

Malted Barley Appreciation Society

January 2008 • Volume 15 • Number 1



Cheers! From the editor's desk.
—ALAN RICE

NEXT MEETING:

Wed. Jan. 9, 7:30pm, Mugs Ale House.

**Our guest will be Lars Dahlhaus of
Schwelmer Beer Imports.**

MBAS 2008 COMMITTEE

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Brothers in Beer

BY ALAN RICE
PHOTOS BY
MARY IZETT
AND ALAN RICE



Dan Shelton was kind enough to return for ninth consecutive December meeting of the Malted Barley Appreciation Society. His wife **Tessa** and brother **Joel** also came again. At this

point, they are no longer guests of the MBAS but full-fledged members. They are co-hosts of our holiday party with their amazing range and quantity of beer, and also witnesses to our annual election for the group's president.

Mike Lovuollo was nominated, seconded, and elected by voice vote as the MBAS president for 2008 in less time than it takes to open a twist off. I suspect a conspiracy of shady backroom deals and other nefarious activities. Mike has big shoes to fill, as we toasted **Mary Izett** for a job well done.



It seems impossible, but once again the Sheltons outdid themselves. Only a few people managed to try all of the 30 or so beers, and I was not one of them. So I'm sorry if I did not write up your favorite beer. I'd like to thank **Allan Dart** and his ironclad liver for picking up my pen when I wavered. And I apologize if your image did not make it into the newsletter. We had about 40 people crammed into the back room at **Mugs Ale House**, and not

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all of the photos came out alright. In fact, I did some people a favor by editing them out.

By now, most of you know that the Shelton's started out in the beer importing business in 1995 just so they could drink **Cantillon**, which Joel discovered during a gig in Brussels. Soon thereafter, Dan and Will snagged Germany's 15th largest brewery, **Kulmbacher**. Dan told the story of their start in the biz in great detail and with no punches held to Andy Crouch for the October 2003 issue of Beverage Magazine. Click [HERE](#) for an entertaining read.

Speaking of Kulmbacher, they started us off with big pours of **Mönchshof Weihnachts Bier** from two 5-liter mini-kegs. It's a 5.6% lager that pours clear and golden with a nice clumpy head. It's an easy drinker that is not challenging. Santa is on the label, but this is an Oktoberfest/-Marzen.

The town of Kulmbach is just outside of Bamberg near where the western part of the Czech Republic juts into Germany. It's in an historic area known as Franconia, which includes the northern part of the state of Bavaria and territory just to the west. This geography lesson is to let you know where Dan has been spending a lot of time lately. There are a few hundred tiny breweries in the little villages in this region. Many brew subtle, tasty lagers. And unlike other parts of Germany, you can find a dozen different styles. Yes, this is the home of Rauchbier and you will find many smoky varieties. The oldest rauchbier brewery in Bamberg is **Spezial**, which was founded in 1536. The smoke is apparent but subtle, so you will not think that you are drinking bacon.

Here's a quicky before we leave Bamberg. **Mahr's** brews some very good beers. Only a few hundred cases of their **Christmas Bock** made it to the U.S. Buy one if you can.

Some people still mistakenly think of the Sheltons only as Belgian beer importers. In fact, they like to say,

"We travel the world so that you don't have to." Their logo can be found on back label of beers from England, France, Denmark, Brazil, Japan, The Netherlands, Scotland, and Italy. Canada is in limbo; they really want to bring in a third batch of **Péché Mortel**, but the tiny **Dieu du Ciel!** brewpub is not cooperating. The quantity and price point are the sticking issues (more on this later).

They also distribute **Jolly Pumpkin Artisan Ales** of Dexter, Michigan. They are the type of small brewery that the Sheltons enjoy nurturing. They look for brewer/owners who wear coveralls, not suits. Ron Jeffries is this type of guy, and the Sheltons get along with him on a

personal basis. And importantly, he brews unusual, barrel-aged beers.

