



Photos by Chuck Cook

SOUR FEST IN BELGIUM

Brouwerij Timmermans, Itterbeek, Belgium.

By Chuck Cook

Toer de Geuze, Belgium’s premier lambic beer event, continues to grow greatly in popularity. It is organized every odd-numbered year in the Payottenland and Zenne Valley, Belgium’s lambic country. This year’s celebration of spontaneously fermented brews was held on Sunday, May 3.

Toer de Geuze is an open house at most of the Belgian lambic breweries and blenders. For 2015, the participating lambic producers were Boon, De Troch, Drie Fonteinen, Hanssens, Lindemans, Mort Subite, Oud Beersel, Tilquin and Timmermans. De Lambiek, the new lambic beer visitor’s center in Alsemberg, was also open for visitors. See DeLambiek.be.

Each individual lambic brewery and blendery was free to do its own thing during the Toer. Most opted for a combination of education about lambic brewing and blending, along with tasting and fun activities for adults and children alike.

I attended Toer de Geuze 2015 with Stu Stuart of BelgianBeerMe.com as part of his “Wild and Spontaneous Beer Tour,” which ran from April 29 to May 4. In fact, we stopped in at just about every lambic brewery and blendery mentioned above, as well as Brasserie Cantillon and Brouwerij Girardin. At the latter, we said hello to brewer Paul Girardin and took a few photos. Note that Girardin does not do any tours and was not open for Toer de Geuze. However, you can see one of his two brewhouses from the road, and its highly polished copper kettles are a beautiful sight.

While Geuzestekerij De Cam was not technically part of the Toer this year, it was open from 2 to 5 p.m. the same day as the event. Blender and owner Karel Goddeau also was available for several hours on the Saturday morning and afternoon before the big Sunday event. Goddeau was in fine form, regaling beer lovers with stories of lambic history and heritage, and even playing the bagpipes, all of which he does very well.

All of the De Cam beers that were on offer, namely, Lambiek, Kriekenlambiek, Framboise Lambiek and Faro, were superb examples of their respective styles, as they have been for years. The Faro was one of the best (least sweet) ones that I have ever savored. Goddeau also had 75-centiliter bottles of Framboise Lambiek and Oude Geuze to sell, which is rare, given how quickly his sought-after beers sell out. I call this the “RP-RT” phenomenon: right place, right time.

During each Toer de Geuze, tour buses circle the area to the south and west of Brussels from before the 10 a.m. start until after the 5 p.m. close. HORAL, the High Council for Artisanal Lambic Beers, organizes the tour, and buses leave from various places to visit five or so of the lambic producers over the course of the day. Different buses go to different producers on different routes, as it is nearly impossible to visit all nine of the lambic breweries and blenders in the same day. You can sign up at HORAL.be for a space on your selected bus starting the previous February.

See Toer de Geuze on page 46

Belgian Beer Me!

BEER TOURS OF BELGIUM



Visit Some of the Finest Breweries, Beer Cafés, Abbeys and Beer Festivals in Belgium

The fun has just begun!

Visit Belgianbeerme.com for a Complete List of Tours.

Follow current tours at [Facebook.com/beertours.belgium](https://www.facebook.com/beertours.belgium)

Introducing

Bambergbeerme.com for beer tours of Bamberg, Germany.

Available in June
Artisan Series 3 OF 6

Brewed as a high gravity American Wheat Ale.
Boldly hoppy and perfectly balanced.
8.0% ABV

HUMBOLDT HAZE

Imperial Wheat
India Pale Ale

MAD RIVER BREWING COMPANY

THE RIVER RUNS RYE

22oz Bottles

A hearty Red India Pale Ale with a healthy dose of rye and crystal rye malts, balanced with spicy and herbal hops.
8.2% ABV

Available in July
Artisan Series: 4 OF 6

RED RYE INDIA PALE ALE

Toer de Geuze from page 5

Also making the routes are private coaches with members from beer clubs all over Belgium, the Netherlands and other countries. I heard stories that over 170 buses/coaches were making the rounds in the region on the day of the event.

