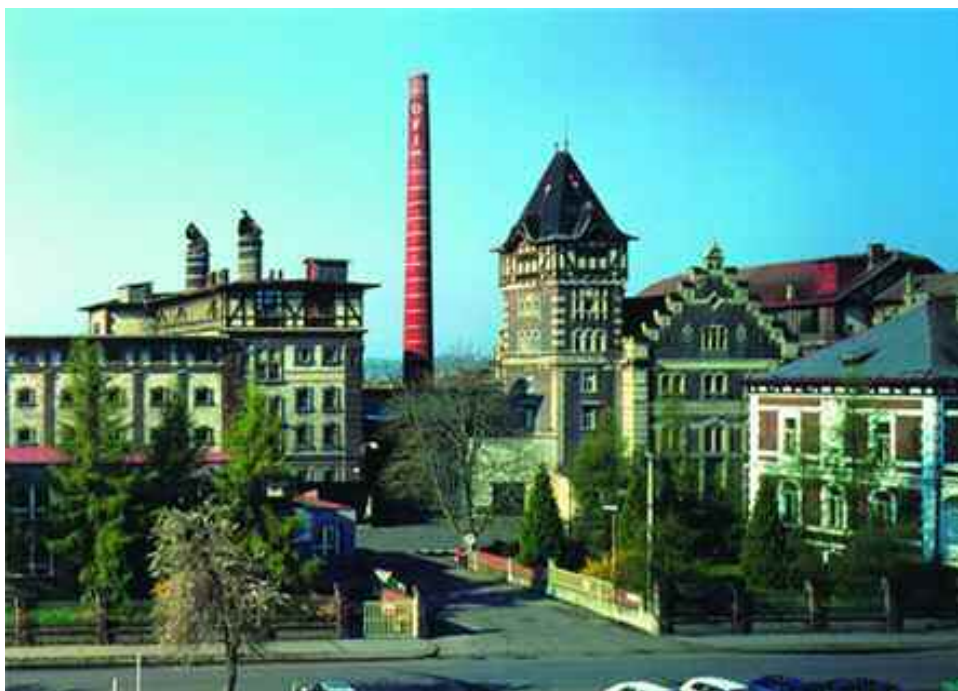
of Columbus, Magnum, Tettnanger and Centennial hops may be even better now. The brewery changed and several times over the years but is now back under the total control of the Finkels. It would be great if they brought it back here.

MdV picks up a Pils

The first beer that we tried was Zatec, a Bright Lager brewed by Zatec Pivovar in the Czech Republic. However, on the American label it's called the Zatec Brewery. Anyway, it's from the town of Zatec, which we know better from the German name, Saaz. Yes, that Saaz.

Hops were discovered in Bohemia in the 9th century, and they have been brewing there ever since. The Zatec Brewery was founded in 1261. The "new" brewery opened in 1801 on the location of a destroyed royal castle, and it is still brewed there today. In 1842, the world's

first golden lager was brewed nearby in Pilsen. During WWII, the kettles were buried to save them from the smelter. Under Communist rule, the beer was cheap, and the Czechs became the largest per capita beer consumers in the world. But there was no reinvestment or R&D, so the industry stagnated. In 1989, the brewery was privatized. A foreign investor purchased the brewery in 2001. The buildings were restored, and the brewery installed a modern wort chiller, a new bottling hall, and new



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stainless steel transfer piping.

Zatec Bright Lager is produced via very traditional, labor-intensive means: a double-decoction mash, open primary fermentation, and 45 days of lagering before packaging. Because the regional hop growers' cooperative is just a couple of blocks away in the village, the



MEETING PHOTOS BY WARREN BECKER

brewers at Zatec can pick up hops from them immediately before they brew. All of the hops are Saaz (Zatec) grown in the fields around the city, including the Saaz sub-varieties Sladek and Premiant.

The letter “Z” is pronounced the same way in Czech as in English. But they actually spell Žatec with a “Ž.” The wedge shaped diacritic mark over the letter is a caron. In Czech it's known as a háček, or little hook. It is found in several Eastern European languages, and it serves to soften the consonant. In this case, it's pronounced like “zh,” as in “treasure.” For no fee, and you get what you pay for, here's a possible marketing slogan: “For your pleasure, Žatec!”

