



Pittsburgh BrewMasters 2009 Tasting Recaps

Gathering #13 "BrewMasters Favorites" January 21, 2009

Congratulations to all our members on our one year anniversary! What a fun ride it's been. If you attended all twelve meetings, you'd have tasted 73 beers (we threw in a bonus round once). Thanks to Hart and the Sharp Edge for putting on a great show!

To celebrate, we tasted six of the top twelve beers as ranked by YOU! We couldn't do the exact top six as some of them are seasonal and unavailable in January. [Click here](#) to see the list for 2008.

Our comments are a little lacking this month, but thanks to those of you who provided your thoughts. Where was Sheila? Since it was a blind tasting, I included the number in which each beer was tasted in parentheses.

Oh, and thanks for the "candid" shots posted below.

Beer Tasting Results: (Scale 1 = Yick! What is this crap?; 5 = Yum! Gimme more!)

1. Corsendonk Christmas Ale (#6) - 4.00 average rating - *"Yummy!" "Happy Xmas!"*
2. Orkney Skullsplitter (#4) - 3.71 - *"Alcohol aftertaste." "Blah!"*
3. Bell's 2 Hearted Ale (#5) - 3.58 - *"Hoppy hooray!" "Great!"*
4. Franiskaner Hefe Weisse (#1) - 3.45 - *"Not in my top six. Kind of boring."*
5. Sam Smith Nut Brown (#3) - 3.35 - *"I'm so sure this was Corsendonk Christmas." "A bit nutty!"*
6. Fuller's ESB (#2) - 3.19 - *"Bitter. Yuck. No wonder the British have bad teeth!"*

Gathering #14 "Strong Beers to Keep You Warm!" February 18, 2009

Sorry, I don't remember much of the night. Strong beers will do that to you. Thank goodness we have pictures to prove it actually happened. Thanks to Jim for participating in the "Get to Know You" halftime entertainment. And thanks to Bob for the "note on my refrigerator". Oh, and Sheila's back with her "reviews".

Beer Tasting Results: (Scale 1 = Yick! What is this crap?; 5 = Yum! Gimme more!)

1. Scotch de Silly - 3.57 average rating - *"Kak! Hhhhhhheu. The smell does not prepare you for what is to come."* Also overheard, *"One to have when you're only havin' one."*
2. Chimay Grande Reserve - 3.48 - *"No distinguishable taste, but it made my tongue tingle. Heeee!"* Also overheard, *"Those monks know how to make a good brew!"*
3. (tie) Troubadour Obscura - 3.34 - *"Tasted like bitter butterscotch. 'Bitterscotch?'"* Also overheard, *"Freakin' yummy!"*
4. (tie) Hebrew Jewbelation - 3.34 - *"I don't know that I mind this. Oive!"* Also overheard, *"Not in a car, not in a bar!"*
5. Samichlaus Helles - 2.75 - *"I'd rather chew off my finger nails. This is some nasty s*#!!"* Also overheard, *"Cough medicine. Fill the cabinet!"*
6. Rogue Old Crustacean - 2.50 - *"Bitter flavor, like ants crawling on my tongue spreading yuck everywhere."* Also overheard, *"Makes me shiver. And not in a good way!"*

Gathering #15
"Abbey Beers"
March 18, 2009

I never met an abbey beer I liked. Ah, well. At least we had a great group of friends! Thanks for selling out another beer tasting! Thanks too to Julie for being our *Get to Know You* halftime entertainment (sorry for the "serious" questions, Julie!). Sheila's comments are below. Don't forget to join the Pittsburgh BrewMasters Facebook group!

Beer Tasting Results: (Scale 1 = Yick! What is this crap?; 5 = Yum! Gimme more!)

1. Augustijn - 3.59 average rating - *"Smells like a dog's S&##. Doesn't taste very good either."* Also overheard, *"This is my favorite beer of all time!"*
2. Orval - 3.58 - *"Hart's favorite because he 'understands' it. This is just nasty!"*
3. Petrus Double - 3.48 - *"Eh. If root beer were really beer, it would taste a lot like this."*
4. Grimbergen Double - 3.03 - *"I don't like it (no surprise here). Sweetly metallic - is that ever a good thing?"* Also overheard, *"Try the draft. It's much better!"*
5. Maredsous - 2.72 - *"I suspect someone made peanut butter into an alcoholic drink. Not too shabby."*
6. Ename Triple - 2.27 - *"Yuckadoo. Hated it."* Also overheard, *"WTF is this? Yick!"*

Gathering #16
"Intro to Belgians"
Sharp Edge Brasserie
April 1, 2009

Thanks to everyone for making our first beer tasting at the Sharp Edge Brasserie a smashing success! Pittsburgh BrewMasters wouldn't exist without you! Thanks also to Dennis for being our *Get to Know You* halftime entertainment. Don't forget ... if you want more information on his wine/beer tasting fundraiser on April 25th, send

an e-mail to info@pghbrewmasters.com and we'll hook you up. Sheila doesn't travel to Peters Township, so the reviews below are comments supplied by many of our members. Don't forget to join the Pittsburgh BrewMasters Facebook group!