The rise in popularity of Toer de Geuze and its timing just one week after Belgium's premier beer event, the Zythos Beer Festival, has not gone unnoticed among beer lovers and lambic makers. This has led to various pre-TDG events. Brouwerij Boon opened its brewery for visitors on Friday and Saturday as well as for Sunday's Toer. There was also a party at the brewery, replete with bands, until 10 p.m. that Friday night. I attended, and many lambic beers were enjoyed.

The brewery was serving year-old lambic directly from a *foeder* and had numerous other beers available, such as Oude Geuze, Oude Kriek, Mariage Parfait in both Oude Geuze and Oude Kriek forms, and the new Vat 77, a blend of 90% lambic from *foeder* 77, dating to October 27, 2011, and bottled in 2013. Two of Frank Boon's sons have followed their dad and work at the brewery.

On Saturday, May 2, Gueuzerie Tilquin of Bierghies-Rebecq, the only lambic blender in Wallonia, got things going with its English Beer Festival. Blender Pierre Tilquin invited some fine microbreweries



A volunteer at Hanssens Artisaanaal pouring a lambic from a barrel.



Brewhouse at Mort Subite.

from the other side of the Channel, including Brew By Numbers, Burning Sky, Magic Rock, Partizan, Siren Craft Brew, The Kernel and Thornbridge. Also in attendance was Gregory Verhelst, who brought his Brasserie La Rulles beers.

Of course, all of Gueuzerie Tilquin's fine beers were available. These included Meerts, a lambic of just 3.6% that was more common many decades ago; Faro; draft Gueuze Tilquin; Lambic Blend (a blend of lambics made especially for the fest); bottled Oude Gueuze à l'Ancienne; Quetsche with plums from Namur Province; and the new Mûre, a blackberry lambic that debuted that weekend. The first bottling of Mûre was a small one, just a few thousand bottles, so none of this first batch may make it Stateside except in the luggage of beer lovers headed home.

The two aforementioned fests were fine warm-ups for the main event, which once again featured a new beer especially blended for Toer de Geuze. The brew, HORAL Oude Geuze Megablend 2015, contains lambics from Boon, De Troch, Drie Fonteinen, Hanssens, Lindemans, Oud Beersel, Tilquin and Timmermans (and none from Mort Subite).

The 75-centiliter corked bottles sold for nine euros each on May 3. They are likely to be selling for more by the time you read this, as they sold out. Bottles are bound to appear in various Belgian beer cafés and

TAKE THE PATH TO
Award Winning
BELGIAN TASTE
www.st-feuillien.com

World Beer Awards
U.S. Open Beer Championship
European Beer Star

Brasserie
Tripel, Feuillien
Brune Réserve
Saison
Grand Cru

Artisanal IMPORTS

EXCLUSIVE
U.S. IMPORTER | AUSTIN, TEXAS
www.artisanalimports.com
Artisanal Imports | @ArtisanalBeers

512.440.0811

Six Rivers Brewery ~ 1300 Central Ave. McKinleyville, CA ~ 707-839-7580



Foeders at Mort Subite.

specialty beer shops ... not to mention the cellars of beer writers.

Each individual lambic brewery and blendery was free to do its own thing during the Toer. Most opted for a combination of education about lambic brewing and blending, along with tasting and fun activities for adults and children alike.

Brouwerij Mort Subite had a tent outside the brewery with its Lambic, White Lambic, Oude Gueuze and Oude Kriek on offer. Mort Subite also was serving a tasty lambic directly from foeder number 10 inside the brewery. It was good to make a second visit to this impressive place.

Oud Beersel held a pig roast replete with its Lambic, Kriekenlambic and the rest of its lineup. On our visit the Friday before, we also sampled Bersalis Tripel aged in oak barrels with Brettanomyces for one year, as well as the brewery's fine Oude Kriek and Oude Geuze.