It is a clear golden Bohemian Pilsner. But since “Pilsner” is an appellation in the Czech Republic reserved for beers from Pilsen, they must call it Bright Lager. Anyway, it had a half-inch creamy head that settled slowly. The nose has dominant malt sweetness, with a floral hop aroma. The start has a pleasant malt profile with a slight hop bite at the back. The Finish has modest acidity, and the hops are delectably spicy but not grassy. It is well balanced with a pleasant malt presence. Zatec is a light

and refreshing lager at 4.6%, with a surprising amount of flavor.

Zatec Bright Lager is also known as Blue Label. It is their export beer. They brew several other lagers for the regional market, including the new Xantho Special Dark Lager, at 5.7%. That's one I'd like to compare some day.

MdV picked up the Blue Label to compete with Budvar, and I'd like to try them side-by-side, along with Urquell, Staropramen, and Rebel. A trip on the N-train to the Bohemian Beer Hall in Astoria may be in the offing.

Time to get a new hobby

Celiac Disease, also known as Gluten Intolerance, is a genetically inherited autoimmune disorder characterized by intolerance to the elastic proteins found in all varieties of wheat, and the related grains barley, oats, rye, spelt, kamut and triticale. Even a small amount can cause a toxic reaction on the surface of the small intestine, which damages the hair-like cilia that absorb nutrients. Symptoms include abdominal pain, bloating, chronic diarrhea, etc. Continued exposure results in more severe, often permanent disabilities.

An affected person can, of course drink wine. And fortunately, all spirits, including vodka and whisky, are fine. Gluten proteins survive the brewing process, so I guess that they are left behind at distillation. So, there are many ways to imbibe, however, sometimes you just want a beer.

The disease can strike at anytime from childhood through old age. It hit Derek Green when he was 55. He was out of the textile business and was looking for something to do when he saw the need for this product. In 2004 he brought the first gluten-free beers to Britain. He contracted out to De Proef Brouwerij in Lochristi, Gent, Belgium. Greens's is located in Baildon Shipley, West Yorkshire, near Leeds. MdV is the sole American importer.

Gluten proteins are found in all grains and each is different. So a lab must test for the offending protein found in each of the above-mentioned grains. However, the gluten proteins found in rice, millet, buckwheat and sorghum do not trigger an autoimmune response in Celiacs. All of these grains are used in Green's beverages. And if they care to use it, corn is safe, too. Therefore, former drinkers of European and American mass-market lagers find it easiest to adjust to the taste of these beers.

Sorghum can be malted and its flavor is neutral, so it is the base malt for most

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“non-gluten” beers. They must use yeast that is isolated from offending glutes and propagated in a medium such as molasses or cane sugar.

Green’s now has nine beers in their portfolio. The most popular is Pioneer, a 5% pale lager, not available here. But there are already several such beers brewed in America, including Anheuser-Busch Redbridge, Bard’s Tale Dragon’s Gold (contracted to Gordon Biersch), and Lakefront New Grist. (The latter got approval from the Feds to use “Beer” on the label of a non-barley malt beverage, and the others followed.) So Merchant du Vin went for a niche within a niche, by picking up three strong flavored beers for the U.S. Perhaps they will be introduce more if these sell well. And with several million people suffering with some sensitivity to gluten or other food allergens, this may be a significant opportunity.

They are serving people with many special dietary needs. The labels state that that Green’s beers do not contain wheat or barley, crustaceans, eggs, fish, peanuts, soy, milk, lactose, nuts, celery, mustard, sesame seeds, sulfur dioxide and sulfites. There is a logo used in Britain indicating that it is vegan. And on the hangtag it says no wheat, no barley, and all natural, and there is also the logo for gluten-free. They are priced like high-end niche products, as I saw them around town for \$5.20 up to \$5.99 per half liter.