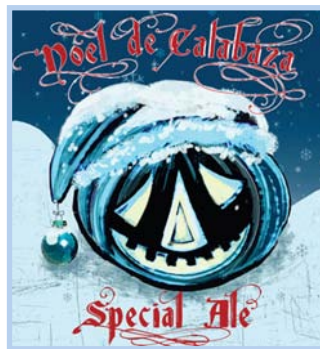
We got to try **Noel de Calabaza**, which is dark reddish brown, malty, with stone stone fruit, dried fruit, and nut flavors.

[**Russian River** is tripling capacity to 6,000 barrels with room for growth. Keep working on Vinnie Cilurzo, Dan.]

The Shelton's provide a big service to the small breweries besides distribution, and that is label registration. There is paperwork to be filed. Each label must be approved in every state. And many of the brewers are not fluent in English. But worse, there are fees to be paid. New York state alone charges \$150 per label, and sometimes the Bros. sell only 10 cases. That is why it can be difficult to find some of their beers in certain locales. Former lawyer Dan is mad as hell and he's not going to take it anymore – lawsuits are in the offing.

The cost of ingredients and the weakness of the Dollar vs. the Euro and the Pound are obvious reasons for the high price for some of their beers. But it is also expensive to deal in small quantities with these brewers. Some of them don't even make money on the deal but like the notoriety or esteem that comes with exporting to the U.S. The Shelton's need lots of these little breweries selling little bits. They try to ship a full a container.

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The Brothers put out a 5 beer “Christmas in Belgium” suitcase. I assume a few of these ended up under someone’s tree. They all have different but good looking and complimentary label art. **Perè Noël** from **Brouwerij De Ranke** is a 7% strong golden ale with a touch of licorice root that is hopped up for an American palate. **Kerstmuttske Christmas Nightcap** (from Dany at Slaapmuttske, via **Brouwerij De Proef**) is a 7.4% strong dark ale that is dry and spicy (but unspiced), fruity, deftly hopped.



Also in the sampler is **Zinnebir Xmas** from **Brasserie de la Senne** is a Belgian pale ale at “only” 6.5% from a brewery in Flanders that stays away from the strong stuff. It has a peppery spiciness, herbal hops, caramel, and toasted malts. **Winterkoninkske** (Winter King) from **Brouwerij Kerkom** is not a funky farmhouse

beer, but a quintessential Belgian farmhouse brewer’s winter ale from the maker of **Bink**; it’s strong, dark, luscious from oats, with dark fruit and a bit of sweetness and a welcome sourness. **Serafijn Christmas Angel** (that’s redundant) from **Brouwerij Achilles** is made in a typical garage brewery in Flanders; it’s a sweetish tripel with a spicy, fruity bouquet for those who like mead and spiced beers.

Mikkeller Brewery in Copenhagen, Denmark is a doing quite well in the U.S. selling American-style beers. Their Beer Geek Breakfast is very popular among beer geeks, of all people. We tasted **Santa’s Little Helper** 2007, a 10% quad brewed with pilsner, special-B and cara aroma malts, flaked wheat, syrup, dark muscovado sugar, and northern brewer, styrian golding and hallertauer hops. I only had a small sample, but for my tasting note I wrote a star, so I know that I want to try a full serving.

Brouwerij ‘t IJ of Amsterdam is located in a converted bathhouse standing next to a windmill – like almost everything else in Holland. Ij (pronounced “eye”) takes its name from a lowly squatter’s flat on the Ij riverfront where the owner spent his formative years. The money to convert the bathhouse into a brewery came from

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The Shelton Gang...

formed at the beginning of prohibition in Southern Illinois. While unknown outside of Illinois, Carl, Earl, and Bernie Shelton were just as successful and dangerous as Al Capone. The three brothers eventually employed 50 gunmen in their bootlegging operation. Over 150 people died as they consolidated power and fought off the Klan in the area around Cairo known as Little Egypt.

Feuding with rival gangster and former ally Charles Birger turned violent to the point where the Sheltons dropped dynamite from a plane on his headquarters. Birger testified against them in 1927, and they got 25-year sentences for robbing a mail carrier. Birger was hanged in 1928 for murdering the mayor of West City, who was a friend of the



Carl, Earl, and Bernie Shelton were liquor distributors.

Sheltons. The rest of the Shelton gang moved their bootlegging, prostitution and gambling operations to East St. Louis. They were eventually driven out and moved to Peoria.

