



# The Herald Tribune



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Newsletter of the Ann Arbor Brewers' Guild

November 2009

## November Meeting

This month's meeting of the AABG is Friday November 13th. It will be hosted by **Chris Frey**. See the map and directions on the next page. The featured style is **Belgian Strong Ale**.

## Beer in Belgium

Beer in Belgium varies from the popular pale lager to lambic beer and Flemish red. Evidence of brewing in Belgium dates from the Middle Ages. There are approximately 125 breweries in the country, ranging from international giants to microbreweries; in Europe only Germany, France and the United Kingdom are home to more breweries. Belgian breweries produce about 800 standard beers. When special one-off beers are included, the total number of Belgian beers is approximately 8700. Belgians drink 93 litres of beer a year on average.

## AABG 2009

January .....	Rolf Wucherer .....	Strong Ale
February .....	Mike O'Brien .....	English Pale Ale
March .....	Chris Frey .....	1.080+*
April .....	Matt and Rene Greff ....	Extract
May .....	Stephen Krebs .....	Scottish and Irish Ale
June .....	Mark Zadwinski .....	Spice/Herb/Vegetable
July .....	Steve Darnell .....	Fruit Beer
August .....	Jay Howe .....	Amber Hybrid*
September .....	Bob Scholl .....	European Amber Lager*
October .....	John Rathmell .....	Pilsner
November .....	Chris Frey .....	Belgian Strong Ale*
December .....	Rolf Wucherer .....	Sour Ale

\* Denotes AHA Club Only Competition Style  
All meeting are the second friday of each month beginning at 7:30 p.m., except for the July meeting (BeerBQ) which is the second saturday.

## AABG Pico System

The guardian of the club's pico system is Mike O'Brien. Anyone wishing to use it should contact him at: 734.637.2532 or e-mail: mobrien315221MI@comcast.net

## 18. Belgian Strong Ale

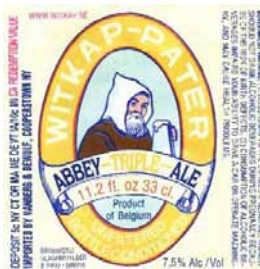
- 18A. Belgian Blond Ale
- 18B. Belgian Dubbel
- 18C. Belgian Tripel
- 18D. Belgian Golden Strong Ale
- 18E. Belgian Dark Strong Ale

### 18C. Belgian Tripel

**Aroma:** Complex with moderate to significant spiciness, moderate fruity esters and low alcohol and hop aromas. Generous spicy, peppery, sometimes clove-like phenols. Esters are often reminiscent of citrus fruits such as oranges, but may sometimes have a slight banana character. A low yet distinctive spicy, floral, sometimes perfumy hop character is usually found. Alcohols are soft, spicy and low in intensity. No hot alcohol or solventy aromas. The malt character is light. No diacetyl.

**Appearance:** Deep yellow to deep gold in color. Good clarity. Effervescent. Long-lasting, creamy, rocky, white head resulting in characteristic "Belgian lace" on the glass as it fades.

**Flavor:** Marriage of spicy, fruity and alcohol flavors supported by a soft malt character. Low to moderate phenols are peppery in character. Esters are reminiscent of citrus fruit such as orange or sometimes lemon. A low to moderate spicy hop character is usually found. Alcohols are soft,



spicy, often a bit sweet and low in intensity. Bitterness is typically medium to high from a combination of hop bitterness and yeast-produced phenolics. Substantial carbonation and bitterness lends a dry finish with a moderately bitter aftertaste. No diacetyl.

**Mouthfeel:** Medium-light to medium body, although lighter than the substantial gravity would suggest (thanks to sugar and high carbonation). High alcohol content adds a

pleasant creaminess but little to no obvious warming sensation. No hot alcohol or solventy character. Always effervescent. Never astringent.

**Overall Impression:** Strongly resembles a Strong Golden Ale but slightly darker and somewhat fuller-bodied. Usually has a more rounded malt flavor but should not be sweet.

**History:** Originally popularized by the Trappist monastery at Westmalle.

**Comments:** High in alcohol but does not taste strongly of alcohol. The best examples are sneaky, not obvious. High carbonation and attenuation helps to bring out the many flavors and to increase the perception of a dry finish. Most Trappist versions have at least 30 IBUs and are very dry. Traditionally bottle-conditioned ("refermented in the bottle").

**Ingredients:** The light color and relatively light body for a beer of this strength are the result of using Pilsner malt and up to 20% white sugar. Noble hops or Styrian Goldings are commonly used. Belgian yeast strains are used – those that produce fruity esters, spicy phenolics and higher alcohols – often aided by slightly warmer fermentation temperatures. Spice additions are generally not traditional, and if used, should not be recognizable as such. Fairly soft water.