It is not fair to compare these to regular beers, because frankly, they would not do well in a homebrew contest against them. The beers must be taken for what they are, and be judged on their own merits. And to support the effort, CAMRA had the first gluten-free beer fest in February 2006 at Chesterfield. Cask and bottled beers were served, along with wheat-free pretzels.

A good analogy would be a vegetarian eating a veggie burger or tofu dog. Most carnivores won’t touch them, but with all the toppings, they are fair substitutes. When you no longer consume the original, your tastes adjust, and sometimes you just want something familiar.

The Green’s beers are better when they’re cold, and they’re better with food than standing alone. Pair them with the same foods as you would with the styles that they emulate. The best joke of the evening was that they should not be paired with shrimp, omelets, or Beer Nuts. (Maybe

you had to be there.)

The three that we tried are bottle conditioned. They have carbonation like regular beer, but the head is a bit different. They also have the appearance and mouthfeel of beer. And these Belgian and British inspired ales have more flavor than the lager-style sorghum beers. But they are all a bit sweet and sour, and there is something different about the aroma in all of them that requires acclimation.

Discovery Amber Beer is categorized as English Strong Ale at 6%. It poured reddish brown, with a decent head, and sour strawberry and currant aroma. It could have used a bit more of the Magnum and Saaz hops than 24 IBUs to balance the sweet and sour flavors and astringent finish.

Continuing with the Space Shuttle theme, Endeavour Dubbel Dark is 7% abv. It pours chocolate brown with a big dark head that was retained for a while. It has the sour, dark fruit aroma found in all three beers. Strongly flavored,

this brew is spicy and sour. There is sweetness from the caramelized candi sugar, which presumably provided the color as well. The Belgian yeast provided some funkiness, and 32 IBUs of Magnum and Saaz provided some balance. This could pass for a dubbel, and it was the best of the three.

No, now I see that “Endeavour” is spelled in the charming English style, and that the beer-naming theme is searching into the unknown. Quest Tripel Blonde has the 8.5% alcohol for the style, and it poured with a pretty good head, but the comparison ended before the soapy bubbles popped. It has a green tinge to it, which didn’t come from the Magnum, Hallertau, and Saaz hops. It smells like Martinelli’s sparkling cider spiked with alcohol, and unfortunately, tastes similar to it as well. It has a fizzy mouth feel with an odd vegetal flavor. It finishes like sour mead. If someone has Celiac’s they should probably try it for themselves, but I recommend Samuel Smith’s Cider instead.

Good things for those who wait

Our reward at the end was Rochefort 10. Since most of you are familiar with Trappist Ales, I am not going to go on about it. Get one if you have never had this huge, 11.3% world-class Quadruple. And if you like it, pick up

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a couple more and hide them in the closet, since they will change in wonderful ways as they age.

And as long as you're at the store, try a Rochefort 8 or a Rochefort 6, which are Stong Belgian Dark Ales. The numbers are very "old school", and refer to the specific gravity. This roughly corresponds to alcohol by volume, and they come in at 9.2%, and 7.5%, respectively.

There are seven Trappist monasteries brewing beer, six in Belgium and one in the Netherlands. Merchant du Vin imports beers from three of them. Besides Rochefort, we also get Orval, Westmalle Dubbel and Westmalle Tripel.



Congratulations to the New York winners at the 2007 Great American Beer Festival

- Cat. 13, American Style Sour, 12 entries, **Cuvee de Castleton, Captain Lawrence Brewing**, Gold Medal
- Cat. 18, Cellar or Unfiltered, 31 entries, **Hop Angel, Chelsea Brewing**, Bronze Medal
- Cat. 21, German-style Pilsener, 47 entries, **Kingfisher Lager, Olde Saratoga Brewing**, Bronze Medal
- Cat. 30, American-style Amber, 44 entries, **Toasted Lager, Blue Point Brewing**, Silver Medal
- Cat. 58, French & Belgian-style Saison, 35 entries, **Southampton Saison, Southampton Publick House**, Bronze Medal
- Cat. 59, French & Belgian-style Ale, 24 entries, **Southampton Double White, S'hampton Publick House**, Silver Medal

For the complete GABF results, click [HERE](#).