The Shelton brothers got out of jail early during WWII and resumed their mayhem. A rival shot Carl to death in an ambush on his Peoria farm in 1947. Bernie was murdered by a sniper in 1948. Around this time Governor Adlai Stevenson took notice. He reorganized the state police and cracked down on illegal gambling. Earl Shelton survived an attempt on his life in 1949. He took the hint and moved to Jacksonville, Florida where he died at the age of 96 in 1986.

MBAS Holiday Party



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the royalties on a hit song written by the owner. Due to this success, the brewery doesn't have to answer to investors or pursue the export of its beers. Annual production is around 1200 barrels, and most of it is consumed locally.

"Ij" sound like the Dutch word "ei," which means egg. This play on words inspired the brewery's emblem – an ostrich guarding its egg – and the names of the beers Struis (meaning "ostrich") and Columbus. In Dutch parlance, "I've found the Egg of Columbus!" is the equivalent of "Eureka!" or, "I've invented something rather smart."

They were too smart for their own good on



their first attempt at a label for **Ijnde Jaars**, their holiday beer. Jesus wearing a Santa cap with puffy red eyes from smoking the local cigarettes was not going to fly. So instead we have a flightless bird dressed for New Year's Eve wearing a fez and blowing a party noisemaker. It's a 9% Belgian-style strong pale ale with a fluffy white head, sweet caramel aroma, a rich flavor with raisins and a finish with noble hops.

Nøgne Ø was started by two homebrewers in Norway who got tired of drinking lagers. The head brewer is an

airline pilot. In his travels he discovered American craft beers and wanted to bring these flavors to Scandinavia. For a while he kept his day job, but he is now brewing full time to keep the Sheltons happy.

Norway has laws similar to Utah, where strong beer must be sold in state-owned liquor stores. In order to get their Christmas beer in supermarkets, they brewed **Julesnadder** at 4.5%. In this country, problems arose with the original name, **God Jul**, which means Merry Christmas. Apparently, no beer can start with the letters g-o-d.



It's a g-o-o-d thing that the authorities don't know that Nøgne is Norwegian for the Naked Coast.

It's a dark red ale brewed with Maris Otter, Munich, caramel, black, amber, and chocolate malts; Chinook, Columbus, and Cascade hops; and English

ale yeast. It was the only session beer of the evening.

If you are looking for a beer that is produced in the Champagne method similarly to DeuS, but a bit less expensive and with a much better name, try **Eisenbahn Lust**. I have to try it as well, since I didn't know that they opened a bottle until I saw Mary's photos on Flickr. (Dan and Joel brought an incredible amount of beer. If you went home sober, you must have had an 8 a.m. meeting or car

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keys.) **Cervejaria Sudbrack** produces the Eisenbahn line in Blumenau, Brazil. They claim to be the largest craft brewer in the country. Eisenbahn also brews a Belgian-style strong golden ale. The rest of their line-up is German-style, as the brewer is from Weihenstephan.

No December would be complete without the **Ridgeway** series of holiday beers. There are now so many different Bad Elves that even the Insane ones are getting into the act. If you're tired of Santa dropping Lumps of Coal out of his Butt and into your beer, well, this year there is a new cartoon character to kick around. The Reindeer has Revolted and he's spending the winter in Florida. He's on the label of a 6%



beer that is one of the better ones of the series. I know what Ridgeway is trying to do here, but their bottled conditioned, English IPA, is far superior to these. Check it out.

According to Dan, British breweries are heading towards a financial crisis. He says that they account for only

about 4% of our imports, and that includes big guys like Newcastle. (And Guinness, which we get from Canada?) Their craft breweries are producing subtle beers that aren't popular with beer geeks. Many of them are trying to do bigger beers, but not everyone is good at every style.

This is particularly annoying to Dan, since he prefers subtle beers. He has issues with sites like **Rate Beer** and **Beer Advocate** (BA), which hype up Imperial This and Double That. And the raters don't do blind tastings, so they are influenced by the hype. Dan got into a big on-line argument with Todd Alstrom, co-founder of BA when he went after this mentality, and Todd shot back that Dan was "High and



Mighty." **Todd and Jason Alstrom** were in town on business, and came by Mugs after the Stone Brewing event at the Blind Tiger. So the two



sets of Beer Brothers are no longer feuding.