### Vital Statistics:

- OG: . . . 1.075 - 1.085
- FG: . . . 1.008 - 1.014
- IBUs: . . . . . 20 - 40
- SRM: . . . . . 4.5 - 7
- ABV: . . . . . 7.5 - 9.5%

**Commercial Examples:** Westmalle Tripel, La Rulles Tripel, St. Bernardus Tripel, Chimay Cinq Cents (White), Watou Tripel, Val-Dieu Triple, Affligem Tripel, Grimbergen Tripel, La Trappe Tripel, Witkap Pater Tripel, Corsendonk Abbey Pale Ale, St. Feuillien Tripel, Bink Tripel, Tripel Karmeliet, New Belgium Trippel, Unibroue La Fin du Monde, Dragonmead Final Absolution, Allagash Tripel Reserve, Victory Golden Monkey

## When and Where

Friday, Nov. 13, 7:30pm

**Chris Frey**  
275 S. Ann Arbor St.  
Saline, Michigan  
734.944.0469

### Directions

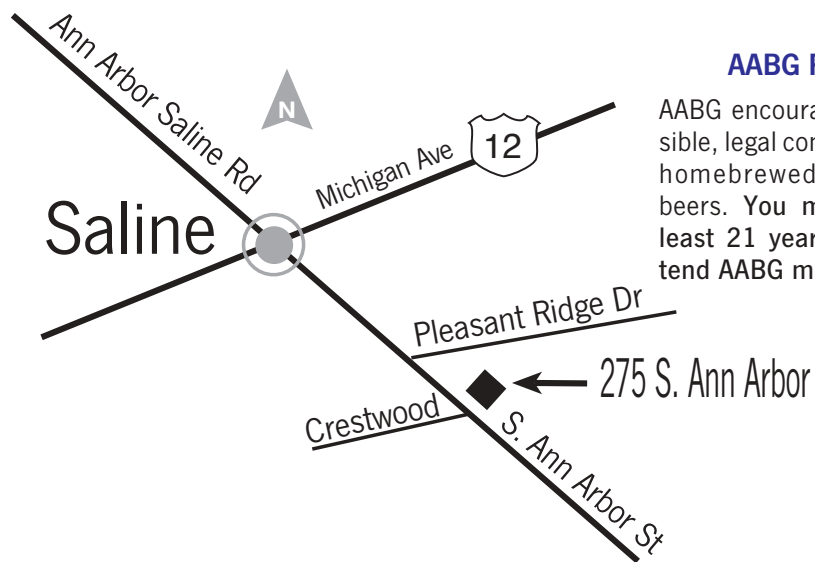
Chris's house is at the intersection of Crestwood and Ann Arbor Street on the east side. It is a light color with a square cupola. There is no parking on Ann Arbor but plenty on Crestwood.



## Tripel

Tripel is a term used by brewers mainly in the Low Countries, some other European countries, and the USA to describe a strong pale ale, loosely in the style of *Westmalle Tripel*.

The origin of the term is unknown, though the main theory is that it indicates strength in some way. It was used in 1956 by the Trappist brewery, Westmalle to rename the strongest beer in their range, their *Superbier*, and the popularity of that brand ensured the name is still strongly associated with the Westmalle brewery, though both the term Tripel and the style of beer associated with the name (strong pale ale), were in existence before 1956. (However, some of the pre-1956 beers called Tripel were dark, in contrast to the modern understanding of the style.) The style of Westmalle's *Tripel* and the name was widely copied by the breweries of Belgium, and in 1987 another Trappist brewery, the Koningshoeven in the Netherlands, expanded their range with a beer called *La Trappe Tripel*, though they also produced a stronger beer they termed *La Trappe Quadrupel*. The



## AABG Policy

AABG encourages responsible, legal consumption of homebrewed and craft beers. You must be at least 21 years old to attend AABG meetings.

### Guide for New Members

Bring 1 to 2 bottles per batch of your beer that you'd like to share, or an interesting commercial beer. Bring tasty munchies to cleanse the palate and sop up the alcohol and a small sampling glass to keep your host from having to provide one. Feel free to share and sample with other members and make and accept constructive comments. Please use good judgment while imbibing and don't drive while intoxicated.

term spread to the USA and other countries, and is applied by a range of secular brewers to a strong pale ale in the style of *Westmalle Tripel*.