Beer and Bourbon...PART I

BY B.R. ROLYA

Recently, Bob and I went to a wedding near French Lick, Indiana. After arriving at the ranch where we were staying and where the wedding was to take place, we did the first thing that anyone would do: drove into town to buy beer for the weekend. I have almost managed to block out the traumatic experience of the beer aisle at the Jay C Foods and my subsequent beer consumption over the weekend. Let me just say that rural southern Indiana is not known for its craft beers.

We made up for this deficiency later in the trip, however. We had flown into Louisville, the closest airport, so after the wedding we returned to Kentucky where we spent a few days. Since neither of us knew much about bourbon and since I had already toured the horse farms around Lexington as a child, we decided that after a day in Louisville we would head south to Bardstown where several bourbon distilleries are located.

Our first stop after visiting the animals at the Kentucky State Fair, was the Bluegrass Brewing Company in Louisville. We hit the Shelbyville Road location, which is not only their oldest location but also the only one open on Sunday.

As we were exhausted from the weekend festivities and the state fair, we only sampled several of their beers (and took short notes) but we did enjoy the few that we had. We started out with the rich copper-colored Alt (4.19% abv) which had a malty aroma and a full malt flavor that was almost roasty, finishing with a crisp hoppiness. We continued with the 5% Drunkelweizen (sic) which was very light brown in color and had a faint clove aroma as well as a malty aroma that was reminiscent of a nut brown. The flavor followed in the nut brown trend, being much more malty than “wheaty”.

Next up was the Dark Star Porter (5.6%), a robust



PHOTO BY BOB WEYERSBURG



porter named after the 1954 Kentucky Derby Winner. It came with a thick, creamy tan head and was deep brown and cola-like in color. The roastiness in the aroma carried through to the flavor and was balanced by a pleasant sweetness in the middle.

The Weizenbock (7.1%) had a rich brass color and a slightly smoky nose mixing with the traditional hefeweizen clove note. The alcohol was noticeable and the rich, malty body came with a surprising but pleasant bourbon note (interestingly enough, we detected this note before the bourbon portion of our trip began).

BBC does brew Jefferson’s Reserve Bourbon Barrel Stout (8%; aged for 2 months in small-batch bourbon barrels) and we had picked up a 6-pack to enjoy back at the hotel. This is definitely a post-meal sipping beer as the malt sweetness, creamy roast, and vanilla and bourbon notes almost verged on cloying. While tasty, I think we would have appreciated this beer more if it were not so hot and humid out.

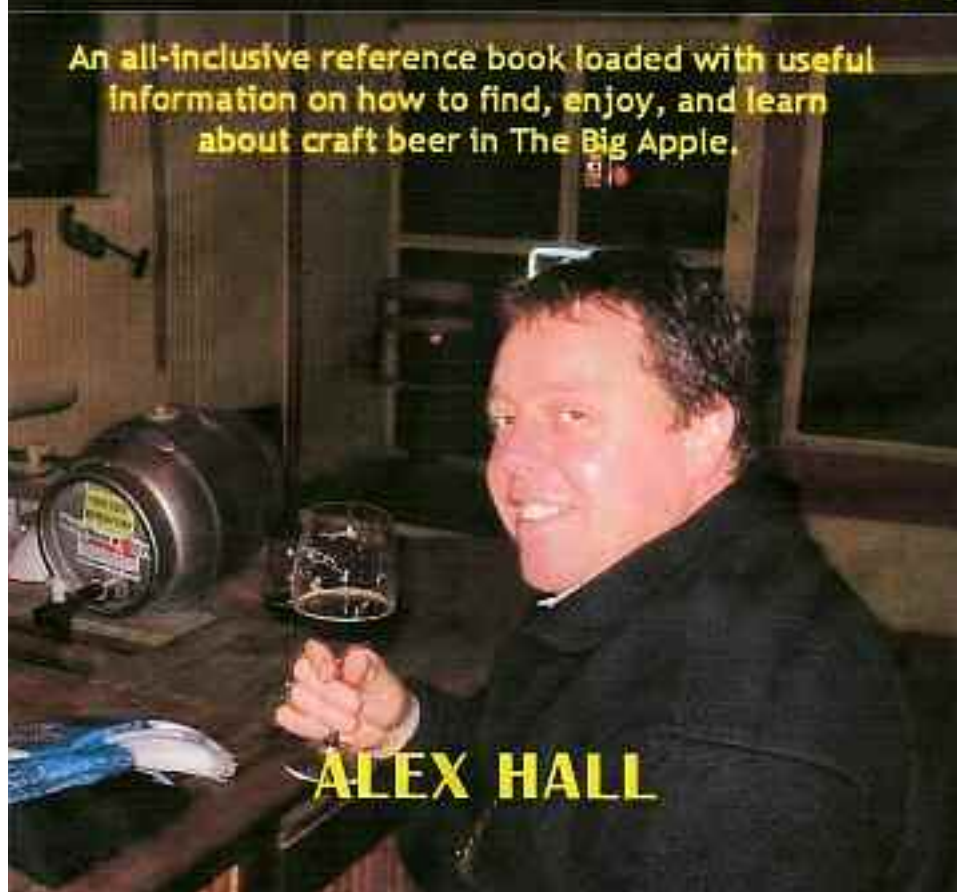
The next morning, we drove to Bardstown and threw BJCP style sheets to the wind as we got a crash course in bourbon production and tasting.

