

The Herald Tribune



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Newsletter of the Ann Arbor Brewers' Guild

February 2011

February Meeting

This month's meeting of the AABG is Friday February 11th. It will be hosted by **Phil Wilcox at JaXon Beer Company**. See the map and directions on the next page. The featured style is **Belgians**.

Saison

Saison (French, "season") is the name originally given to refreshing, low-alcohol pale ales brewed seasonally in farmhouses in Wallonia, the French-speaking region of Belgium, to refresh farm workers during harvest season. Modern-day saisons are also brewed in other countries, particularly the USA, and are generally bottle conditioned, with an average range of 5–8% abv, though saisons at the more traditional 3.5% strength can still be found.

AABG 2011

January	Randy deBeauclair	English Pale Ales*
February	Phil Wilcox JBC	Belgians
March		Bock*
April	Josh Budde	Wood-aged Beer*
May	Stephen Krebs	Pilsner
June	Chuck Warpehoski	Wheat Beers
July	Steve Darnell	Mead*
August	Patti Smith & Jeff Bletch	Sour Beers
September	Jeff Renner	Specialty/Experimental/ Historical*
October		Hefeweizen*
November	Chris Frey	Porter and Stout
December	Rolf Wucherer	Dark Lagers*

* Denotes AHA Club Only Competition Style

All meetings 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 club's pico system is available to members for brewing. If you wish to borrow it contact Mike O'Brien at:

734.637.2532

picobrew@comcast.net

Access the AABG Club System forum at:

<http://tinyurl.com/29h7yxc>

16. Belgian and French Ale

- 16A. Witbier
- 16B. Belgian Pale Ale
- 16C. Saison
- 16D. Bière de Garde
- 16E. Belgian Specialty Ale

16C. Saison

Aroma: High fruitiness with low to moderate hop aroma and moderate to no herb, spice and alcohol aroma. Fruity esters dominate the aroma and are often reminiscent of citrus fruits such as oranges or lemons. A low to medium-high spicy or floral hop aroma is usually present. A moderate spice aroma (from actual spice additions and/or yeast-derived phenols) complements the other aromatics. When phenolics are present they tend to be peppery rather than clove-like. A low to moderate sourness or acidity may be present, but should not overwhelm other characteristics. Spice, hop and sour aromatics typically increase with the strength of the beer. Alcohols are soft, spicy and low in intensity, and should not be hot or solventy. The malt character is light. No diacetyl.

Appearance: Often a distinctive pale orange but may be golden or amber in color. There is no correlation between strength and color. Long-lasting, dense, rocky white to ivory head resulting in characteristic "Belgian lace" on the glass as it fades. Clarity is poor to good though haze is not unexpected in this type of unfiltered farmhouse beer. Effervescent.

Flavor: Combination of fruity and spicy flavors supported by a soft malt character, a low to moderate alcohol presence and tart sourness. Extremely high attenuation gives a characteristic dry finish. The fruitiness is frequently citrusy (orange- or lemon-like). The addition of one or more spices serve to add complexity, but shouldn't dominate in the balance. Low peppery yeast-derived phenols may be present instead of or in addition to spice additions; phenols tend to

be lower than in many other Belgian beers, and complement the bitterness. Hop flavor is low to moderate, and is generally spicy or earthy in character. Hop bitterness may be moderate to high, but should not overwhelm fruity esters, spices, and malt. Malt character is light but provides a sufficient background for the other flavors. A low to moderate tart sourness may be present, but should not overwhelm other flavors. Spices, hop bitterness and flavor, and sourness commonly increase with the strength of the beer while sweetness decreases. No hot alcohol or solventy character. High carbonation, moderately sulfate water, and high attenuation give a very dry finish with a long, bitter, sometimes spicy aftertaste. The perceived bitterness is often higher than the IBU level would suggest. No diacetyl.

Mouthfeel: Light to medium body. Alcohol level can be medium to medium-high, though the warming character is low to medium. No hot alcohol or solventy character. Very high carbonation with an effervescent quality. There is enough prickly acidity on the tongue to balance the very dry finish. A low to moderate tart character may be present but should be refreshing and not to the point of puckering.

Overall Impression: A refreshing, medium to strong fruity/spicy ale with a distinctive yellow-orange color, highly carbonated, well hopped, and dry with a quenching acidity.

History: A seasonal summer style produced in Wallonia, the French-speaking part of Belgium. Originally brewed at the end of the cool season to last through the warmer months before refrigeration was common. It had to be sturdy enough to last for months but not too strong to be quenching and refreshing in the summer. It is now brewed year-round in tiny, artisanal breweries whose buildings reflect their origins as farmhouses.