The Shelton Bros. put their money where their mouths were when it came to flavorful session beers. They are contracting at **Paper City Brewing** in Holyoke, MA under the name **High and Mighty Brewing Co.** Hey, why waste a good insult? This is primarily Will Shelton's project, and he now has four styles under his belt. Click [HERE](#) to read about the first three and the brand's philosophy.

*It's the most wonderful
time for a beer!*

Beer and Bourbon, Part 2

BY B.R. ROLYA

(After attending a wedding in southern Indiana, Bob and I spent a day in Louisville drinking beer before heading to bourbon country. This is the continuation of that trip report.)

The next morning, we drove south to Bardstown and got a crash course in bourbon production and tasting. From the guidebook, we knew that bourbon had to contain at least 51% corn in the mash and be aged a minimum of 2 years in a new charred American oak barrel. Originally produced in Bourbon County, barrels of whiskey marked with this place of origin were shipped down the river to New Orleans where imbibers who liked the mellow flavor began to refer to it as bourbon.

After learning this simple history, our heads began to spin - not from the bourbon - but by all the facts about bourbon and its production that we learned on the tours. The limestone water from this region of Kentucky is one of the components that contributes to bourbon's flavor profile.

The initial process is essentially like that of beer brewing: grains (corn and malted barley, and wheat or rye) are crushed, put in a mash tun with water, and heated. Unlike beer, the entire mash goes into the fermenter with the yeast. A small portion of spent grains from the previous

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The Maker's Mark mash tun, above, cypress fermenters, right, and the stills, below. The distillery was quiet—they were not in production.



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batch are added, creating a sour mash. They call this crusty, pungent liquid “beer.” Spent grains are removed during the distillation process. It is then twice distilled in pot stills to less than 160 proof; at a higher proof key flavors would be lost. The resulting clear liquid, or “white dog,” is then diluted with water to no more than 125 proof before it enters the barrel.

Bourbon must spend a minimum of two years in new charred oak barrels (although most, if not all, distillers age their whiskey for at least four years) and the barrels are stored in tall warehouses with open windows for plenty of ventilation. The combination of hot summers (wood expansion and fluid absorption) and cold winters (wood contraction and fluid release) contributes to the aging process. Scotch whisky takes longer to mature since it ages in used barrels, and the temperature and humidity variance is less extreme. Interestingly, bourbon loses more water than alcohol to the atmosphere during dry winters, so it increases in proof during aging. Conversely, scotch decreases in proof over time.

Once the distiller decides that a barrel is properly aged and has absorbed the flavors of the charred oak (vanilla, caramel, and butterscotch among others) as well as the color, the whiskey is then either blended (straight bourbon) and bottled or, in the case of an exceptional barrel, put directly into the bottle without blending (single barrel). Small batch bourbons are part of the straight bourbon category and generally refer to smaller selection of prime barrels, often of the same age, that are blended together. All bourbon must be bottled at a minimum of 80 proof (40% abv).

Our first visit was the Maker’s Mark Distillery in Loretto. They were not distilling at the time but tours were still given, so we learned that it’s the oldest operating distillery on its original site (built in 1805 as a gristmill distillery), that they use 12 foot deep cypress fermenters, and that they produce only one brand. They do not pick out single barrels, but rotate their stock up and down and throughout the warehouse so that all are aged equally. They don’t sell different vintages or have different age statements – just one consistent product.

Maker’s Mark recipe is comprised of corn, malted barley, and winter wheat. Unlike most bourbon producers, they do not use rye. All bourbons are primarily corn, which provides sweetness. It usually comprises 70-75% of the grain bill, but there are extremes in the low 60s and

upper 70s. Also known as the mash bill, it is a closely guarded secret. The enzymes in malted barley (about 8-12% of the recipe) are necessary for proper fermentation; it also adds creaminess to the mouthfeel but little flavor. The distiller chooses wheat for the “small grain” if he wants a smoother, mellow whiskey, and rye if he wants a



In the visitor center we were offered the opportunity to “dip” our own bottle into a vat of melted red wax to give it the Maker’s Mark trademark seal.

spicy, minty, more assertive flavor. Wild Turkey and Jim Beam are popular brands with rye. Compare them to Maker’s, which is the biggest selling wheated bourbon.