To be continued...

A self-published grassroots resource from the founder and publisher of The Gotham Imbiber

BEER DEMYSTIFIER NEW YORK CITY 2008

An all-inclusive reference book loaded with useful information on how to find, enjoy, and learn about craft beer in The Big Apple.



This good-looking chap is Nigel Croft of CAMRA.

A few people have wondered what I've "had up my sleeve" since the plug was pulled on The Gotham Imbiber magazine about a year ago. The answer is this comprehensive beer guide, which lists all breweries and all beers available in New York City, including tasting notes and grades on a scale of 1 to 5. Also, listed by borough and neighborhood are my top 100 bars, top 25 restaurants, and top 25 beer stores (plus some "also worth a visit" brief entries).

The project is finally complete, and is available here as a 136 page PDF file:

<http://www.gotham-imbiber.com/>

- Alex Hall

Homebrew Competitions

All entries welcome • Judges and stewards wanted

DECEMBER 1, 2007

New England Fall Regional Homemade Beer Competition

At the White Church, Old Deerfield, MA
Presented by the Valley Fermenters of Greenfield Mass.
For details, click [HERE](#).

FEBRUARY 10, 2008

Homebrew Alley 2

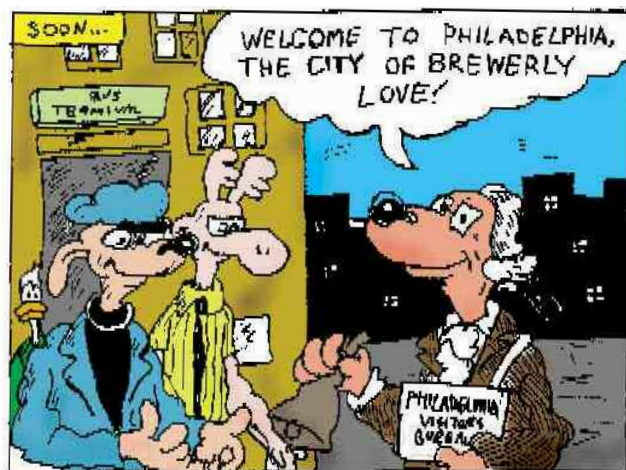
At Chelsea Brewing Co.
Presented by the New York City Homebrewers Guild
For details, <http://hbd.org/nychg/>.

MBAS PHILADELPHIA PUB CRAWL

Saturday, November 17 • All are welcome to attend.