Beer Tasting Results: (Scale 1 = Yick! What is this crap?; 5 = Yum! Gimme more!)

1. Lindeman's Framboise - 3.89 average rating - *"Raspberry, soda beer with a sweet finish." "SweetTart!" "Frankie likes it!"*
2. Silly Saison - 3.68 - *"I love it! I want to kiss it and hug it!" "Overwhelming butterscotch." "Tickles the mouth. Good finish."*
3. Ultra Bruin - 3.44 - *"Sweet and strong ... just like me!" "Like Hart mentioned, it'd be a great after dinner drink." "Ouch! Where is the beer???" Ugh!"*
4. (tie) Maredsous 8 - 3.24 - *"Not my fave. I gave it a 5." "This beer is not good." "Opens the taste buds. Poor finish."*
5. (tie) Petrus Triple - 3.24 - *"Never met a Petrus I didn't like." "Fizzy." "Ahh, reminds me of fake champagne when I was knee-high to a grasshopper." "It would be a pleasure to chug this during beer pong (if I could afford to)."*
6. Wittekerke - 3.06 - *"Like Miller or Coors Light." "Great! Refreshing. Like after mowing the lawn." "Bland with a bitter after taste."*

Gathering #17

"Wheat Beers"

Sharp Edge Creekhous

April 15, 2009

Wow! What a great crowd on a Pens playoff game night! You guys are awesome! Sheila stood us up last night, so the reviews are a mix of witty comments provided by a variety of our members. Don't forget to join the Pittsburgh BrewMasters Facebook group!

Beer Tasting Results: (Scale 1 = Yick! What is this crap?; 5 = Yum! Gimme more!)

1. Baltika #8 - 3.54 average rating - *"It's a curious frothy mixture."*
2. De Graal Triverius - 3.51 - *"This beer is not very good."*
3. Paulaner Hefe Weisse - 3.38 - *"Bland." "Yummy!" "Fruity, like Treloar."*
4. Bell's Oberon - 3.19 - *"Yum!" "Summer's here!"*
5. Fruli - 2.86 - *"Holy heck! Liquid candy! Like someone tore open a strawberry and drowned it in chamriple!" "Sweet molasses!" "I want more!" "This isn't beer."*
6. Weyerbacher Slam Dunkle - 2.72 - *"Great after taste." "Smells like a skunk." "Smells like wet cardboard."*

Gathering #18

"German Beers"

Sharp Edge Brasserie

May 6, 2009

Hey! Thanks for coming out on a rainy Penguins playoff game night! I hope you had as good a time as I did! Thanks also to William for being our halftime

entertainment! The comments below are mostly from Rod, I think! Please correct me if I'm wrong. Don't forget to join the Pittsburgh BrewMasters Facebook group!

Beer Tasting Results: (Scale 1 = Yick! What is this crap?; 5 = Yum! Gimme more!)

1. Spaten Oktoberfest - 3.59 average rating - *"Good! Good! Good! Smells like a carmel candy beer!"*
2. Ayinger Brau Weisse - 3.45 - *"Good start. Mellow with banana taste. Makes you want another one."*
3. Kostritzer - 2.95 - *"Yuck! Tastes like an old funky oak barrel. Never again."* Also overheard, *"Smells like baby food." "If it were free, I'd regift it!"*
4. Spezial Rauchbier - 2.90 - *"Woopee do!! Hits the taste buds and stays. It's a keeper!"*
5. Eku 28 - 2.86 - *"Happy hoppy. Tastes like a brandywine beer."*
6. Lowenbrau Lager - 2.80 - *"Poor finish. Smells like a cesspool. Ugh!"*

Gathering #19
"Beers Sheila Will Hate"
Sharp Edge Creekhous
May 20, 2009

Thank goodness there wasn't a Pens game last night! What a great night out on the deck! Thanks to Sheila for being a good sport about the theme. Even though she couldn't join us last night, her presence was felt. Thanks to home brewer Chris for providing the halftime entertainment. The reviews below are a collection from various members. I can't believe the Petrus ranked so low! I'm so tempted to overrule all of you and make it a perfect 5! Don't forget to join the Pittsburgh BrewMasters Facebook group!

Beer Tasting Results: (Scale 1 = Yick! What is this crap?; 5 = Yum! Gimme more!)