Saison continued on next page...



When and Where

Friday Feb. 11, 7:30 pm

Phil Wilcox

JaXon Beer Company

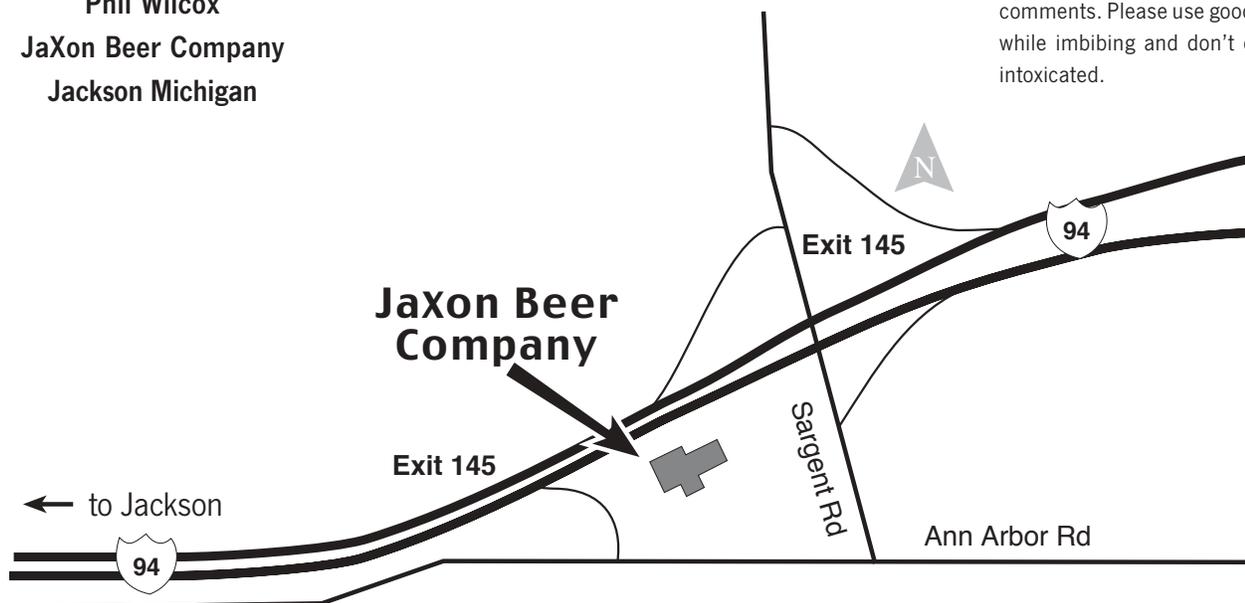
Jackson Michigan

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 1–2 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. 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.



... *Saison* continued

Comments: Varying strength examples exist (table beers of about 5% strength, typical export beers of about 6.5%, and stronger versions of 8%+). Strong versions (6.5%–9.5%) and darker versions (copper to dark brown/black) should be entered as Belgian Specialty Ales (16E). Sweetness decreases and spice, hop and sour character increases with strength. Herb and spice additions often reflect the indigenous varieties available at the brewery. High carbonation and extreme attenuation (85–95%) helps bring out the many flavors and to increase the perception of a dry finish. All of these beers share somewhat higher levels of acidity than other Belgian styles while the optional sour flavor is often a variable house character of a particular brewery.

Ingredients: Pilsner malt dominates the grist though a portion of Vienna and/or Munich malt contributes color and complexity. Sometimes contains other grains such as wheat and spelt. Adjuncts such as sugar and honey can also serve to add complexity and thin the body. Hop bitterness and flavor may be more noticeable than in many other Belgian

styles. A saison is sometimes dry-hopped. Noble hops, Styrian or East Kent Goldings are commonly used. A wide variety of herbs and spices are often used to add complexity and uniqueness in the stronger versions, but should always meld well with the yeast and hop character. Varying degrees of acidity and/or sourness can be created by the use of gypsum, acidulated malt, a sour mash or Lactobacillus. Hard water, common to most of Wallonia, can accentuate the bitterness and dry finish.

