



April 2009

### Korbinian Doppelbock

**Weihenstephaner, Freising, Bavaria, Germany**

**7.4%abv     \$3.50/500ml**

Happy April all – Bay Area folks, we hope you enjoyed the spate of warm weather. We've been busy trying to keep up with an industry that is defying the economy and rising ingredient costs with new breweries and expanded offerings from existing ones. Records in 2008 show 56 new breweries with only 10 closing shop. That said, we are bucking the trend and going way back to remind ourselves how the US got to this enviable position with a remarkable first selection of the month.

Distilling one thousand years of history into highlights: In 725, a Benedictine monastery was founded atop a hill in Freising near Munich. Records dating back to 728 show that hops were grown on the property. To farm a portion of the property, the farmer was required to give the monks ten percent of the crop. The historical presumption is that they were using it to make beer. Much later, in 1040 the Abbot was officially given the right to brew and sell beer by the State of Bavaria. The mix of church and state proved problematic when Napoleon secularized the monastery transferring the rights from the monks to the state. Since 1921 it has been known as the Bavaria State Brewery Weihenstephaner. Deconstructing their claim as the oldest brewery, it might be better stated as the oldest *continuous* brewery. Considering all this facility has been through, (four complete destructions, plagues, multiple invasions) the nature of Bavarian spirit is well exemplified.

Today, Weihenstephaner is a state-of-the art facility that is well known alongside the Technical University of Munich. The University has produced 17 Nobel Prize winners since 1927 in the fields of Chemistry and Physics. The brewery is a continuous center for research and also for hands on brewers' education. Many current master brewers around the world got their start here.

Since the Bavarian Purity Law was literally issued on the steps of this brewery, you can guess their offerings are very traditional and representative of German beers overall. An interesting side-note: The Purity Law as stated originally said only water, hops and barley could be used in production. You're correct if you noticed 'yeast' was missing from the initial decree. In those days, management of these microorganisms wasn't a documented part of the equation – yeast's contribution to fermentation wasn't understood until Louis Pasteur's time. Sediment from previous batches carried enough yeast to ferment the next batch. The law was subsequently changed to include yeast. Weihenstephaner brew twelve beers, including three Hefe-Weissens, but for our selection, we chose their Korbinian Doppelbock.

Korbinian is named after the original founding saint of the Benedictine monastery and its label features his depiction, the Bavarian flag and a saddled bear. The symbol originates from a journey to Rome where the saint's horse was killed by a bear. The saint tamed the bear and it carried him on to Rome. Inside the bottle is a doppelbock. Doppelbocks are dark rich lagers that the monks brewed in preparation for fasting periods during Lent (technically we should have used this beer last month!). Due to the high volume of malts, it was dubbed 'liquid bread'. Apparently fasting was limited to food. At an average of about 7%, it is one of the strongest styles produced in Germany. A general rule to identify one amongst a selection of German beers is to look for the 'ator' at the end of the name. Paulaner's Salvator is credited as the original progenitor of the style.

Your Korbinian pours a clear, deep claret color with a quickly dissipating beige head. As a lager, it is best served at 45° into a dimple mug or a goblet. If you have a stein, ignore the first two suggestions. The nose of the beer is almost solely malt, with a roasted, sweet profile with a hint of dried fruits. The mouth feel is rich while retaining the crispness of a lager. The flavor continues the malt theme with the roasted malts balancing an overall breadly sweetness. Rounding out the flavor profile is a slight alcohol heat and a faint grassiness from the hops. The aftertaste coats the mouth with sweetness that lingers. This is a surprisingly drinkable 7% made even more remarkable by the price point. Simply staring at the bottle calls for Jägerschnitzel! If doing a true pairing for flavor, try this with dried apricots or fig preserves on multi-grain bread. These are complementary flavors. To provide balance, go with a savory selection like bacon. For cheese pairing, a mild selection like Swiss is ideal.