After a tour through the historic buildings we ended up at the visitor center where we were given free samples of bourbon candy and offered the opportunity to “dip” our own bottle into a vat of melted red wax to give it the Maker’s Mark trademark seal. Bob was generous enough to allow me to dip our bottle.

After dipping our bottles in wax and our toes into bourbon production, we figured that we ready for the Oscar Getz Museum of Whiskey History, located in the Bardstown Historical Museum. There we learned more about bourbon’s history and production, moonshine and

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illegal stills, and prohibition until we were gently ushered out at closing time.

By this point we were getting thirsty so we took advantage of the selections of the Bourbon Bar at the Old Talbott Tavern (a stagecoach stop from the 1700s) where we were staying. Overwhelmed by the large list, we were happy to find that they offered a sampler similar to what you'd find at a brewpub. We started by choosing five names we were unfamiliar with (which were numerous since we don't know a lot about bourbon). The bartender, seeing our confusion, was very helpful and pointed out a few standout items to try including Elijah Craig 18 year old single barrel which she described as "my daddy's favorite." When we tried it we agreed that her daddy has good taste.

The next morning we headed to Heaven Hill Distillery (the producers of Elijah Craig) and the Bourbon Heritage Center. By this point we thought that we were old pros at bourbon, until we were humbled as we spent several hours there learning even more. The Heritage Center is probably the most detailed visitor's center dedicated to an alcoholic beverage that we have ever seen. Part museum, part multimedia and promotional tour of Heaven Hill Distillery we were immersed in all things bourbon including the aroma of bourbon at different stages of aging. We finished with samples of their bourbon chocolate in the tasting room (shaped like a giant still), and were then lead through a lengthy and descriptive tasting of Elijah Craig 18 year old and Evan Williams single barrel from 1997.



The photo directly below comes from the Heritage Center Web site. It shows the barrel house at Heaven Hill Distillery.



We had originally planned to visit another distillery but we ended up spending so much time and learning so much at Heaven Hill that we just headed straight back to Louisville to have a quick bite before catching our return flight.

If you ever do a bourbon tour of Kentucky, we highly recommend starting at the Bourbon Heritage Center and then visiting other distilleries of your preference, especially if you are new to distilled spirits like ourselves (note that several are closed in August). We thoroughly enjoyed ourselves and our only regret is that now we've got to find room in the liquor cabinet for a few more bottles.

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

Wed. Jan. 9, Rogue at The Gate.

Brutal Bitter, Hazelnut Brown Nectar, Dry Hop St. Rogue Red, Chipotle Ale, Brewer, Nitro Chocolate Stout '06, Anniversary Monk Madness '05.

Wed. Jan. 9, 4pm, Southern Tier at Blind Tiger.

Choklat Imperial Stout, IPA on cask, IPA, Unearthly IPA, Uber Sun, Gemini IIPA, Porter,

Raspberry Porter, Raspberry Wheat, Big Red, Hoppe, Phin & Matt's, Old Man Winter.

Tue. Jan. 15, 7pm, Sly Fox at Bar

Great Harry. Brewer Brian O'Reilly will be visiting. Black Raspberry Reserve (Raspberry Wheat 8%), Gang Aft Agle (Scotch Ale), Ichor '06 (Quad 10%), Odyssey (11 Hop Varietal IIPA,

8.4%), O'Reilly's Stout (Irish Dry Stout 3.9%), Pikeland Pils (German-style Pils 4.9%), Saison Vos (6.9%).

Wed. Jan. 16, New York, NY at The

Gate. Southern Tier, Captain Lawrence, Ommegang, Brooklyn, Ithaca, Sixpoint, Blue Point, Southampton, Middle Ages, and more.

CALENDAR continues on next page

Homebrew Competitions

**Please participate • All entries welcome
Judges and stewards wanted**

FEBRUARY 10, 2008

Homebrew Alley 2

At Chelsea Brewing Co.