### De Koningshoeven Brewery

De Koningshoeven Brewery (Brouwerij de Koningshoeven) is a Dutch Trappist brewery founded in 1884 within the walls of the abbey *Onze Lieve Vrouw van Koningshoeven* in Berkel-Enschot (near Tilburg). The abbey opened a brewery inside the monastery in 1884 in order to finance the monastery and contribute to charitable causes. Despite this goal, the brewery was run as a commercial enterprise. The abbey owned several bars in the area and produced lager under its own *Trappist* brand as well as several private labels. In 1969, the abbey licenced the brewing operations to *Artois* (now InBev). In 1980 the deal with Artois ended, and the monks went back to brewing themselves, this time a top fermented beer which had been made in limited quantities since the 1950's only. Over time the brewery introduced more varieties, first with the *Dubbel* and

*Tripel* in 1987, then in 1992 they introduced their *Blond*. Between 1993 and 2000, the brewery also marketed a variety called *Enkel*. The brewery also produces the world's only Trappist witbier. The brewery also used to produce the Jopen beer.

The brewery started exporting in 1985, and in 1989 the brewery was modernised.

From 1980 until 1999, the brewery was largely run by the monks. Due to the difficulty of the ageing monks continuing to operate the brewery, a limited liability company was set up as a subsidiary of the large commercial brewer, Bavaria. In 1999 the new company began to take over day to day operations, renting the buildings and equipment from the abbey.

As a result of this agreement, a dispute arose with the *International Trappist Association*, the body that governs the labelling of goods as Trappist. They claimed that this new method of operation was against the regulations that permitted the beer to display the *Authentic Trappist Product* logo. Whilst the beer continued to be brewed within the

*Koningshoeven continued on next page...*

abbey walls, the arrangement with Bavaria was felt to be too commercialised. As a result, the brewery withdrew their use of the logo on 1 December 1999. However, the brewery continued to label the beer as *Trappistenbier*.

After a lengthy study by all parties, and a review of the agreement between the abbey and brewery, the beers were granted the right to display the logo again as of September 9, 2005. As part of this settlement, the monks have taken a more active control of the brewery day to day operations, working several hours each day.

## Trappist Beer

A Trappist beer is a beer brewed by or under control of Trappist monks. Of the world's 171 Trappist monasteries (as of April 2005), seven produce beer (six in Belgium and one in the Netherlands). Only these seven breweries are authorized to label their beers with the *Authentic Trappist Product* logo that indicates a compliance to various rules edicted by the International Trappist Association. The Trappist order originated in the Cistercian monastery of La Trappe, France. Various Cistercian congregations existed for many years, and by 1664 the Abbot of La Trappe felt that the Cistercians were becoming too liberal. He introduced strict new rules in the abbey and the Strict Observance was born. Since this time, many of the rules have been relaxed. However, a fundamental tenet, that monasteries should be self-supporting, is still maintained by these groups.

Monastery brewhouses, from different religious orders, existed all over Europe, since the middle-ages. From the very beginning, beer was brewed in French cistercian monasteries following the Strict Observance. For example, the monastery of La Trappe in Soligny, already had its own brewery in 1685. Breweries were only later introduced in monasteries of other countries, following the extension of the trappist order from France to the rest of Europe. The Trappists, like many other religious people, originally brewed beer as to feed the community, in a perspective of self-sufficiency. Nowadays, trappist breweries also brew beer to fund their works, and for good causes. Many of the trappist monasteries and breweries were destroyed during the French Revolution and the World Wars. Among the monastic breweries, the Trappists were certainly the most active brewers: in the last

300 years, there were at least nine Trappist breweries in France, six in Belgium, two in the Netherlands, one in Germany, one in Austria, one in Bosnia and possibly other countries.

Today, seven trappist breweries remain active, in Belgium and the Netherlands.

In the twentieth century, the growing popularity of Trappist beers drew some unscrupulous brewers with no connection to the order to label their beers as "Trappist". After unsuccessful trials, monks finally sued one such brewer in 1962 in Ghent, Belgium.

### International Trappist Association

Beers from all seven trappist breweries available in 2009, from left to right: Achel, Westvleteren, Orval, Rochefort, Chimay, Westmalle and La Trappe (Koningshoeven)

In 1997, eight Trappist abbeys, six from Belgium (Orval, Chimay, Westvleteren, Rochefort, Westmalle and Achel), one from The Netherlands (Koningshoeven) and one from Germany (Mariawald), founded the International Trappist Association (ITA) to prevent non-Trappist commercial companies from abusing the Trappist name. This private association created a logo that is assigned to goods (cheese, beer, wine, etc.) that respect precise production criteria. For the beers, these criteria are the following:

- The beer must be brewed within the walls of a Trappist abbey, by or under control of Trappist monks.
- The brewery, the choices of brewing, and the commercial orientations must obviously depend on the monastic community.
- The economic purpose of the brewery must be directed toward assistance and not toward financial profit.