### The Wise ESB

**Elysian Brewing Company, Seattle, Washington**

**5.0%abv \$4.50/22oz**

The Pacific Northwest is synonymous with great beer tradition and experimentation. Portland is known as Beertown with the most breweries in the country. From Oregon as a whole, we've featured several selections over the years including Deschute's and Rogue. A few hours north of Portland, Seattle's national contributions include Redhook and Pyramid. Those beers are only scratching the surface of Seattle as a great beer town. There are several breweries such as Mac and Jack's, Hales, Pike, Big Time, Laughing Buddha and Maritime. These beers are staples of most restaurants and taverns in Seattle. Great beer bars are also easy to find including Brouwers, Uber, The Dray and the Stumbling Monk. What is somewhat unusual, not one beer from the state of Washington has been featured as our beer of the month. The reality is most are popular in their local markets and are not distributed very far. Of course we're leading up to an exception. A few locations in the Bay Area are privy to the first selections from Elysian Brewing becoming available. Elysian recently helped kick-off its arrival with a few events during SF Beer Week including a wood-aged tasting hosted at 21<sup>st</sup> Amendment.

Elysian was founded in 1996 by Joe Bisacca and Dave Buhler of Rogue Brewing, and Dick Cantwell from a few Seattle breweries. Prior to brewing, German born Cantwell was an aspiring fiction writer. Now as an influential brewer, his written contributions can be found in many industry publications. Elysian's goal was to establish a large Seattle brewpub that would be able to scale to a larger distribution than the current crop of Seattle breweries. The original location is in the trendy Capitol Hill neighborhood. It is the largest facility and houses a 20-gallon brewing capacity. The venue is a full service restaurant and bar. The second facility is located in the Greenlake neighborhood and is referred to as Elysian Tanglewood. The facility houses a 3-gallon capacity that allows for small batch creativity to evolve a line-up that has included over 60 beers. The third location, Elysian Fields is located across the street from Qwest Field as a warm-up spot for Seahawks and Sounders games.

Visiting any of these locations you will likely see a list containing beers only available at the pubs. In some cases outstanding beers from other companies are also featured. The pubs are the proving grounds for each new recipe. The current year round offerings cover the bases with a stout, porter, ESB, IPA, pilsner and pale ale. The seasonal selections are a bit harder to keep up with, but the Bifrost, Pumpkin, and Jasmine IPA have earned particular distinction. In keeping with the Elysian name, each beer's moniker is allusive (but not limited) to Greek mythology.

Our selection (depicting Athena), 'The Wise' ESB may not seem very outside the box as it has won gold in the Great American Beer Festival three times. A particularly remarkable achievement considering the addition of 'ESB' to the average craft beer drinker's lexicon can be attributed to their pioneering neighbor, Redhook. Bitters are attributed to the UK and historically could be interchanged with pale ales. The term "bitter" is the obvious descriptive result of more hopping than traditional ales and lagers. Today's bitters have evolved to differentiate themselves from pale ales by featuring a smoother and more pronounced malt profile, while pale ales lean toward lighter malts, relying on hops for most of their character. In the UK, a bitter is almost always served cask style, where the keg is removed from refrigeration and hand-pumped directly through a firkin. The warming of the beer wakes up the yeast just enough to provide mild carbonation. Bitters have low alcohol levels and are quite smooth – perfect for remembering all 90 minutes of a football match. Extra Special Bitters feature more hop aroma, larger malt support and a bit more alcohol. The flavor profile requires a delicate balance; perhaps that's why there are so few standouts. Fullers and Redhook are probably the two best known in the style (at least in the US).

Your 'The Wise' ESB pours a clear copper with a thin off-white head. Unlike its warmer UK counterparts, this is best served at 45° degrees and will do just fine in a pint glass. The aroma is a spicy balance of toasted malt, floral hops and very light orange peel. On the palate it is a nice balance of rich and crisp. This beer is bittered with Chinook hops, a high alpha strain with a very pungent character. The toasted contribution of the Munich malts balances out what would otherwise be a pale ale. The flavor and aroma hops are also high alpha strains of Centennial and Cascade. What is keeping this beer from being dominated by the aggressive hops is a complex combination of malts including Cara-Helles (richness/toffee) and Belgian Special B (caramel/nutty). The aftertaste is somewhat dry with the bitterness coating on the tongue. Pair this with dishes featuring masala spice, like vindaloo. For just enjoying as a session beer, aged cheddars or any richer cheese will help cleanse the palate.