



## Beer of the Month Club

July 2007 Selections

### St. Druon de Sebourg Abbey Ale

**Brasserie Duyck, Jenlain, Nord-Pas-de-Calais, France**

**6.0%abv      \$9.99/750ml**

Léon Duyck (pronounced 'deek'), a Belgian from Flanders, was the first of his family to become involved in the brewing trade, some time around the turn of the twentieth century. While it never became his sole means of supporting his family, Léon was passionate enough about the business to instill that passion in his son, and in 1922 Félix Duyck moved to the small town of Jenlain, in far northern France, where he opened the brewery that carries his family name to this day. Prior to World War II, the beers of Jenlain were sold only in wooden cask, as their entire market was local, and transporting beer in barrel to local pubs and inns was the easiest way to do so. Following WWII, however, people's habits began to change, and the local pub was not necessarily the center of village life the way it had been before the war. Consequently, Brasserie Duyck became a pioneer in recycling. While other breweries were making the investment in new, flip-top bottles (of the variety that Grolsch has made famous over the decades since), Félix Duyck had the idea of reusing Champagne bottles. Soon, the brewery had local scout troops, under-funded pensioners, and anybody else willing to help bringing used Champagne bottles to the brewery, where they were cleaned, de-labeled, and re-filled with the breweries finest ales, now ready for home delivery, as well as being more suitable for long distance travel than wooden barrels could ever be. Robert Duyck, Félix's son and heir, who ran the brewery from 1960 through the 1980's, still fondly recalls time spend as a youth in the family's brewery, patiently scraping foils from the necks of those bottles, getting them ready to be re-filled. In 1968, Robert changed the name of their flagship brew, formerly called 'Duyck Old Beer' to 'Jenlain', in honor of their hometown. Throughout the 1970's, he also worked on expanding the brewery, keeping up with modern technology, but without sacrificing their authenticity. When Robert handed over the family business to his son, fourth generation brewer Raymond Duyck, the family firm had grown to be France's second largest independent brewery.

The St. Druon de Sebourg Ale is named for a pious orphan that traveled the roads of the area, before settling in the village of Jenlain, where the local church is named in his honor, and religious pilgrims continue to pay their respects. It is a classic French Farmhouse ale, closely related in style to the Saison ales of neighboring Belgium. These beers, also known as 'Bières-de-garde' ('beer for aging'), are ales that were traditionally made during the harvest season for consumption during the summer work season of the following year. They had to be strong enough to last through the winter, but light enough to be refreshing and restorative during the busiest season on the farm. The St. Druon is brewed using mostly barley malt from local farms, with just a little wheat from nearby Beauce. Three types of hops from Alsace are used for aroma and bittering. The water comes from a natural well beneath the brewery, and a proprietary yeast strain that has been used in the brewery for over 80 years completes the fermentation. To get the most from your St. Druon, try it around 50-55°F, from a red wine or Belgian ale glass.

The St. Druon de Sebourg pours into the glass with a brilliant, clear golden color and a lacy, off-white head. The aromas are full of cereal grains, with a slight earthiness from the hops, and fruity esters provided by the yeast. It is crisp and refreshing on the palate, leading with fruit and grain notes before finishing in a crisp, citrusy, and mildly bitter finish. This is the perfect beer to restore a hard worker halfway through the work day (but don't tell my boss!) with a light lunch, or with richer and heavier foods at the end of the work day. Try it with such Alsatian specialties as *choucroute garni* or *Tarte Alcadienne*.

