

What's on tap?



September 2010

www.pghbrewmasters.com

A word from the Beer Goddess

I recently accepted a volunteer opportunity as the civilian leader of the U.S. Army Reserves 303rd Family Readiness Group (FRG). In case you aren't aware, an FRG provides activities and support to enhance the flow of information, increase the resiliency of unit soldiers and their families, provide practical tools for adjusting to military deployments and enhance the well-being and morale within the unit.

The 303rd is involved in psychological operations. The unit's teams work in groups of three talking with local leaders in an attempt to persuade them not to cooperate with terrorists or make explosive devices and instead support American troop efforts. Their tasks can include everything from pamphlet campaigns and making announcements over loud speakers to going door-to-door. I encourage you to learn more at www.usacapoc.army.mil.

In an effort to support our local military families, Pittsburgh BrewMasters is hosting a fund raiser on Tuesday, September 28th at the Sharp Edge Creekhouse. Thanks to generous donations from the Sharp Edge and several local beer distributors, all the money collected will be donated to the 303rd FRG. Tickets are on sale now. Please visit www.pghbrewmasters.com for more information. If you can't attend and would like to make a monetary donation, please contact me.

Thanks so much for your support!



Christine

Spirit of Giving

Pittsburgh BrewMasters Members Receive A Note of Thanks

What we do for ourselves dies with us. What we do for others and the world remains and is immortal.

*Albert Pine
English author
d. 1851*

It's no surprise to me that Pittsburgh BrewMasters members are special. Every beer tasting proves it to me. I always enjoy the warm conversations we share and the way you welcome first-timers to our group.

This was reinforced the other day when I received a handwritten note in the mail. In these times of electronic communications at lightning fast speed, the personal note delivered by the U.S. Postal Service feels like a treat. And the red envelope certainly caught my attention.

The note was from member Lisa who "shamelessly" solicited donations for the American Cancer Society at the Creekhouse tasting in July. Lisa ran in the Rock 'n' Roll Chicago Half Marathon on August 1st. Here's what she wrote:

Creekhouse BrewMasters,

I just wanted to thank you for your generous donations to the American Cancer Society. All together \$121 was donated, helping take a chunk out of my \$975 fund raising goal. I truly appreciate your support (and trust ... let's face it, most of you don't really know me but still happily donated when I hit you up for cash!). Knowing I had such a great bunch of people backing me made it that much easier to finish the Rock 'n' Roll Chicago Half Marathon.



Lisa

As always, though I don't know when I will be able to spend my next evening with you guys, I look forward to it.

Thanks again, Lisa

P.S. When a race promises you free beer at the end of the 13.1 miles, it's probably because it's crappy. Lesson learned.

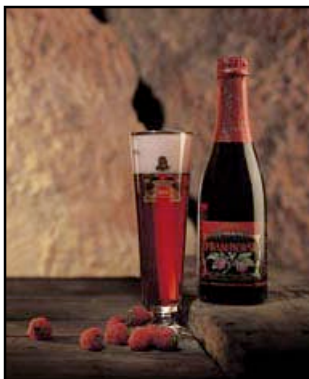
In case you're wondering, Lisa's time was 2:44:34.

Featured Style

Sour

There's a new trend brewing (no pun intended) in the craft beer scene. While Belgian brewers have traditionally made more sour beers than anyone, craft brewers are increasingly experimenting with sour and barrel-aged styles.

Belgian sour styles include unblended lambics that ferment in oak barrels in Belgium's Senne Valley. Brewers add fruit to develop tart framboise (raspberry) and krieks (cherry), to name just two tangy options. Gueuzes blend three consecutive lambic vintages to balance flavors, minimize astringency and create carbonation. Flanders red ales can be intensely tart. Berliner Weisses aren't Belgian, but they are light wheat beers and they are tart, so much so that they're often served with a dollop of raspberry or woodruff syrup.



Our home brewers might have experienced the misfortune of having a beer become sour unintentionally. This is a flaw caused by actobacillus (which creates lactic acid and also sours milk) or poorly cleaned lines and dispensing equipment.

But an intentionally sour or tart beer is an amazingly subtle and refreshing beverage full of earthy esters and layers of flavor.

There are several microbes that sour beer, including lactobacillus and acetobacter, which produces acetic acid. These can be added as cultures, or the beer can be fermented with Brettanomyces, which many brewers regard as the evil twin of common beer yeasts. Brett sours beer and also produces the "horse blanket" aroma that marks many a great Belgian beer, but the prospects of cross-contamination in a production brewery make many brewers shy away.

The microbes that sour beer love old oak barrels, so barrel aging is a good way to make tart beer, especially as barrels are reused and their microbial colonies flourish. That said, not all sour beers are barrel aged, nor are all oak-aged beers sour or tart.

Making an oak-aged sour ale is a journey that can last months or years and involve the arcane arts of cellarmaster and master blender to yield a finished beer.

So what do you eat with it?