1. Piraat - 3.76 average rating - *"Sneaky strong. Nice Belgian flavor."* Also overheard, *"Sweet! Perfect beer for a night on the deck!"*
2. Baltika #6 Porter - 3.73 - *"Malty. Yummy!"* Also overheard, *"One of my favorites! Order early and often!"*
3. Victory Storm King - 3.35 - *"Starts out hoppy. Finishes malty. Great stout!"* Also overheard, *"Almost cherry. Great for cookouts!" "Would be great with a steak!"*
4. Stone IPA - 3.13 - *"Oh yeah! Awesome!"* Also overheard, *"Clean, smooth finish."*
5. Over the Edge - 3.00 - *"Great Belgian/IPA mix. Tasty!"* Also overheard, *"Tastes like Hart's home brew."*
6. Petrus Aged Pale Ale - 2.84 - There were no comments that could accurately describe the look on some of your faces when you tasted this sour beverage from heaven.

Gathering #20
"Beer Rocks!"
Sharp Edge Brasserie
June 3, 2009

Weird, cold, rainy night. Thanks to Tony the Beer Guy from [Vecenie Distributing Company](#) for joining our group last night. And thanks to all of you for coming out and putting up with me (and my singing). Thanks also to Betsy for taking the pictures, and to Hart for splitting the Fantome with me! Oh, and let me not forget to thank Creekhouseregulars Chris, Joe and Rob for making the surprise journey down to the Brasserie! You guys rock!!! Comments below are from a bunch of members. Don't forget to join the Pittsburgh BrewMasters Facebook group!

Beer Tasting Results: (Scale 1 = Yick! What is this crap?; 5 = Yum! Gimme more!)

1. Celis White - 3.60 average rating - *"Tastes like Michigan."*
2. Weyerbacher Echo - 3.45 - *"You can really taste the rye. Different!"*
3. Baltika Porter - 3.40 - *"Awesome!"* Also overheard, *"Tastes better than it smells." "I never met a porter I liked."*
4. Troeg's Sunshine - 3.10 - *"Looks like Miller Lite, tastes like summer!"* This is Hart's drywalling beer. Also good after mowing grass.
5. Dieu Du Ciel Corne Diable - 3.05 - *"Translated: Horn of the Devil."*
6. Voodoo Gran Met - 2.85 - *"Cough syrup finish." "Ick."*

Gathering #21
"Homebrew Challenge"
Sharp Edge Creekhouseregulars
June 17, 2009

[WATCH THE VIDEO!](#)

It was an exciting night at the first Pittsburgh BrewMasters/TRASH Homebrew Challenge! I think we all suspected we'd taste some good beer last night, and the homebrews did not let us down. No, the results below were not fixed. Congrats to the homebrewers for a sweep against commercial brews!

Oh, and Mother Nature threw in a few surprises too! I've captured it on video. Click [here](#) to watch! Pittsburgh BrewMasters and TRASH member Keith offered up the following alternative names for last night's event:

- Pittsburgh Storm Blows Away Glasses, but Not Beer Drinker Spirit
- Electrifying Taste Test Graces Creekhouseregulars Deck
- Deluge Tasting Session – Compliments of Low Pressure System
- TRASH Beers Bring Smiley Faces to a Stormy Night
- TRASH Brings Beer, Hart Provides Lightshow!!!!
- TRASH Homebrews Excite PGH BrewMasters Crowd, while Storm Adds Refreshing Outlook on the Importance of Solid Creekhouseregulars Structure
- Homebrew Wins 7 Game Series!!! Commercial Beers Bow Head in Shame
(*does Keith have a sixth sense?*)
- TRASH Hits Creekhouseregulars along with Twister!! Beer Kegs Tossed into Welcoming Hands of PGH BrewMasters

- My car floated down Chartiers Creek, but I don't care, because I'm drinking good TRASH homebrew.
- TRASH and PGH BREWMASTERS -- Helping White Guys Dance Since 1849!
- Full House, Fresh Beer and Fierce Storm, All Make Mark on Creekhous Deck!!!
- Stormy Skies do not Damper Diehard Beer Tasters ... Commercial Beer Dampens Taste Buds Instead
- Geeepers! It's a bird! It's a plane! No, it's Hart being sucked up into an updraft!

Apologies to Peter Kozlowski for the technical difficulties that prevented his Americal Pale Ale from participating in the contest, but Hart got it working at the end and those of us who were lucky enough to get a taste thought it was awesome (personally, I think it's the greatest thing since sliced bread).

Thanks to the Sharp Edge for providing the door prizes for our 50/50 raffle. And, thanks to each and every one of you for your continued support. I am truly blessed to know so many wonderful people!

Thanks to Betsy for taking bunches of pictures! I couldn't have made the video without you!

In the chaos of the evening, we neglected to collect comments from our members. Sorry. But, obviously, the homebrews spoke volumes!

Don't forget to join the Pittsburgh BrewMasters Facebook group!

Beer Tasting Results: (Scale 1 = Yick! What is this crap?; 5 = Yum! Gimme more!)