## Moa Original Premium Lager

**Moa Brewing Company, Blenheim, Marlborough, New Zealand**

**5.5%abv      \$11.99/750ml**

There is an old saying amongst winemakers that “It takes a lot of great beer to make great wine”, and Moa Brewery is a true testament to that theory. Moa was founded in 2003 by a young man named Josh Scott. Josh’s father, Allan Scott, is one of the pioneers of the modern New Zealand wine industry, having started as a vineyard manager for one of the country’s biggest wine producers in 1973. By 1975, Allan Scott had purchased his own first vineyard, where he grew grapes to be sold to other producers for the next decade. In 1985, the family sold their original property, and purchased a larger one, where they were one of the first in New Zealand to plant Sauvignon Blanc, now the wine that New Zealand is most famous for. By 1990, the Scotts had designed and built their own winery, and begun bottling all of their own fruit under the Allan Scott label. Josh graduated from college with a degree in Winemaking in the late 1990’s, and then set off for a few years of apprenticeships in France and the United States, before returning home to join the family business, where he is now the winemaker. In 2003, Josh decided to start his own side project, a quest to make New Zealand’s definitive fine beer. His brewery was named after the extinct giant moa, an ancient relation to Australia’s emu that roamed the islands of New Zealand until hunted to extinction by the Maori some time in the 1500’s (although some crypto-zoologists insist the bird still exists). Now aided by his head brewer David Nicholls, Josh opened his first brew-pub earlier this year, and according to most ‘Kiwis’, has already accomplished his goal of making the country’s definitive beer.

While the Moa Original Lager *is* a lager beer, it is one of the most unique that we have ever come across. With the exception of the yeast strains used for the primary and secondary fermentations, all of the ingredients in the Moa beers are local. Josh begins the brewing process with an all-malt charge, predominately pale Pilsner malt, with a small amount of the slightly darker Vienna malt, and a bit of Wheat malt for its higher protein levels, which aid in head retention in the finished beer. The beer is hopped at three different times during the brewing process, using hop pellets and whole cones of dried hops, making this one of the hoppiest lagers in the world. The hops used are B Saaz and Hallertau, both grown in the Nelson region of New Zealand. The water comes from an artesian spring at the site of the brewery, and is so pure that it needs no treatment before being used in the brewing process. The initial fermentation is performed by a classic, European Pilsner yeast, at very low temperatures, to produce a low-ester (esters are the compounds that give beer and wine their fruity notes) aroma profile. This initial fermentation is followed by a short warm-conditioning period, and then six weeks or more of cold maturation. The beer is then filtered before bottling, before undergoing its most unusual step. At bottling time, a small dosage of brewers’ sugar is added to the bottle, along with a special yeast from France that is traditionally used in Champagne production. Like Champagne, the beer is then allowed to complete its secondary fermentation in the bottle. Unlike Champagne, however, this beer is not ‘disgorged’ – that is to say, they leave the yeast in the bottle. This will mean that the beer pours slightly cloudy, unless great care is taken in decanting from the sediment, but this is perfectly acceptable, as that sediment has a lot of flavor. Josh recommends consuming the Moa Original around 40-45°F, in a footed Pilsner glass or Champagne flute, and we heartily agree.

Due to the bottle fermentation, the Moa Original pours slightly hazy, with a pale, lemon-yellow color. The carbonation of this beer is quite amazing for a lager. The bead of bubbles rising from the bottom of the glass is so fine that it is almost invisible, and yet there is an amazingly thick and vibrant white head, which replenishes itself so well that you may never see the surface of the beer underneath. Even then, a quick swirl of the glass will bring the head immediately back to life. The nose is dry and spicy, with citrus and hop aromas predominate, and light malt notes poking out from behind. The palate is, likewise, quite dry and spicy with Saaz hops, but with a little more prominent malt. What really sets this beer apart, though, is the texture. It is quite full-bodied, and the natural carbonation gives it a creaminess on the palate that I’m not sure I have ever experienced in a lager beer. The bitterness from the hops is a bit more pronounced than the typical lager, too, lending it to pairing with bigger, spicier foods. While the Moa is extinct, you could try pairing this with its closest living cousin – grilled emu. It also makes a great pairing for spicy curry dishes, or anything with sauerkraut or kimchee.