

Malted Barley Appreciation Society

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Chelsea Biers

BY ALAN RICE
Photos by Alan
Rice, except
where noted

The turnout was light for the July meeting. It was a shame, because **Chris Sheehan** and the gang from **Chelsea Brewing Co.** had to ride the L Train all the way to Brooklyn from Manhattan. It's only 5 stops, but still... Perhaps it was the conflict with the Victory Brewing event at the Blind Tiger. That was the first time they had ever given all 24 handles to one brewery, and three casks, too. This month the taps have been turned. On the night of our August meeting, the 'Tiger is featuring Chelsea Brewing, including two vintages of the aptly named Tsar's Revenge Imperial Stout.

Or maybe it was the weather. For once, there was no competition for the tables out back. That's because the smart people didn't want to get wet. Soon after Mike read the announcements and Ian poured the first round, we had to move inside. Fortunately the long center table was available. When the rain stopped, we went back out – until it rained again, this time in buckets. After the deluge it was clear and dry (except for the tables and chairs). We ended up having a great party. But it wasn't much of a meeting. The silver lining (sorry) for the dozen guys (Sophie the Poodle was the only female) was that we had lots and lots of fresh



beer. And Chris let us keep the growlers.

Chris Sheehan's first pro job was at the Triple Rock in San Francisco back in 1991. This led him to the well-regarded 20 Tank Brewery. He earned a reputation as an expert in opaque ales by formulating Kinnikinick Old Scout Stout and Heart of Darkness XXX Stout, which won Gold and Bronze in separate categories at the 1996 GABF.

David Yarrington of Smuttynose

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Cheers from the editor, Alan Rice
NEXT MEETING:
Wed., August 13, 7:30pm,
Mugs Ale House.
Our guest: Brian O'Reilly of Sly Fox Brewing Co.

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Brewing also followed the Triple Rock to 20 Tank path as a rookie in 1994. He credits Chris as a mentor on his blog: "I had the pleasure of working with Chris Sheehan at The 20 Tank where he always made awe inspiring stouts. His thoughts were to really build up the base of the beer with tons of character malts before the addition of your roasted grains."

Chris is originally from up-state NY, and in he came back East to work as head brewer at the Neptune Brewery on West 16th. They were a microbrewery, but also had tied outlets at the Greenwich Brewery on 6th Ave. and 9th St., and the Village Bistro on 7th Ave. near West 4th, across from Jekyll and Hyde. I remember a great oatmeal stout and Cuban cigars at the Bistro. But the latter went out of business soon after Neptune closed. Greenwich hung on until a few years ago, selling re-branded Chelsea beers.

Chelsea Brewing Co. opened in 1996 at Pier 59 on the Hudson River, or 18th St. and the West Side Highway, as part of the new Chelsea Piers sports and TV studio complex. That was at the peak of the brewpub craze. They have common ownership with the West Side Brewing Co., which hasn't brewed in years but never changed the name. Chris Sheehan quickly saw the writing in the foam at Neptune, and he moved to Chelsea under **Russell Garrett** in 1998. When Russell moved to Ireland to open a microbrewery, Chris took over as Head Brewer.

Chelsea Brewing today is

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Sails'n' Ales

You've probably noticed the calendar listings for Ron Carlson's beer and cheese cruises. Ron is a sales rep at Chelsea Brewing, after working for Unibroue. Now he's got this side gig as a tour guide and taste instructor. Buy your ticket on-line, or at the dock. Check in for the ship "Imagine" on the other side of the driving range from the brewery. Then walk over for a drink.

Ron gives a basic brewery tour for the novices. But you get to taste the 2 beers that won't be on the boat. He takes 4 different brews in growlers aboard, and

there is enough beer and cheese for the 2-hour cruise.

Coincidentally, Lucy and Eric were celebrating with a beers and a boat ride on the night I went to check it out. We got to hang out with brewer Mark Szmaida before the crowd showed up.



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New York City's only brewpub, and Manhattan's only surviving brewery. Some closed because their beers weren't that good. But the cost of real estate and the expense of trucking in an out materials and waste is



"Stir the Grain," by Michael Salerno, at CBC.



nearly prohibitive. The restaurant side must do huge numbers. So enjoy the beautiful Hudson River views, and their spacious wood, brass and glass interior while you can. They opened when there was nothing in the area outside of the Chelsea Piers. Today, the neighborhood is booming. They'll likely be priced out when the 20-year lease expires.

Similarly, 20 Tank only survived 10 years. They closed in 2000 at the peak of the Dot-Com bubble. The tech firm that took the space paid a ridiculous rent for only about a year before they went belly-up. Today, it is a nightclub.