Round 1: Hefe Weisse

1. **Homebrew from Chip Reich - 3.65 average rating**
2. Ayinger Brau Weisse - 2.97

Round 2: American Pale Ale

1. Sierra Nevada Pale Ale - 3.12
2. **(substitution) Homebrew Vanilla Porter from Mike Moretti - 3.23**

Round 3: American Brown Ale

1. **Homebrew from Mike Task - 3.15**
2. Brooklyn Brown Ale - 3.12

Round 4: American IPA

1. Bell's Two Hearted - 3.25
2. **Homebrew from Chris Meta - 3.46**

Gathering #22
"Summer Beers"
Sharp Edge Brasserie
July 1, 2009

Hey everyone! I'm still mellow from my 2+ glasses of Ommegang Rouge Grand Cru! Love that stuff. I've decided to make it the honorary winner of last night's tasting ... the first ever perfect 5 in the history of Pittsburgh BrewMasters! Thanks to Mike for providing the halftime entertainment. And thanks to Hart for putting together a mighty fine tasting! Comments below are a collection from many of you. Enjoy the Ommegang Reaction play-by-play photo montage. Don't forget to join the Pittsburgh BrewMasters Facebook group!

Beer Tasting Results: (Scale 1 = Yick! What is this crap?; 5 = Yum! Gimme more!)

1. Ommegang Rouge Grand Cru - 5.00 average rating - *"It's not so much how it tastes, it's how it makes me feel."* OK, so the REAL ranking was 2.66, but who's counting??? Also overheard, *"I don't know if I like it, but Christine said, 'Make it a 5 or else!'"* *"Shivvers my timbers!"* *"Gives me the shakes."* *"Serendipity!"*
2. Victory Prima Pils - 3.94 - *"Superflouous! My favorite!"* Also overheard, *"OK, this is really, really good. Never ever had a pilsner this good!!!"*
3. Cooper's Extra Stout - 3.77 - *"Starbucks makes beer!"* Also overheard, *"Tastes like grandma's espresso. Finally, a stout for summer!"*
4. Bell's Oberon - 3.61 - *"Wow! I could drink this all summer! Good, good, good!!!"* Also overheard, *"Refreshing. Good for after grass mowing."*
5. Spaten Lager - 2.72 - *"Interesting hop flavor."* Also overheard, *"Where's the lager?"*
6. Rogue American Amber - 2.44 - *"Nice hops, good finish."* Also overheard, *"Makes me want to quit drinking."*

Gathering #23
"Summer Beers"
Sharp Edge Creekhous
July 15, 2009

Phew! Thanks to Mother Nature for no repeat of last month! Turned out to be a nice night. Again, the Ommegang Rouge Grand Cru is the honorary winner of last night's tasting, with a perfect 5 in my book. I don't care what any of you say! Thanks to Paul for providing the halftime entertainment. Check out his website at www.lucmusic.com. Comments below are a collection from many of you. Enjoy the Ommegang sour face photo montage. Thanks to Betsy for taking the photos. If I got your name wrong, please be sure to tell me! Don't forget to join the Pittsburgh BrewMasters Facebook group!

Beer Tasting Results: (Scale 1 = Yick! What is this crap?; 5 = Yum! Gimme more!)

1. Ommegang Rouge Grand Cru - 5.00 average rating - *"This is absolutely the best summer beer ever and if you don't agree with me, I'm still going to rank it #1!"* OK, so the REAL ranking was 2.55, dead last. :(Also overheard, *"It's a girly beer."*

- "Tart is smart! I'll give it a high 5!" "Woah! Too much for me! Whawh!" "Who picked this crap?" "Yummy! An excellent choice to end the evening!"*
2. Lion Stout - 3.02 - *"Excellent stout! Coffee, chocolate and sweet finish!"* Also overheard, *"The drink of Vishnu." "Can I have a piece of tiramisu with this?"*
 3. (tie) Franzi Dunkle - 2.94 - *"Banana and clove flavors. A lot going on."* Also overheard, *"Yum! But not a summer beer."*
 4. (tie) De Ranke XX Bitter - 2.94 - *"Excellent hop flavor, but still refreshing enough on a hot day."* Also overheard, *"Delightful! Excellent hop finish." "Bitter? No kidding!"*
 5. Wittekerke - 2.69 - *"Refreshing. Nice finish."* Also overheard, *"Tastes like summer."*
 6. Troegs Sunshine - 2.58 - *"Smooth, clean."* Also overheard, *"Smelled like it was going to taste good, but then ... it didn't."*

Gathering #24
"Beer for the Wine Lover"
Sharp Edge Brasserie
August 5, 2009

Wow! A record crowd at the Brasserie! Thanks to all our first-timers for checking us out. Hope we didn't scare you off! And, thanks to all the "regulars" for your continued support! Hart did a great job pairing beers to various wine styles, but the beer lovers in us didn't take too kindly to most of them. However, I think the wine lovers might have found a few beers they like. And, how about Dennis providing the halftime entertainment?! Good thing we're all adults! Thanks to Betsy for taking the photos. OH, and if you gave me your e-mail address and didn't receive the update from this tasting, please resend your address ... I probably couldn't read your writing. ;)

Beer Tasting Results: (Scale 1 = Yick! What is this crap?; 5 = Yum! Gimme more!)