Vital Statistics:

OG: . . . 1.048 – 1.065
FG: . . . 1.002 – 1.012
IBUs: 20 – 35
ABV: 5 – 7%
SRM: 5 – 14

Commercial Examples: Saison Dupont Vieille Provision; Fantôme Saison D'Erezée-Printemps; Saison de Pipaix; Saison Regal; Saison Voisin; Lefebvre Saison 1900; Ellezelloise Saison 2000; Saison Silly; Southampton Saison; Pizza Port SPF 45; Lost Abbey Red Barn Ale; Ommegang Hennepin

The Lost Abbey

Red Barn Farmhouse Ale

This Farmhouse Ale traces its roots to the small rustic breweries of Southern Belgium. The word Saison comes to us from the French language and it means Season. Lightly spiced with Organic Ginger, Orange Peels, Black Pepper and Grains of Paradise, this brew promises to quench your thirst on the hottest Southern California days or wherever your travels may take you. Available in 750 ml bottles and on draft at select inspired locations.

OG 1.065 • TG 1.012 • 6.7% ABV

Malts: Two Row, Flaked Wheat and Flaked Oats

Hops: Phoenix and German Tettnang

Yeast: Belgian Saison Yeast

Adjuncts: Dextrose, Ginger, Orange Peel, Black Pepper and Grains of Paradise

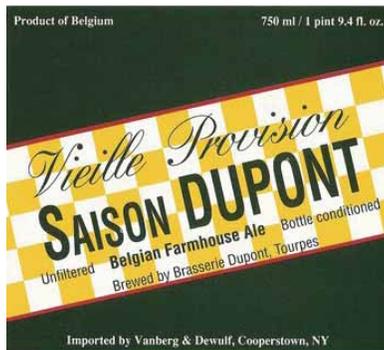
Dupont Brewery

The **Dupont Brewery** (in French: *Brasserie Dupont*) is a brewery located in Tourpes (Leuze-en-Hainaut), in the centre of West-Hainaut, Belgium. The current brewery, founded in 1950, is located on a working farm which dates back to 1759 and has significant brewing history. In the 1990s, a bread bakery and cheese-making facility were added.

Historically, their best-selling beer was the Moinette Blonde. However, the popularization of the Saison Dupont by their American importer in the 1980s has led to great international popularity for this beer, which provides a link to the historic farmhouse ales of the region.

Technical information

The brewery's copper boiling kettles date from the 1920s, but there are also a number of pieces of modern equipment in use in the brewhouse. Square, flat-bottomed fermentation tanks of stainless steel are utilized to provide specific flavor



characteristics that are evident in the finished beer. Primary fermentation lasts about 5 days, followed by a 1–2 week secondary fermentation. After this, the beer is packaged and warm-aged at the brewery for 6–8 weeks at 73°F (23°C). All of Dupont's beers are naturally carbonated via bottle conditioning.

The distinctive Dupont house yeast strain has been the subject of much speculation and discussion. The complexity of flavors it generates has caused some to suggest that in fact a combination of multiple strains are used, and its good performance at high temperatures and signature spiciness have led some to conjecture that it was originally a red wine strain that has been adapted to beer fermentation. While most beer is fermented at temperatures not exceeding 68–72°F (20–22°C), the tanks at Dupont

have been observed to have reached the mid-90's (32°C+).

Beers

- *Saison Dupont* (6.5% ABV) A slightly cloudy yellow-colored ale with high carbonation, fruity and spicy aromas and tastes, and perceptible, somewhat quinine-like bitterness. Brewed in the Saison style from Pilsner malt and Kent Goldings and Styrian Goldings hops. Originally titled "Saison Vielle Provision", the beer was also dry-hopped until the brewery stopped this practice in favor of a larger late hop addition in the boil. Unfiltered and bottle-conditioned, Saison Dupont is packaged in green glass bottles of a thickness appropriate to withstand the substantial carbonation. The bottles are finished with a champagne-style cork and wire cage.
- Moinette Blond (8.5% ABV)
- Moinette Brune (8.5% ABV)
- Avec Les Bons Vœux de la Brasserie Dupont (9.5% ABV) This strong golden-colored ale began as the brewery's Christmas gift or "Cadeau" for friends and favored business associates, but has become part of their regular commercial lineup. Often referred to simply as "Bons Vœux", the beer's name means "With the good wishes of the Dupont Brewery".
- Bière de Belœil (8.5% ABV)
- Bière de Miel (8.0% ABV) A beer brewed with the addition of honey. An organic version is also available.
- Biolégère (3.5% ABV)
- Blanche du Hainaut Biologique (5.5% ABV)
- Foret Saison (5.5% ABV) A Saison brewed from organic ingredients.
- Cervesia (8.0% ABV)
- Redor Pils (5.0% ABV)

Biolégère

Alcohol: 3,5% vol. The **Biolégère** is a top fermentation beer with refermentation in the bottle. Created in 1992, this beer was the answer of our brewery to the increasing

demands coming from a large group of potential clients, wanting an organic beer with character but low in alcohol. This light and refreshing blond beer combines marvellous aromas, taste of malt and citrus. The refermentation in the bottle in combination with an "adapted hopping" are resulting into a complex beer with only a small degree of alcohol. The production is being controlled by Certisys and the beer has the label Biogarantie.