Ron Carlson and Mark Szmaida of CBC

Mark Szmaida is CBC's assistant brewer. He was a truck driver before he got into brewing. He studied at the Siebel Institute in Chicago in 1997, and stayed there to work at Goose Island for a while. Mark is originally from NJ, and he was happy to come back home.

CBC is a 30-barrel DME brewhouse. They ferment in four 30-barrel uni-tanks, and six 60-barrel uni-tanks. So reading between the lines, they must double batch. Conditioning takes place in two 60-barrel bright beer tanks. More juggling is necessary to supply the six 15 barrel servers located behind the bar.

The 12,000-square-foot facility features a fully automatic grain-handling system, 46,000-pound grain silos, and an automated bottling system capable of handling 2000 bottles per hour. But they haven't bottled in sev-

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Photos by Shoshana Bettencourt



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eral years. Chris had no control of the product once it left the brewery. Cases of Checkered Cab and Sunset Red were sitting around for months in a warm warehouse.

The last time I looked, the bottler was still gathering malt dust, and taking up valuable space. There are plenty of beer geeks caught up in the latest craze of high gravity beers, and these can survive bad treatment. But that shouldn't be a problem, as experimental hybrid styles, barrel aged and funky concoctions often sell out at a brewery in days, or even hours, and often at inflated prices. Lack of cellar space is an issue, even though many people are willing to age beers themselves. Perhaps they could take out the cigar lounge and fill it up with barrels...a cellar in the attic.

When they were bottling, CBC brewed closer to their capacity of 6,000 bbl/yr. In 2007, they brewed 2,500 bbl. Much of this was sold off premises for draft accounts. Moving these kegs reduces much of the hassle of moving beer among the tanks.

Due to their size, CBC uses only one yeast for all of their ales. Chris will not risk cross contamination. They do not brew lagers, although some styles require longer fermentation at cooler temperatures. They brew Americanized versions of British and German styles, never Belgian. Like other breweries, the bigger stuff hits the kettle in the cooler months.

On tap at Mugs last month was **1000 Gyle Imperial Mild**. It was named for their 1000th batch. "Gyle" refers to an old technique used by small breweries to make a variety of strengths. It's a barleywine with mouthfeel similar to a mild. So, why not "Imperial Mild" to dig at all of the so-called imperial beers out these days? The beer starred at the 1st Manhattan Cask Ale Fest held at CBC last March.

Last year, they brewed 26 different beers, including 6 IPAs. Chris has the dark ale reputation, but that's because not everyone knows his West Coast roots. He's proud of his IPAs, and they're different than what's produced at the 3 Brooklyn breweries. He believes it from his use of a hopback. Whole leaf hops go into a strainer. The hot wort from the kettle is

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forced through on its way to the fermenter. CBC was the first brewery in the region to use this method. Blue Point, Victory, and Troegs do, too.

Hop Angel was on tap at Mugs during the meeting. It won a bronze medal last year at the GABF, albeit in the unfiltered beer category. It has Cascades for bittering, with Simcoe and Amarillos dry-hopped. This beer has the citrus nose and bitter aspirin finish that you expect. This is an American beer.



1st Manhattan Cask Ale Fest. Photo by Scott Beard.

The guys brought a couple growlers of **Henry Hudson IPA**, which rotates in during the summer. It is has pine aromas, not citrus. It might be able to pass as a British ale. They originally used Willamette hops in the kettle. Dry hopped with Columbus pellets this year. This high alpha variety has a pungent aroma and clean bittering, and is excellent in bitter ales and American IPA styles.

They are contracting hops 2 years out, and can't get Columbus. What is available went up 300% to \$2.50/ounce. That used to be homebrewers' prices. They're substituting with Galena, which is one the most "mellow" hops of the high-alpha varieties, and is one of the most widely grown American hops. It's an excellent general-purpose, high alpha-acids hop, with balanced bittering properties and a good aroma profile.

They used whole flower Brewer's Gold in the hop back. Brewer's Gold is the ancestor of most major high-alpha hops grown



around the world today (including Galena). It is a complex bittering hop that is noted to have a sharp or pungent bittering quality, although it is on the low end of the bittering scale. It also imparts a fruity yet spicy aroma as well as having a black currant characteristic. Brewers Gold can be used in a wide range of styles from English Ales to German Lagers and adds a European element to the beer. These make a good partner to noble varieties such as Tettnang and Hallertauer.

Look for **Catskill Hop Harvest** this fall. This fresh hop beer uses NY state hops, many picked by Chris himself. There are some wild ones growing on his mother's farm just north of the Catskill Park, hence the name.

