



wine
**Richard
Watson**

Winemakers' choice in beer is the imports

I am not entirely sure this is true, but it is said that winemakers drink more beer per capita than members of any other profession.

Wholly true or not, I know from observation and association that they do drink a lot of brew. What better way to cleanse the palate and nose than with a hefty draught — frothy, cool and relatively strong.

These men and, increasingly, women who earn their living by their palates, what do they drink when they drink beer? A non-systematic survey via my memory is that very few drink standard, domestic beer.

ENGLISH, GERMAN and Canadian are most popular with them, beers of greater body and substance. Refrigerators are stocked most often with Beck's, Labatts, Watneys, Old Peculiar and Molson. No "Colorado Kool-Aid" for them.

I am moved to this discourse by the most recent trend in American drinking preferences, this time with beer rather than wine (though the parallels are obvious).

The new style of beer-making that may be catching on — at least it is called "dry." It is presently being made by Michelob and Old Style, is advertised heavily and is being watched closely by the industry.

AND, IT MUST now be reported, the dry beers taste just about like every other light American beer. Both initial American efforts are valid, simple and certainly not dry, whatever that would be — hardly fare appealing to winemakers and others who like the taste of something in their mouths.

Ever eager to sponsor the novel in order to capture the attention of the consumer, brewers have gone a step beyond light: less flavor and more calories and alcohol.

Making dry began in Japan (General Motors readers take note). The Asahi brewery recently began exporting its dry beer into the United States.

THIS ENTRY has been very successful, full of body and maltiness —

and some domestic makers took note. However, true to form, the American products are much lighter than the Asahi. It is now difficult to know what a true dry beer is like, so different are the products under the name.

For the record, production methods are the same. Dry beer is simply cooked longer than standard beer, converting more of the natural sugars. Hence, the term dry is used usually to mean the absence of sugars. It is hoped that the next domestic brewer who enters the field does not also add as a punchline to his commercials: "It doesn't get any better than this." It does.

FORTUNATELY, ALL American brewers do not adhere to the keep-it-simple-and-stupid principle. Ever Coors, producers normally of some of the most tasteless beer in all the world, exceeded only by the quality of its commercials, has demonstrated that it clearly has the skill to make a beverage of substance.

For the last couple of years, it has produced during the cold months a Winterfest, warm and full of flavor. And all year long it makes Killian Irish Red, a most tasty experience.

Another encouraging sign of the brewing times is the increasing frequency of so-called micro-breweries across the nation. They are fine by their size/production and tend to produce, at modest but apparently justified prices, beers of individuality and character.

MOST OF them are motivated to get into this business, it is reported, to counteract the lack of character

in many domestic beers that flood our markets. I am aware of micro-breweries in Kalamazoo, Chelsea and Frankfort (though the last may be bit large to qualify) in Michigan, all available in select outlets in the Detroit area.

It is also possible, in metropolitan Detroit, to buy from the Boulder Brewery of Colorado, makers of at least four malt varieties. All very tasty.

THE SIERRA-NEVADA Brewery in California is nationally the best known, with a fairly wide distribution, though the Detroit area is unfortunately beyond its range. However, that beermaker's products are widely available in the western part of the United States.

Worth seeking out when one is in the West are breweries in Hopland (Mendocino County), Healdsburg (Sonoma County) and Callotoga (Napa County), all in the North Coast region of California.

Both Seattle and Portland boast several small breweries of high distinction. Indeed, I vividly recall not too long ago having Sunday brunch in the prestigious Westman Hotel in downtown Portland and drinking small quantities of eight locally produced beers and ales.

No, I do not recall what I had to eat.

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upcoming things to do

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21, Super Rocks of the '60s featuring Gary Lewis and the Playboys, Dennis Yost and the Classics Four, Billy J. Kramer and the Dakotas, Sonny Geraci and the Outsiders; Wednesday, Aug. 23, Lee Greenwood and Sunday, Aug. 27, Smokey Robinson. Five additional nights of Oldsmobile Stage performers will be announced at a later date. Performances begin each evening at 8 p.m. All 10 nights of Oldsmobile Stage concerts and all 10 days of other Michigan Festival performances and activities are accessible with the purchase of a Michigan Festival button for \$8 before the festival and \$10 at the events. Buttons can be obtained by calling Mondays-Fridays from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. at 355-6686 or toll-free in Michigan, 1-800-WHARTON, with Visa or Mastercard.

• 'THREPPENNY OPERA'

Brecht Company Producing Director Bob Brown has announced that Arthur Strimling and Diane Dowling of New York's Ballad Theatre will join forces with the Brecht Company for its upcoming 10th anniversary production of the Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill classic "The Threppenny Opera." The Brecht Company will present a low-cost preview of "The Threppenny Opera" on Thursday, June 15, before officially opening the production on Friday, June 16. Thereafter, performances will run Thursdays-Saturdays at 8 p.m. and Sundays at 2 p.m., through July 9. All performances will be at the Residential College Auditorium in Ann Arbor. Tickets are \$4 for the preview, \$10 Fridays-Saturdays and \$8 on Thursdays and Sundays. Student Rush discounts are available at the door only. Advance tickets are on sale at the Michigan Theatre Box Office in Ann Arbor or by calling 668-8397.

• **'WAYNESVILLE TRILOGY'**
Performance Network of Ann Arbor presents Al Sjoerdsma's "Waynesville Trilogy: 1 and 2. Death Drinks a Beer and That'll Be The Day." Thursday, June 15, through Sunday, June 25. Performances are at 8 p.m. Thursdays-Saturdays and 6:30 p.m. Sundays. Tickets are \$5 for all seats. Call 663-0681 for reservations.

• FUN, GAMES

The Westland Festival will be held from Friday, June 30, through Tuesday, July 4. Offered will be carnival rides, millionaires' party, car show, children's games and adult events. Featured on the main stage will be the United Band; Guy and the Del-locks; Sea Cruise; the Waco Country Band, the Blue Water Band, and Tracey Lynne and the Mountain Express. For information on the festival, call 729-1732.

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