Saison – Michael Jackson

Perhaps people question the existence of Saison because it has no clear definition in respect of raw materials and processes. It is one of those instances where a number of beers from a certain region are broadly similar in character and use the same designation on their labels.

In fact no style has a rigid definition. Even in Germany, where a disciplined approach finds favor, the malt and hop grists of two Pilseners, for example are not required to be identical. A German might nonetheless be puzzled by broader styles such as Saison. Saisons were regarded as a distinct family of beers by brewing scientists in the late 1800s and early 1900s. These beers were originally produced to a variety of strengths, including "children's", "family", "double", and "royal" (regal), but they were especially associated with the summer season. The beer had to be sturdy enough to last for the summer months, when brewing was impossible, but not too strong to be a harvest quencher.

Those two characteristics help identify a Saison today. It is a medium-to-strong summer ale, traditionally with a distinctively yellow-orange color; highly carbonated; well hopped, dry and fruity, with a thirst cutting acidity and a crisply quenching finish. It is hard to define by technical specification or method of production. Over the years many techniques have been used.

Hard water is often used. High mashing temperatures are sometimes employed, to produce a substantial degree of unfermentable sugars, giving a firm edge to the beer. In the past, some brewers allowed the wort to develop a degree of natural lactic acid before the boil. Or this may have happened afterwards, in the wort-cooling.

Jackson continued on next page...

Some breweries used the Baudelot system, in which the wort was exposed to the air, and any wild micro-organisms present, as it flowed over the outside of pipes containing cold water. Some of the beers gained acidity during maturation, usually in mild steel tanks. In some instances the refreshing acidity was imparted by a blending of young and old beers. These brews are sometimes flavored with dry-tasting spices and in the past were often dry-hopped. Their flavors also suggest the use of some very characterful yeasts.

Saisons are usually presented in corked Champagne bottles, with a secondary fermentation, and they can pour with a dense rocky head. They are produced especially in and around the western part of the province of Hainaut. Saisons have typically been made by a handful of mainly very small and artisanal breweries. Some of these breweries show their origins as farms, and one or two others speak of the small beginnings of the industrial revolution.

I am sometimes asked how Saisons compare with the Bieres de Garde made across the border. The answer is that the French style at its most typical is not at all crisp or summery: it is softer, more rounded, richer, sweeter, and maltier, sometimes with a licorice note.

Just across the border, near the town of Enghien, (in Flemish Edingen), is the village of Silly, which sounds perfectly sensibly in French. This village, on the river Sille, grows sugar-beet and wheat. In the center of the village is a cafe proclaiming the beers of the family Meynsbrughen (who seem to have fiddled with the spelling of their name over the years). Next door, behind a restored façade, is a cobbled yard that looks straight into the brewhouse. It is still very much an agricultural brewery.

Farmer Nicholas Meynsbrughen established the brewery in 1850, and his family still runs it. All of its beers have a very soft fruitiness, reminiscent of nectarine. Its Saison de Silly is made by the blending of a pale brew with a darker one that has been aged for about a year in a metal tank. Some devotees feel that Saison de Silly is the example most loyal to the tradition, though it does not have refermentation in the bottle. The brewery's other products include pale and dark versions of its maltier, stronger (8% abv) Double Enghien and a potent, smooth, spritzy bronze ale called La Divine (9.5 % abv)

This area is noted for its loyalty to the local 'bieres speciales'. It is the Jeu de Balles that causes the thirst,? I was told by the patron at Cafe Titien, in nearby Bassilly. He was talking about Pelotte, a game that appears in odd pockets and in various rather different forms, along the European seaboard from Friesland to the Basque country of Spain - and, as Jai-Lai, from Cuba to Florida to Connecticut. There was a league-table on the wall. The Jeu de Balles has also led to the practice of long-distance egg throwing. In 1990, one of the locals threw an egg 63 meters, and it landed in the Guinness Book of Records.

Tasting note: rich, sweetish, with a syrupy maltiness, balanced by a distinctive wineyness and tartness.

Food Pairing: fruity desserts. For example, caramelized oranges. Trifle. Sticky toffee pudding."

*— Presented by Michael Jackson
as the selection of September 2002
In his "Great Beers of Belgium" beer club.*