This association has a legal standing, and its logo gives to the consumer some information and guarantees about the produce.

There are currently seven breweries that are allowed to have their products display the *Authentic Trappist Product* logo.

Brewery	Opened	Production/Yr
Bières de Chimay	1863	123,000 hL
Brasserie d'Orval	1931	45,000 hL
Brasserie de Rochefort	1899	18,000 hL
Brouwerij Westmalle	1836	120,000 hL
Brouwerij Westvleteren	1838	4,750 hL
Brouwerij De Achelse Kluis	1998	4,500 hL
Brouwerij De Koningshoeven	1884	145,000 hL

The Dutch brewery *De Koningshoeven* produces the only Dutch Trappist beers—branded *La Trappe*—that are able to carry the "Authentic Trappist Product" logo. In 1999, however, their use of the logo was withdrawn, but was restored in October 2005.

### Types of beer

With the recent exception of Koningshoeven's Bockbier, Trappist beers are all ales, that is, top fermented, distributed in bottles, and mainly bottle conditioned. Trappist breweries use various systems of nomenclature of the different beers produced, which relate mainly to the relative strength of the beer in the range (e.g., "single", "double", "triple". (Enkel, Dubbel, Tripel in Dutch). Considering the importance of the Holy Trinity in the church, it is unlikely that the choice of three types of beers was accidental. Colours or numbers can be used to indicate the different types, dating back to the days when bottles were unlabelled and had to be identified by the capsule or bottle-top alone. The number system gives an indication of strength, but is not an exact alcohol by volume.

### Patersbier

Most Trappist breweries also feature a lower-alcohol "patersbier" or "fathers' beer" that is only available locally. This variety is designed to be consumed by the monks themselves, although it is sometimes offered at the monastery's on-site café. Examples include Chimay Dorée and Petite Orval.

### Enkel

Enkel, meaning "single", is a term formerly used by the Trappist breweries to describe the basic recipe of their beers. There are now no Trappist (or secular) breweries using the term. Instead, "Blond(e)" or the number "6" is used by La Trappe, Achel, Rochefort and Westvleteren to describe their lightest beer.

### Dubbel

The dubbel (also double) is a Trappist breweries naming convention. The origin of the dubbel was a beer brewed in the Trappist Abbey of Westmalle in 1856. The abbey had, since 10 December 1836, brewed a witbier that was quite sweet and light in alcohol for consumption by the paters. The new beer, however, was a strong version of a brown beer. In 1926, the formulation was changed and it became even stronger. The first written record of its sale by the abbey was on 1 June

*Trappist* continued on next page...

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... **Trappist** *continued*

1861. Following World War Two, abbey beers became popular in Belgium and the name “dubbel” was used by several breweries for commercial purposes. Westmalle Dubbel, Chimay Premiere, Koningshoeven/La Trappe Dubbel and Achel 8 degree Bruin are examples.

### **Tripel**

Tripel (also trippel or triple ale), is a naming convention used by Belgian Trappist breweries to describe the strongest blonde beer in their range. Westmalle Tripel is considered to be the foundation of this beer style, and was developed in the 1930s. Westmalle Tripel, Koningshoeven/La Trappe Tripel, and Chimay Cinq Cents are all examples of Trappist tripels, but this style has proven even more popular among secular breweries like Bosteels and St. Bernardus. Tripels as a style are generally pale colored beers with an alcohol content ranging from 8-10% ABV. A spicy phenolic flavor accentuated by earthy and spicy Belgian hop flavor is typical. Fruity-tasting esters are moderate to moderately high.

### **Dark Strong Ale or Quadrupel**

Most of the Trappist breweries produce at least one beer categorized as a “Belgian Dark Strong Ale” or Quadrupel. These are rich, dark (but never roasty) ales with a high percentage of alcohol, usually 8-12% ABV. Chimay Grand Reserve, Rochefort 8 and 10, Westvleteren 12, Achel Extra, and Koningshoeven/La Trappe Quadrupel are examples. These beers range greatly in profile, but often feature rich dried fruit-like malt and yeast flavors, cocoa-like malt character, yeast spiciness and fruitiness, and little hop flavor. Rather than bitterness, alcohol flavor and warmth balance the sweet flavors in these beers.

### **Other Beer Styles**

The beers made at Trappist breweries often do not fit any particular style. For example, Koningshoeven/La Trappe’s Tripel has a toastiness that is not present in any other example of the style. Orval produces a unique beer that is refermented with a house strain of *Brettanomyces*, a tenacious yeast that is considered a wild yeast by winemakers and many brewers.