1. Kulmbacher Eisbock (port) - 3.62 average rating - *"Very good! Not too sweet, but balanced. Very smooth!"* Also overheard, *"Very close to the port feel and taste." "I want more!" "Perfect drink for last call!" "Malty, tasty, strong."*
2. Wittekerke Rose (white zinfandel) - 3.14 - *"Nice summer beer, and I don't like white zinfandel!"* Also overheard, *"Better than raspberry lambic." "How about a Hawaiian Punch?" "Reminds me of Mike's Hard Lemonade. Finishes like cough syrup!" "Tastes like a wine cooler!"*
3. Leute Bokr (shiraz) - 3.00 - *"Sweet with sour after taste. Good Overall."* Also overheard, *"Yum! But not a summer beer." "Fruity nose and start with a peppery and stout flavor finish."*
4. (tie) Kasteel Triple (chardonnay) - 2.94 - *"I don't love it, but I taste the chardonnay."* Also overheard, *"One of the best Belgians. Fruity. Really great finish." "Belgians are the best!" "Starts like a traditional Belgian but finishes like a chardonnay."*
5. (tie) Weyerbacher Double Simcoe (cabernet Sauvignon) - 2.94 - *"Big IPA."* Also overheard, *"Strong but good." "Good IPA. Needs a little more fruity flavor. Really nice bite." "Never tasted an IPA that tasted like shiraz, but leave it to Hart!" "Full of flavor, hoppy, bitter, interesting. Dry like a cab. Nice long finish."*

6. Dogfish Head Festina Peche (sauvignon blanc) - 1.80 - *"Shame on Dogfish Head. Tastes like sour club soda."* Also overheard, *"Just peachy."* *"Really good!"* *"Tart, but strange rubbery finish."* *"Very tart! Close to the wine, but more sour."*

Gathering #25
"Return of the Hops"
Sharp Edge Creekhouse
August 19, 2009

Quite an interesting selection last night! And the beers were good too! Ha! Thanks to Frank for taking photos in Betsy's absence ... wench is diving off the Florida Keys. Must be nice. Who is that Christine chick in all the photos?? Thanks also to Jenny and Peter for participating in the "Get to Know You" portion of the evening. Thanks for the quotes below, but I think Hart takes the prize for the night with, *"Sometimes I like to drink three or twelve without getting drunk."*

Also, word of caution: Stay away from the Pink Killer! It may not be suitable for all beer lovers. As BrewMasters member Julia said, *"Pink Killer Grapefruit Whit = Pine Sol (if that's your thing)."*

Beer Tasting Results: (Scale 1 = Yick! What is this crap?; 5 = Yum! Gimme more!)

1. Duvel - 3.84 average rating - *"Love this beer! Refreshing, yet Belgian."* Also overheard, *"Excellent Belgian!"* *"Surprisingly not hoppy!"*
2. Anchor Liberty - 3.53 - *"Not as good as on draft in San Francisco, but still awesome!"* Also overheard, *"OK, maybe I'm drunk, but it's OK."* *"Yawn."* *"Now we're talkin'!"*
3. Samuel Smith India Ale - 3.40 - *"Very smooth. Good for an English IPA."* Also overheard, *"OMG! Actually drinkable."* *"Love the nose on this."*
4. Warsteiner - 3.33 - *"Typical German Pilsner. Not very hoppy."* Also overheard, *"Like drinking out of my old shoe."*
5. Stone Levitation - 3.09 - *"The best."* Also overheard, *"Floral, but light. Smells more hoppy than it is."* *"Oh, yeah!"* *"Kinda yuck. Bitter like my mother-in-law."*
6. Pilsner Urquell - 2.95 - *"Miller Lite with an extra hop."* Also overheard, *"Just a safe beer."* *"Pretty good, but not hoppy enough."*

Gathering #26
"Hops, Hops and More Hops!"
Sharp Edge Brasserie
September 2, 2009

Another fun night at the Brasserie! Thanks to all the first-timers for coming out ... there were so many of you! I hope we didn't scare you and that you'll join us again. Hart had another great lineup for us, and thanks to the Sharp Edge for the cool t-shirts! Betsy was back to take photos. :) And, thanks to John for participating in the halftime entertainment. The quotes below are a compilation of your comments.