You've all had **Sunset Red Ale**. If not, why not? It's been around for quite a while. It's an American ESB that won the GABF gold medal in 1997. Back then, they were using Cascades. Today, it's Columbus. The mash is crystal, caramel Munich, and British pale malts. This is one of their regular beers, so they're shooting for balance.

I never order the blonde at a brewpub. But there is no reason to insult a guest who brings a couple growlers. **Checker Cab Blonde Ale** is a Kolsh. And you know what, it really is nice and refreshing on a warm day. It's CBC's biggest seller - no surprise there. Many of the patrons are coming after sporting activities on the Piers, or taking a break from site-seeing along the river. They can't all be Bud drinkers settling for something light. As you'd expect they use Hallertaus. Perle when they can get it, or Northern Brewer. The secret ingredient is 10% wheat malt.





*MBAS
Park Slope
Pub Crawl
August 9, 2008*



Who's Brewing? WHO's Brewing!

BY ERIC FREBERG

A microbrewery...a winery...and now, a homebrew club. Yes, Pleasantville, NY has added another facet to its hub of fermentation related activity on light-industrial Castleton Street, namely the **Westchester Homebrewers Organization**, aka the **WHOs**.

In its first meeting, the club elected founder **Phil Clarke** as President, **Eric Freberg** as Vice President, and **Kevin Winn** as Treasurer. The club meets on the fourth Wednesday of each month at 7PM at the Captain Lawrence Brewing Company. We decided on a format of having a featured beer style each month, with one member leading a discussion of that style. People are encouraged to bring a homebrewed



homebrew or commercial beers that are brought.

CLBC brewmaster **Scott Vaccaro** graciously offered the taproom as the site for the meetings, and as expected it has proven to be the ideal environment for a homebrew club. He treated the club to an opening of the hard-to-get Cuvee de Castleton (Trippel brewed with Muscat grapes, fermented with Brettanomyces and aged in oak wine barrels), and he's even given members bags of whole leaf Cascade hops.

Meetings typically have over a dozen members attending, and to date there are 24 dues-paying members. We've not yet decided how to spend the money, but glasses with a club logo are being considered. Plans are being made for participating in AHA sponsored club-only competitions, and we have also discussed pub crawls and possibly a club trip

to the Country Inn in Krumville, NY.

Homebrewing discussions carry on between meetings on our Yahoo group, at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/wchomebrew>

Please feel free to join us, or attend any of our upcoming meetings!



version of that beer style, or an interesting professionally produced example to try. We've already delved in to Pale Ales, Scottish Ales, and Weissbeers, and upcoming meetings will cover Saisons and Stouts. Of course, there are no restrictions - after the main discussion, we open up the meeting to include any other

Calendar

UNDERLINED TEXT INDICATES HOT LINK

Whole Foods Beer Room. Try a sample before you fill up your growler. Storm King, Hop Wallop, Baltic Thunder, Sunrise Weisse, Golden Monkey, Victory Lager, and Hop Devil on cask.
Tue. Aug 26, 6:30pm, Sixpoint

BEER EVENTS

Sat. Aug 16, State College, PA MicroBrewers & Importers Exposition. Two sessions, \$47 or \$77. 60 breweries/150 brews, gourmet buffet, seminars.

Wed. Aug 13, 4pm, Chelsea at Blind Tiger. Checker Cab Blonde, Summer Solstice Wheat, CBC Standard Ale, Henry Hudson IPA, Long Island Altbier, Porter of Authority, Chelsea Cream Stout, Tsar's Revenge Imperial Stout '07, Tsar's Revenge '05, Oatmeal Stout, 1000 Gyle, 1000 Gyle Bourbon-Aged, Frosty's Winter Wheat Wine. Cask: Sunset Red, Hop Angel and Festbier.

Thu. Aug. 14, Schmaltz at Pacific Standard. He'Brew Messiah Bold Aged in Rittenhouse 100 Rye Whiskey Barrels, Rejewvenator, Bittersweet Lenny's R.I.P.A., Genesis Ale; plus Coney Island Sword Swallower and Human Blockhead.

Sat. Aug. 16, 3pm, Sixpoint at Beer Table. Three recent creations plus one surprise.

Tue. Aug 19, 3pm, 8th Anniversary Party at Zum Schneider. Live Oompah, Pig Roast.

Wed. Aug. 20, 4pm, Randall Ruckus at Blind Tiger. 5 Randall the Enamel Animals, all fil-



tering Dogfish Head 90 Min. through different ingredients, not just hops.