In general, sour beers are perfect for food pairing. Their effervescence and tartness cleanse and reset the palate much better than an IPA for example, which can coat the mouth with hop resins.

Sour beers go well with everything from quiche and chicken pot pie to rich cheeses and roasts. They also work with more subtle foods such as asparagus because they don't overwhelm flavors as many beers and wines can.

Lambic beers have a unique crisp and dry flavor that improves with age. The best food pairing options for this style are light, white meat entrees, like roasted lemon rosemary chicken. Desserts are best with this beer. Don't pair it with steak or sausage; the crisp, fruity flavor would most certainly clash with hearty, savory fare.

Framboise and kriek beers go well with cheesecake and other rich, fruit-complimentary desserts.

The best food pairing options for gueuze beers include caramelized apples and spice desserts.

And, finally, red ales go best with salty foods. Try a robust meat, such as garlic turkey sausage or a good, sharp cheddar cheese.

My particular favorite for any sour beer is the Sharp Edge's field green salad which includes fresh baby greens, crumbled chevre, dried cranberries, toasted pecans and Gala apple slices. Or, there's the cranberry almond chicken salad panini made with white meat chicken, tart dried cranberries, toasted almonds and provolone. Both perfect for a relaxing summer night on the deck!

Member Spotlight

Christie



This month's featured Pittsburgh BrewMasters member is Christie, who serves as a Psyop Specialist with the USAR 303rd unit.

I know. I was surprised too. But I was even more surprised when I learned that she enlisted at 17 and

left for boot camp shortly after high school graduation. I anticipated she'd tell me some heartfelt story about being a true patriot and having a strong desire to serve her beloved America, and while I'm sure there's truth in that assumption, the real story is a bit more sordid.

"I went to take the ASVABs (Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery) just to get out of class," she said. The visit to the recruiter followed when she learned that, in her words, "a cute boy" had enlisted. Isn't it amazing the things young girls do?

Well, that cute boy may have had Christie thinking about military life, but she wasn't a flighty teenager. As she learned more, she began to see the opportunities that military service could afford, especially the chance to receive money for college. Her parents, on the other hand, were a

little concerned. "Mom cried and dad kept warning me what a huge commitment I was making," said Christie.

She spent six years in the U.S. Army Reserves and an additional two years in the Army Inactive Ready Reserves. After an eight-year break in service, Christie re-enlisted last September with the 303rd where she is currently on temporary active duty filling an administrative specialist role.

Christie earned a bachelor's degree in psychology from California University of Pennsylvania. She worked as a Child Development Specialist at a residential treatment facility for kids with behavioral issues and as a Crisis Facilitator at Westmoreland Hospital. She spent some time studying pharmacy and worked as a technician, but when organic chemistry caused her to dream nightmares, she realized that wasn't the path she wanted. Prior to re-enlisting, Christie worked as a nanny for three years.

A native of Bentlyville, Christie currently resides in E. Washington, PA. She enjoys hiking, reading and oil painting and admits that while she exudes a bubbly personality in most social situations, there are times when she puts on the game face to get the job done.

Cooking with Beer

Raspberry Lambic Ice Cream

1 1/2 cups seeded raspberry puree
1/2 cup sugar
1 cup framboise or raspberry lambic
1 envelope (2 teaspoons) unflavored gelatin,
softened in 3 tablespoons warm water

1 cup heavy cream, whipped with 2 tablespoons
powdered sugar
1/2 cup vanilla syrup (use a brand made with real
cane sugar)
Ice cream machine

Blend raspberry puree, sugar and lambic. Cover and chill overnight. Remove the fruit blend from the refrigerator and warm to room temperature - or microwave on high for 30 seconds and stir well. Temperature should be around 75 degrees. Blend the softened gelatin with fruit beer mixture, whisk until smooth, then fold in whipped heavy cream and vanilla syrup. Whisk well and chill for 1 hour. Pour into an ice cream machine and freeze according to manufacturer's instructions. Garnish with fresh raspberries and serve.

Mark Your Calendar

Upcoming Events

September 1

Pittsburgh BrewMasters Beer Tasting "To the Dark Side"

Sharp Edge Brasserie

7:00pm - 9:00pm

www.pghbrewmasters.com

September 11

Steel City Big Pour

Construction Junction

12:00pm - 3:00pm

5:00pm - 8:00pm

www.constructionjunction.org

September 15

Pittsburgh BrewMasters Beer Tasting "Oktoberfest!"

Sharp Edge Creekhouse

7:00pm - 9:00pm

www.pghbrewmasters.com

September 18

Capital City Invitational Beer Festival

Appalachian Brewing Company

1:00pm - 4:00pm

5:00pm - 8:00pm

www.abcbrew.com

September 28

Pittsburgh BrewMasters Special Event Fund Raiser Benefiting the U.S. Army Reserves 303rd Family Readiness Group

Sharp Edge Creekhouse

7:00pm - 9:00pm

Tickets sold in advance.

www.pghbrewmasters.com



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