Beer Tasting Results: (Scale 1 = Yick! What is this crap?; 5 = Yum! Gimme more!)

1. Boulder Hazed and Infused - 3.57 average rating - *"It's a tweener ... right in between hoppy and malty."* Also overheard, *"All shout, no soul."* *"Ahhhh, yummy!"*
2. Bear Republic Hop Rod Rye on cask - 3.44 - *"Really not bad."* Also overheard, *"Flat to start, but nice hoppy flavor."* *"Like caramel."* *"Awful!"*
3. Dogfish Head 60 Minute IPA - 3.35 - *"Hoppy, but too earthy."* Also overheard, *"Yeah, baby!"* *"Smooth aroma. Meaty flavor."*
4. Brewdog Hardcore IPA - 3.14 - *"Hoppy and smooth."* Also overheard, *"Fruity and too bitter."* *"I like the sweet/bitter."*
5. Urthel Hop It - 2.85 - *"Like freakin' rubbing alcohol."* Also overheard, *"Just OK."* *"Too Belgian."* *"Sip it, don't chug it."*
6. Wild Goose Extra Pale Ale - 2.74 - *"Wonderfully mediocre."* Also overheard, *"Bottle taste."* *"Good balance. Fruity."* *"All face, no body."*

Gathering #27
"Oktoberfest!"
Sharp Edge Creekhouse
September 16, 2009

Holy cow! Another attendance record! A whopping 55 members crowded the deck at the Creekhouse! Thanks to all of you for your continued support! I don't know what we're going to do when we have to go back inside during the winter months! Remember, we can only take 30 upstairs! Maybe the Sharp Edge can add another level dedicated to BrewMasters members?

Thanks to Hart for coming up with a great lineup, although I am so disappointed in the Penn Oktoberfest (ick!). And by the looks of the comments, none of you were too thrilled either. I can't believe it scored above a "1"! Ugh? Why'd they have to go and ruin a good brewery?

Thanks to Lindsay for providing the half time entertainment. And to Betsy too ... who seemed a bit trigger happy with the camera! (Just kidding, Bets ... we love you!).

Beer Tasting Results: (Scale 1 = Yick! What is this crap?; 5 = Yum! Gimme more!)

1. Spaten Oktoberfest - 4.03 average rating - *"Surprisingly good for InBev."* *"A standard, hearty Oktoberfest."*
2. Ayinger Oktoberfest - 3.86 - *"Achtung! Whatever is German for 'primo', this is it!"* *"It has good mouth feel."* According to Hart, *"mouth feel" is defined as feeling "really full-bodied in your mouth."* *"It's all fuzzy math!"*
3. Victory Fest - 3.58 - *"Nice finish."* *"Probably would have scored it a '1' if the Penn Oktoberfest didn't already earn it."* *"After the Kostritzer, gimme my passport!"*
4. Stoudt's Oktoberfest - 3.15 - *"Rather fruity."* *"Chug. Chug. Chug."*
5. Kostritzer Oktoberfest - 3.00 - *"Beautiful lace and a mouthful of 'fest!"* *"Crisp and clean. Easy drinking."* *"OK at best."*
6. Penn Oktoberfest - 2.07 - *"Plegh!"* *"Bring Penn back to da 'burgh!"* *"The soul of this beer is gone!"* *"Disappointing."* *"Tastes like yellow, domestic pee water."* *"Yoi and double yoi! Someone missed a block on this one."* *"Tastes like a Bud."*

Gathering #28
"Oktoberfest!"
Sharp Edge Brasserie
October 7, 2009

I'm so excited! I just can't hide it! A new Brasserie attendance record! Thanks to all 39 who came out last night! Welcome to all our newbies, and as always, thanks to our regulars for your support! Our little beer tasting group doesn't exist without all of you! (Could I add any more exclamation points to this paragraph?!!!!!!!)

I wonder if anyone from the defunct Penn Brewery will see this ... they should know how crappy their beer is now. Such a poor showing for Penn Oktoberfest ... again! I hope Hart's description didn't sway anyone's opinion. I doubt it. One sip was all I needed. I know a bad beer when I taste it.

Thanks to Kevin for allowing me to twist his arm for the halftime show. It wasn't so bad, was it Kevin?

Beer Tasting Results: (Scale 1 = Yick! What is this crap?; 5 = Yum! Gimme more!)