Timmermans had so many visitors pass through its historic doors that it is clear that beer drinkers know this revitalized brewery is producing some great lambics and kriekenlambics, as well as a fine Oude Gueuze and Oude Kriek. Timmermans Bourgogne des Flandres and Lambicus Blanche also impressed. There is more to come from the Itterbeek brewery. "At

the moment, I can only say that we do have some very special brews in the works here," remarked owner Anthony Martin, the always affable CEO of the John Martin group. Timmermans was also serving a couple of lambics, delicious one- and two-year-old vintages.

Brouwerij Lindemans debuted a new Oude Gueuze to commemorate its recent brewery renovations: Cuvee Renee Special Blend Oude Gueuze 2010. It was a blend of young lambic with a four-year-old version, packaged in a new bottle. The brewery also had its other Cuvee Renee brews on offer and had a large lineup of tasty eats to boot. The huge space was packed, and owner Dirk Lindemans graciously spoke with our tour group about the brewery.

Drie Fonteinen was so busy with hordes of visitors that people lined up, waited for tours and packed the gift shop to buy large quantities of beer and other goodies. Armand, Lydie, Michael and the rest of the crew are all doing very well. The brewery served up a delectable lambic to attendees, free of charge for your first drink, as did most of the other producers. Things are going very well at Drie Fonteinen, and business is good.

Hanssens Artisaan was serving up a lambic from a barrel, as well as its Oude Gueuze, Oude Kriek and the rare Scarenbecca Kriek. Owners John and Sidy had a big crowd of happy beer drinkers in attendance.

Brouwerij Mort Subite and Hanssens Artisaan are almost never open for tours anymore, so Toer de Geuze is the one chance most people will have to visit these places.

The next Toer de Geuze should be held in late April or early May 2017. **CBN**

Charles "Chuck" Cook is a freelance writer living in Baltimore, Md. His passions are beer and travel, and he has written for various beer publications. He can be reached via e-mail at chuck@beerandtravel.com.

Orange County from page 30

Chicken braised with Black Phoenix chipotle coffee stout, mirepoix and spices highlighted the main course, which was paired with GABF 2014 bronze medal winner Rocco Red. The malt and balanced hops of the beer played well with the moist chicken, accompaniments and Black Phoenix au jus.

To tease our child side, Machuca chose Cap'n Crunch as a base ingredient for the dessert. Cap'n Crunch berries panna cotta with mango coulis, raspberry fruit roll-up stars and strawberry pearls paired nicely with 79 Anniversary Ale and brought back memories of Saturday morning cartoons.

This beer previously celebrated Bootlegger's fourth anniversary and 79 years since the end of Prohibition. The Belgian-style dark ale was aged in red wine barrels and allowed to sour. Its well-rounded and puckering flavors provided a refreshing contrast to the sweetness of the dessert.

The final beer of the evening was a seventh anniversary formulation of bourbon barrel-aged Black Phoenix. Its coffee, spice, pepper and bourbon notes served as an appropriate digestif to end a fine meal. **CBN**

David Mulvihill continues his quest to discover and spread the good-brew news across the land. He can be contacted at dbrewhill@gmail.com.

You Can... Benefit from our 30 years of experience in the industry



To date, we have installed over 400 canning lines in 30 different countries throughout the world

We Invented Micro-Canning

- We've been manufacturing canning systems for the brewing industry since 2000
- We offer innovative, global canning and packaging solutions
- We build flexible systems to accommodate a small footprint
- We build simple, easy-to-operate systems with fast start-up, CIP and clean-up times
- Our systems have a pre-rinser with automated depalletizer
- We offer proven, reliable automated, semi-automated and manual systems



cask
global canning solutions



Contact us today | cask.com | 1.800.661.8443

Official supplier of Ball Corporation for the supply of printed aluminum cans to our customers