Noon: **Monk's Belgian Cafe**, 264 S. 16th (near Spruce)
1:30: **Nodding Head Brewpub**, 1516 Sansom St.
3:30: **Standard Tap**, 901 N. 2nd St. (at Poplar)
5:00: **Eulogy Belgian Tavern**, 136 Chestnut St.
6:30: **Triumph Brewpub**, 117 Chestnut St.

Please RSVP to Mary Izett where you plan to join the crawl so that we can reserve space: meguiar@yahoo.com. We will attempt to stay on schedule, but we'll give you a cell number so you can find us if you're coming late and we're running late.



The crawl will involve walking, public transportation, and cab rides. Transportation to Philly is up to you. There are several ways to get there without a car (Click for hot links):

- Amtrak
- Apex bus from Penn Station
- Apex bus from Chinatown
- New Century Travel from Chinatown
- P2P Circular bus from Penn Station
- Greyhound
- NJ Transit

Calendar... Click on event titles for a hot link to their website.

Mon. Nov. 12, Sixpoint at Whole Foods Houston, 7-9pm. Meet the brewers and sample Eight Days of Wheat, the new house beer available exclusively here for only \$7/growler! For the occasion and until they're gone, Sixpoint Craft Ales will pour from the other 5 lines: the seasonals Belgian IPA and Belgian RyePA for \$11/growler; and core brands Bengali Tiger, Righteous Rye and Brownstone for \$9/growler.

Wed. Nov. 14, Lagunitas at Blind Tiger. List TBD.

Wed. Nov. 14, Southern Tier at Spring Lounge. List TBD.
Wed. Nov. 14, Avery at The Gate. Redpoint, Karma '06, Hog Heaven, 14'er ESB, Old Jubilation, The Reverend, Salvation, Ellie's Brown Ale, and bottles of The Maharaja and The Czar '06.

Sun. Nov. 18, 3rd Annual BRUCE Chili Cookoff at Barcade, 8pm. There will be an open buffet after judging the 10 entries in the BRowoklyn Underground Chili Extravaganza. The winner gets 3 cases of Sly Fox – expect quite a few on tap, too.

Tue. Nov. 27, Dogfish Head at Downtown Bar & Grill. We're featuring DFH through the end of the year. Join us for the seasonal debut of Pangaea '07, World Wide Stout '07, and Golden Era '07. Also on tap 60, 90, and 120 Minute; and Midas Touch, Raison D'Etre, Indian Brown, and Shelter Pale Ale. We'll have about 10 additional Dogfish in bottles.

Wed. Nov. 28, Allagash at Blind Tiger. Brewer Rob Todd will be on hand. List TBD.

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Calendar, continued

Thu. Nov. 29, Stoudt's at The Creek And The Cave, 1-3pm. Brewer Carol Stoudt will be taking over 4 taps and passing out free swag.

Thu. Nov. 29, Smuttynose at Barcade. Oak Aged Barleywine 2005, Oak Aged Maibock, Wheat Wine, IPA, Big A IPA, Farmhouse Ale, Gnome, Scotch Ale, Imperial Stout, Belgian Dubbel.

Sat. Dec. 1 - Sun Dec. 2, Belgium2Brooklyn II at Mugs Ale House. List TBD.

Tue. Dec. 4, Beer, Cheese and Chocolate Tasting at Jimmy's No. 43, 6:30pm and 8:30pm. With Anne Saxelby Cheesemongers, Chris Cuzme and Mary Izett. Expect both seatings to sell out, so RSVP ASAP at: rsvp@nycdat.com

Wed. Dec. 5, Lagunitas at Spring Lounge. List TBD.

Wed. Dec. 12, Stone Brewing at Blind Tiger. List TBD.



PHOTO BY ALAN RICE

Wed. Dec. 12, MBAS Holiday Party at Mugs Ale House, 7:30pm. Dan Shelton will once again be pouring us samples from the Shelton Brothers' winter seasonal portfolio while he regales us with tales of his latest travails.

For **up-to-the-minute event info**, go to:

<http://hbd.org/mbas/calendar.html>

For the **latest draft lists**, go to:

<http://hbd.org/mbas/new.html>

For **area beer bars**, go to:

<http://hbd.org/mbas/beer.html>