1. Spaten Oktoberfest - 4.00 average rating - *"Yes! Very drinkable." "Good malt. No hops. OK."*
2. Paulaner Oktoberfest - 3.58 - *"Tasty!" "Needs to work out to develop some muscle!" "Good taste. No finish."*
3. Warsteiner Oktoberfest - 3.50 - *"Tastes like air. Nothing to it!" "Wow! Fresh start. Good finish. Love the malt with light hop taste."*
4. Hacker Pschorr Oktoberfest - 3.14 - *"Keep it coming! I can stay all night!" "Flat." "Not a lot going on there." "Balanced, subtle finish."*
5. Stoudt's Oktoberfest - 3.11 - *"Starts nice and finishes completely different." "Sharp start, feeble finish." "Never met a Stoudt's I liked ... still true!"*
6. Penn Oktoberfest - 1.91 - *"What happened?" "It wants to be good." "Oktoberfest lite ... water or beer?" "Hocktoberfest!" "Over carbonated and too sweet." "Yuck! Something you would definitely regift Not a real beer."*

Gathering #29
"Fall Beers"
Sharp Edge Creekhouse
October 21, 2009

Ah, a cool October night ... perfect for enjoying a few good brews with a few good friends! Thanks to Mother Nature! And to Hart and the Sharp Edge for a tasty beer selection!

And thanks to all of you who attended. I needed a nice night out and each of you had a role in that. I truly enjoyed talking with all of you!

Thanks also to John for providing our halftime entertainment.

This is starting to sound like an Oscar acceptance speech, so I'll end it here.

Beer Tasting Results: (Scale 1 = Yick! What is this crap?; 5 = Yum! Gimme more!)

1. Scotch de Silly - 3.80 average rating - *"Great for a malty beer! Festive." "Too much like liquor." "Like the malt, but too sweet at the finish." "Slap me silly Sidney, the Pens are 8-1!"*
2. Sierra Nevada Harvest Ale - 3.62 - *"Nice, clean fall beer ... apple/floral finish." "Good hop. Not overpowering." "Lacking in hop for Sierra."*
3. Spaten Optimator - 3.42 - *"A little sweet, but good." "Good fall beer. Nice mid-level malt." "It grows on ya."*
4. Buffalo Bills Pumpkin Ale - 3.10 - *"OK for a pumpkin." "A perfect 5!" "Pretty spicy. Needs more pumpkin." "*
5. Great Lakes Nosferatu - 2.95 - *"Fantastic!" "Too hoppy. Bitter finish." "It bites." "Like eating a pine tree."*
6. Okocim Porter - 2.87 - *"Too sweet! Yuck!" "Tastes like Coke syrup." "Porter, check my bags. I'm here to stay." "I wish I could scrape the taste off my tongue." "This is a world class beer."*

Gathering #30

"Fall Beers"

Sharp Edge Brasserie

November 4, 2009

Another great night! Welcome to all our first-timers! Hope you enjoyed it! Thanks to Hart and the Sharp Edge for an interesting selection, and to Dick for being our entertainment at halftime. And thanks to Betsy for my favorite quote of the evening ... "I stopped listening after like beer #4."

Keeping it short this time ... ask me and I'll tell you about it. ;)

Beer Tasting Results: (Scale 1 = Yick! What is this crap?; 5 = Yum! Gimme more!)

1. Monshof Schwarzbier - 3.64 average rating - *"Nice and mild. Not offensive. Lite finish." "Very smooth. Nice smokey, malty finish." "Very drinkable."*
2. Troeg's Javahead Stout - 3.46 - *"A mild stout. OK for a breakfast beer." "Excellent malt flavor, nice coffee flavor." "Lacking Stout start, porter middle, water finish." "Way to start a Monday morning!"*
3. Affligem Double - 3.37 - *"A keeper! A great double -- fruity and good." "Belgian's are always the best!" "Light, but multiple flavors." "Too much fizz. Plegh!"*
4. Sierra Nevada Harvest Ale - 3.35 - *"OK. Not special. I'll go with the Racer 5." "OK, hops is all you get!" "I'm happy. It's hoppy." "Oh yeah baby! Great fall beer!"*
5. Founder's Old Curmudgeon - 3.29 - *"Yippee! Founder's comes through again! Bring me more and more!" "Whiskey flavor is too much." "Nice fireplace beer for the evening." "Like drinking brandy ... warm, slight malty finish." "I smell the whiskey in that!"*
6. Troeg's Dead Reckoning Porter - 3.08 - *"Dry malty taste. Good hop finish. Could drink a growler of this!" "Nice porter. Smokey finish."*

Gathering #31
"Winter Beer Extravaganza"
Sharp Edge Creekhouse
November 18, 2009

Sorry for the delay in posting the recap! Life can be a little crazy sometimes. Thanks everyone for a great night! Cheers to Daniel for providing the halftime entertainment. And, as usual, to Hart and the Sharp Edge for a great beer selection! Happy Thanksgiving!

Beer Tasting Results: (Scale 1 = Yick! What is this crap?; 5 = Yum! Gimme more!)

