

TOP DENTISTS 2010

WHAT'S UP? Annapolis

WHAT'S UP? ANAPOLIS
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OCTOBER 2010

HEALTH HOME & GARDEN DINING ART

Chesapeake Beer Madness is Back!

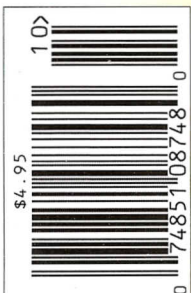
Taste the Best Local Brews

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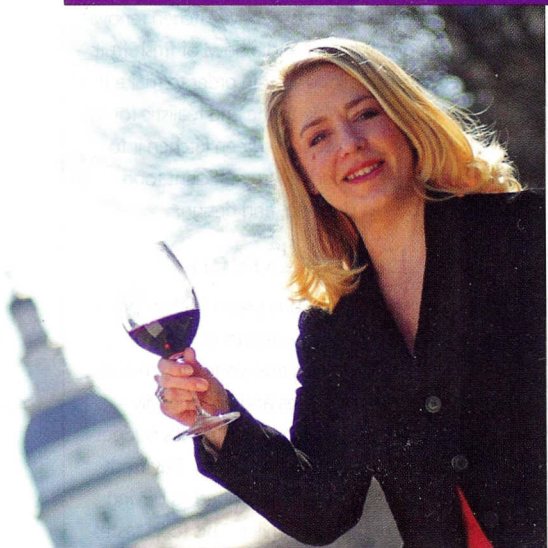
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The Wine Column

For a Change of Pace, We Taste Belgian Beer



Laurie Forster, *The Wine Coach*®

Belgian Beer

By Laurie Forster

If you were looking for a place where beer is a centerpiece of culture, then the European country Belgium would be the spot.

Belgium is roughly the size of Maryland and home to more than 125 breweries that comprise an industry that dates back to the Middle Ages. Beer experts regard Belgium as home to some of the best beers in the world, which may be why per-capita consumption of beer there is about 200 pints per person.

Belgian's brewing industry began when flocks of monks fled France during the French Revolution, settled in Belgium and produced beer for their own consumption. Thankfully for us, the monks began selling their malt beverages sometime in the 1860s. Currently, there are six monasteries in Belgium still producing Trappist beer.

To qualify as a Trappist beer, production must take place on or near a monastery and monks must oversee the process. In addition, the profits need to help support the monastery or other non-profit groups. Breweries that meet some, but not all, of these criteria are considered Abbey beers. Abbey beers are made by defunct monaster-

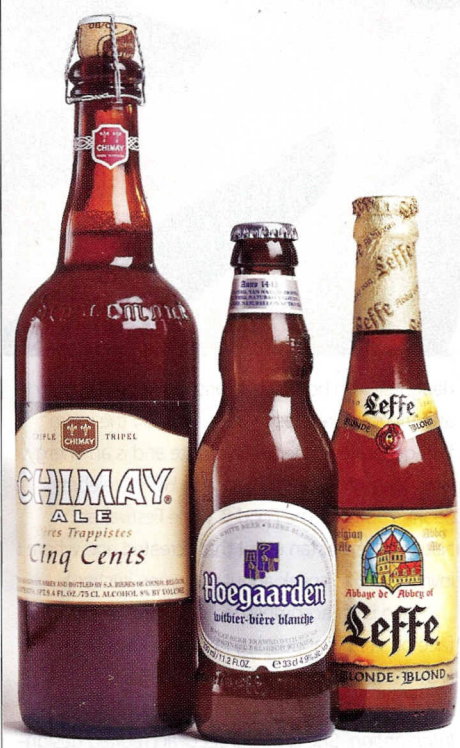
ies, as well as by larger commercial brewers.

Both Trappist and Abbey beers from Belgium come in a variety of styles ranging from lighter Pilsners, white beers, and Lambic fruit beers to Tripel—a strong pale ale—and dark stout beers. If you multiply the variety of styles by all the breweries in Belgium, you have more than 7,000 different beers being produced. This is what beer lovers might call heaven!

With complex aromas, flavors, and elegance, these beers remind me more of wine than what we stereotypically think of as beer. Given all the styles, you can pair a Belgian beer with just about any food. ■

Laurie Forster is a wine educator and author of the award-winning book The Sipping Point: A Crash Course in Wine. Special thanks to Mills Wines & Spirits in Annapolis.

PHOTO BY TONY LEWIS, JR.



While celebrating Oktoberfest this month, discover great Belgian beers, such as Chimay White, Hoegaarden "Witbier," and Abbaye de Leffe Blonde Ale.

As the weather cools off, I invite you to take a trip to Belgium via glass and discover these amazing brews with your next meal. Here are some great Belgian beers I found in our area. Give one a try!

Abbaye de Leffe Blonde Ale

(Style: Pale Ale, 6.6% abv)

Originally made by monks, Leffe was first brewed in 1240 and is still brewed in much the same way today. This Abbey-style blonde ale from Leffe is full bodied, dry, and creamy with great fruit flavors and a hint of spice. It has a delicate malty aroma with a subtle, sweet finish. Try this blonde ale with barbecued chicken and an ear of buttered corn.

Delirium Tremens

(Style: Belgian Strong Pale Ale, 8.5% abv)

Named after the withdrawal symptoms you can get from overindulging, this Belgian Ale is made by the Brouwerij Huyghe brewery, which was founded in 1654. This Strong Pale Ale has 8.5 percent alcohol and a light golden color. It's medium bodied and has both fruity and peppery flavors that would pair well with hors d'ouerves, cheeses, and great company. Delirium Tremens is easier to drink than you would expect for such a strong beer. It also has a label adorned with the mythical pink elephants that you're sure to see if you have one too many!

Hoegaarden "Witbier"

(Style: White Beer, 4.9% abv)

As in many brewing towns, the art of beer-making in the village of Hoegaarden was developed by monks in medieval times. Hoegaarden's white beer uses 50 to 60 percent wheat with barley to create this white-style beer. The beer is unfiltered, making the appearance cloudy from the suspended yeast. White beers are lighter and more acidic than typical ales, which translates to a crisp, more refreshing brew. Hoegaarden uses spices like orange peel and coriander with some hops to accent the flavor. White beers pair best with lighter cuisine like fish, salads, and poultry.

Chimay White

(Style: Tripel, 8% abv)

Chimay is probably the best known of the six Trappist breweries in Belgium, and for good reason—they make amazing beer. This Trappist Tripel style is brewed with three times the amount of malt used in brewing simple ale. The Chimay White has a higher alcohol content of 8 percent with a cloudy golden color accented by dried fruit, floral, and spice aromas. The body is full and rich with a pleasant bitterness on the finish from the aromatic hops they use. Pair the Chimay White with strong cheeses and white meats like pork or poultry.