Presented by the New York City Home*brewers Guild

Entries collected Jan. 20 - Feb. 1

For details, <http://hbd.org/nychg/> .



MARCH 1, 2008

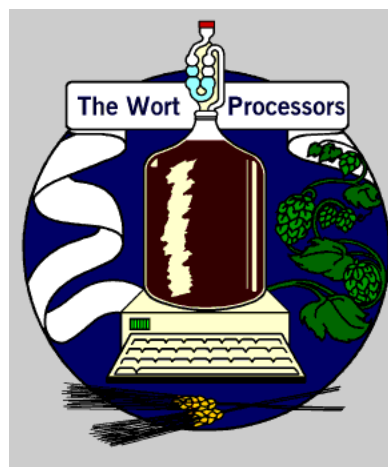
Boston Homebrew Competition

At Holland & Knight in the Back Bay

Presented by the Boston Wort Processors

Entries due by Feb. 13

Details at <http://www.wort.org/bhc>



MARCH 15, 2008

HVHB 18th Annual Homebrew Competition

At the Gilded Otter Brewing Co. in New Paltz

Presented by the Hudson Valley Home
Brewers

Entries collected Feb. 16 – Mar. 8

Competitors contact aalexa@aol.com

Judges contact

Gregory_Venditto@bd.com

Stewards contact

justintaylor84@hotmail.com



Hudson Valley HomeBrewers,inc

Established 1989

Incorporated 1994



Continued from first CALENDAR page

Wed. Jan. 16, Winterfest at

Standings. Five strong seasonals on tap featuring Stoudt's Winterfest (brewed with cocoa), and free burgers from Paul's.

Thu. Jan. 17, 6pm, Vintage Beer

Night at Barcade. We are over run with kegs from 2004, 2005 and 2006 in the storage room and now in the office, too. Expect some North Coast, Brooklyn, Weyerbacher, Dogfish, Smuttynose, Flying Dog and Sixpoint and much more.

Sat. Jan. 19-Sun Jan. 20, Daze of

the Devil II, Hop Devil Grill.

Noon-6pm on Sat., and Noon until they're gone on Sun. At least 20 beers on tap with at least 8% abv, some rare to NYC, 4 oz samples available.

Sat. Jan. 19 - Sun Jan. 20, 2nd Annual

Daze of the Devil at Hop Devil. Noon-6pm on Sat. and Noon until they're gone on Sun. At least 20 drafts from around the world, some rare to NYC, min. 8% abv, 4 oz.

samples available.

Tue. Jan. 22, 6:30pm and 8:30pm, Chocolate, Craft Beer and Artisanal Cheese at Jimmy's No. 43. Hosted by Anne Saxelby, Chris Cuzme and Mary Izett.

Tue. Jan. 22, 7pm, Ommegang Beer Dinner at Quaint, \$55. Enjoy a five-course dinner paired with Duvel, Hennepin, Rare Vos, Ommegang, and Three Philosophers at Time Out NY's 2007 "Best New Restaurant in Queens."

Wed. Jan. 23, Pat's Picks at The Gate's. List TBD.

Sat. Jan. 26, 1-5pm, 4th Annual Long Island Cask Ale Fest at Blue Point Brewery, \$34.50 in advance, \$40 at the door. Featuring the debut of Blue Point Rye Hop Knot served from the world's largest cask, and 30 others from Southampton, Black Forest, Captain Lawrence, LI Meadery, Brick House, Chelsea, John Harvard's and more. Live music and BBQ, too.

Wed. Jan 30, Brooklyn at Andy's Corner. Garrett Oliver will be on hand with some special kegs and casks.



Thu. Feb. 7, 6pm, 3rd Annual Midwest Night at Barcade. About 20 drafts, list TBD.

Fri. Feb. 15 - Sun. Feb. 17, Max's 4th Annual Belgian Beer Fest. In Baltimore, you will find over 100 Belgian beers on draft and over 130 in bottles, plus a full Belgian-style menu.

Fri. Feb. 22 - Sun. Feb. 24, Noon-Midnight, 14th Tri-Annual Cask Head Fest at Brazen Head. Expect 25 casks to be pouring over the weekend, at least 10 at a time.

Up-to-the-minute event info:
<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>