1. Anderson Valley Winter Solstice - 4.16 average rating - *"Reminds me of creme soda ... in a good way." "New favorite!" "Good vanilla flavor lingers."*
2. Corsendonk Christmas Ale - 4.06 - *"Christmas in a glass." "Good spices." "Almost fantastic!"*
3. Brooklyn Black Chocolate Stout - 3.96 - *"Milk shake ... mmmmm ... ice cream!" "Tasty, toasty, robust stout." "Starbucky"*
4. Barbar Winter Bok - 3.50 - *"Very rich. Liquor-like." "Simply the best!" "Gimme the honey, honey!"*
5. Bell's Winter White - 3.12 - *"Good upfront, but nothing to follow." "Nice and festive."*
6. Blue Point Winter Ale - 2.80 - *"Nice vanilla finish." "Consistent ... smooth all the way through."*

Gathering #32
"Winter Beer Extravaganza"
Sharp Edge Brasserie
December 2, 2009

Merry Christmas!! I love winter beers. There's a certain healing quality ... or maybe that was the positive energy you all had going on in that room? Thanks for making me feel better! Even though you ranked my current favorite Anderson Valley Winter Solstice in fifth place. :(Thanks to Loren for providing the halftime entertainment, even if he did try to embarrass me. ;) And, as always, thanks to Hart and the Sharp Edge for an excellent beer selection, and a shout out to Betsy for taking all the pictures! See you all in the new year!

Beer Tasting Results: (Scale 1 = Yick! What is this crap?; 5 = Yum! Gimme more!)

1. Corsendonk Christmas Ale - 3.93 average rating - *"The spices don't overwhelm the Belgian flavor." "An OK journeyman taste. No character." "Smooooooth!" "Perfect Belgian Christmas -- love it, love it, love it!"*
2. Des Geants Noel - 3.72 - *"Caramel sweetness." "Eh ..." "Understated deliciousness!" "This one was the best!" "Easy on the palate. A little too sweet. Malty taste. Weak finish."*
3. Troeg's Mad Elf - 3.68 - *"Nice, smooth, tasty Christmas." "Very good balance for such a high alcohol beer!" "I like it!" "I'd rather drink Coors Light. Gag!! Boo!! Hiss!!"*
4. Delirium Noel - 3.59 - *"Pleasant flavor, but body is too thin." "Me gusta!" "Yummy!" "Very sweet. The alcohol taste ruins the beer." "Good. Very strong."*

5. Anderson Valley Winter Solstice - 3.51 (really, it's a 5!) - *"All Christmas beers are awesome, but this one is my new favorite for 2009!" "Dry, sweet vanilla taste. Could not drink more than one. Like a soft drink." "Not much flavor past the vanilla." "Smooth. No bite. OK for dessert." "It's no 5, babe!"*
6. Rogue Santa's Reserve - 2.57 - *"Great finish! Give it up Santa!" "Snow tires with no tread." "The hops over power the flavor." "A nice hop bite!" "Spiced up Dead Guy. Nice finish."*

Gathering #33
"More Winter Beers!"
Sharp Edge Creekhouse
December 16, 2009

Merry Christmas!! I love winter beers. Wait! Deja vu? Sounds familiar. Thanks to everyone for coming out last night. I know it's a busy time of year and your support is much appreciated. What a great lineup Hart prepared for us! Except for that Sam Adams Winter Lager, heh heh. Betsy out did herself with the pictures (and thanks for the elf hat Bets!) And thanks to Jeff for the halftime entertainment. Congrats to Julie on her promotion at work! Anyway, it's been another great year! Our 2nd anniversary rolls around in January! Whoop! Whoop! Merry Christmas, and warmest wishes for a wonderful new year! Love to you all!

Beer Tasting Results: (Scale 1 = Yick! What is this crap?; 5 = Yum! Gimme more!)

1. Kerkom Winterking - 3.70 average rating - *"Sugar, spice and everything alcohol." "A good sipping beer. Bring on the gingerbread!" "OK flavor. Too much carbonation."*
2. (tie) Sam Smith Winter Welcome - 3.55 - *"Light for a winter brew, but good." "Bite me bitter." "Unoffensive." "Light and smooth. Nice." "What's the difference between this and their Winter Lager???"*
3. (tie) Smuttynose (aka Snot Nose) Winter Ale - 3.55 - *"A little light in the pants for a brown." "Yummy." "Nice start but fizzes."*
4. Victory Yakima Twilight - 3.54 - *"A little too bitter after." "Excellent! A little malty." "Hoppiest winter beer ever!" "Too much hops for the holidays." "Heavenly!"*
5. Anchor Christmas - 3.41 - *"Gingerbread, gingerbread. Catch me if you can!" "Nice and spicy. Rich." "A lot of flavor. Better than Joe's." "Almost kicks the Winterking."*
6. Leroy Christmas - 2.70 - *"Smooth, like Santa down the chimney." "Good smell, nice finish. Not real Christmas-y." "Too sweet, but smooth." "First time available in the US. Bad, bad Christmas ale." "Metallic. Yuck."*