Thu. Aug. 21, Rogue at Mugs Alehouse. List TBA.

Mon. Aug. 25, 6:30pm-9pm, The Art of Beer and Cheese Pairing Sail, Chelsea Brewing, \$75. Ron Carlson hosts a tour of the brewery, then escorts you to a schooner for a 2-hour sail around lower Manhattan and the Statue of Liberty while you enjoy 4 Chelsea beers paired with cheeses.

Tue. Aug. 26, 5-7pm, Victory at



and Cheese at Bierkraft, free. Guest speaker Shane Welch.
Wed. Aug 27, 4pm, Sierra Nevada at Blind Tiger. A "ton" on tap.

Mon. Sept 1, 6:30-9pm, The Art

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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>

Chelsea Brewing Company and The Gotham Imbiber (Alex Hall) present the
**2nd MANHATTAN CASK ALE FESTIVAL
 AT CHELSEA BREWING COMPANY**



NY CRAFT BEER WEEK
 september 12-21, 2008

Pier 59, Chelsea Piers, Manhattan.

(off the West Side Highway at the end of West 18th Street). Tel. 1 212 336 6440.

**Friday 19th to Sunday 21st September 2008
 12 noon-12 midnight**



Featuring at least 45 rare and delicious ales and lagers, *all of which will be cask-conditioned*. Five or six will be brewed in-house by Chelsea Brewing Company, with the rest being brewed by other small, artisanal craft breweries. **No entry fee!!!** See www.gotham-imbiber.com for more information on this three day event.

Definition of Cask Ale: Unfiltered, unpasteurized beer brewed only from traditional ingredients, matured by secondary fermentation in the container from which it is dispensed, and served without the use of extraneous carbon dioxide. Cask Ale, also known as 'Cask-Conditioned Beer' and 'Real Ale', is naturally carbonated beer as it was through history. Cask ale is served at cellar temperature, cool but not chilled. See www.cask-ale.co.uk for more information.

Beers are available while stocks last, empty casks won't be replaced. Strictly over 21s only, please bring ID to avoid disappointment. Admission is subject to capacity limits, so you're advised to come early as this event will be popular.

Subway: A, C, E to 14th Street, about half a mile away. Bus: Westbound M14D 14th Street crosstown and M23 23rd Street crosstown both terminate at Chelsea Piers.

Please drink responsibly, and never drink and drive.

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of Beer and Cheese Pairing Sail, Chelsea Brewing. See Aug. 25.

Wed. Sept. 3, 6pm, **Goose Island at Standings.** 4 drafts, free pizza.

Fri. Sept. 5, **1st Anniversary Celebration at Pacific Standard.** New beers and drink specials all night. Featuring Sixpoint hoppiness: Bengali Tiger IPA, Gemini Double IPA,

Belgian IPA, and introducing Double Belgian IPA! Plus one of the above on cask.

Fri. Sept. 5 – Sun. Sept. 7, **CT River Brew Fest at the Holyoke Canoe Club,** \$25. 30 breweries, live music, BBQ.

Sat. Sept. 6, 3-7pm, **2nd Ithaca Brewfest at Stewart Park,** \$30, VIP \$75. Over 30 breweries, live music.

Tue. Sept. 9, 6:30pm, **Kelso and Cheese at Bierkraft,** free.

TBA.

Fri. Sept. 12, **3rd New York Brewfest at Pier 17,** \$54. Presented by Heartland Brewery for the benefit of the NY State Brewers Assoc. Over 50 breweries from NY and elsewhere, live music, food by Spanky's BBQ.

Mon. Sept. 15, 6:30-9pm, **The Art of Beer and Cheese Pairing Sail, Chelsea Brewing.** See Aug. 25.

Fri. Sept. 19-Sun. Sept. 21, Noon-Mid., **2nd Manhattan Cask Fest at Chelsea Brewing.** About 4 dozen ales and lagers. Most tapped on Fri. and poured until they're dry.

HOMEBREW EVENTS

SEPTEMBER 28, 2008

Homebrew & Food Pairing Competition

The Diamond in Greenpoint, Brooklyn Homebrewers present their best beer and original recipe combination. Brewer and chef teams are welcome. Winner receives a trip for two to the Stoudt's Brewery for Oktoberfest. Patrons pay (price TBD) to taste and score the entries. Proceeds donated to charity.

<http://www.thediamondbrooklyn.com/>

Guest speaker Kelly Taylor. **Sept. 12-Sept. 21, 1st New York Craft Beer Week.** Bookended by the beer fest and the cask fest listed below. 9 neighborhood pub crawls to 60 bars, and 10 beer dinners,

