



Beer of the Month Club

June 2005 Selections

Bachelor Bitter

Deschutes Brewery, Bend, Oregon

5.4%abv \$4.50/22oz

Gary Fish and his father began searching for a location to open a small brewpub in the mid-1980's. Being from northern California, they naturally began their search in and around the Bay Area. After much searching, and more than a little hand-wringing, the two came to the conclusion that California was just not going to fit in their budget. Finally, the Fishes settled on the then sleepy town of Bend, Oregon, where they opened the original Deschutes Brewpub in an old building on Bond Street in downtown Bend. Working with just a 10-barrel brewing system, they still found it difficult to sell all of their beer at first – as Gary says “They weren’t exactly beating a path to our door.” With time, though, sleepy little Bend began to grow in size, as people moved there for the clean air and outdoorsy lifestyle that the region is now famous for. By 1993, the Fishes had completely outgrown the capacity of their little Bond St. brewpub, and had to build an all-new, state-of-the-art brewery on the outskirts of town just to keep up with demand. While they still brew draft ales at the Bond Street location, all of their bottled beers are brewed at the larger facility, which now has an annual capacity of over 120,000 barrels.

Deschutes has always produced a beer that they have called Bachelor Bitter, and it has been available on draft and in six packs throughout the Northwest for many years now. Just recently, however, the folks at Deschutes have started a new program they call the ‘Bond Street Series’, a limited run of special ales packed in the traditional ‘bomber’ bottle, and available at a select few accounts around the west. The first in this series is the Bachelor ESB (Extra Special Bitter), named for the extinct volcano/ski resort that dominates the town’s skyline. The ESB is brewed to a higher gravity than the regular Bachelor Bitter, and has a bit more of an assertive hop character. The bitter, as a style of ale, has its roots in the hop growing country of southeast England, in and around the county of Kent. While the style is hoppy when compared to more traditional styles of ale, traditional English bitters will be considerably less hoppy than the typical West Coast IPA. The main difference is that the substantial amount of hops used in an ESB are added to the brew kettle with the malt to add bitterness, and little or no hops are added later for aroma. The result is a rich, amber-colored ale with a malt-driven flavor profile, and a dry, slightly bitter finish. The Bachelor Bitter is brewed using traditional English floor malts, and a combination of Northwest and Kentish Goldings hops. This ale is bottle conditioned, so it may throw a slight sediment, but this also helps to insure freshness. Try the Bachelor Bitter in your favorite pint glass at British cellar temperature – about 50°F.

The Bachelor Bitter pours a deep copper color, with a slight, rocky, beige-colored head. The nose shows plentiful fruity malt character and a hint of citrusy hops. The palate also shows the sweet, fruity malt notes up front, with plums, citrus and spice cake flavors. This ale finishes pleasantly bitter and totally dry, but with very restrained hop character for a West Coast microbrew. This bold ale would be perfect with fish ‘n’ chips if you have a *Chippy* in your neighborhood, but it will do equally well with other forms of Pub Grub, or your traditional summer barbecue.

Berliner Weisse

Berliner Kindl Brauerei AG, Berlin, Germany

2.5%abv \$3.00/330ml

The Berliner Kindl Brewery was founded in 1872, although its current facility is the third that it has occupied in its lifetime. In the late 1800's there were some 200 breweries in Berlin brewing *weissbier*, but the brewing business consolidated over the years, with the best brewers getting larger and the lesser brewers closing down. In the early 1920's, Berliner Kindl moved into a brand-new, state of the art facility built in the *Bauhaus* style. By the beginning of WWII, there were only three *Berliner Weisse* breweries left, and they were forced to close as the war went on due to lack of raw materials. Unfortunately, all three of three were in the eastern, now Soviet-controlled, sector. One, Pankow, was never recovered; the Schultheiss brewery was destroyed by bombs. The Berliner Kindl brewery was dismantled by the occupying Russian forces and shipped back to the Soviet Union, never to be seen again. Thankfully, though, the Schultheiss and Kindl families were both able to build new breweries in the west, and are the last two breweries that continue to make this historic style of beer.

Berliner weissbiers differ from their Bavarian kin in several ways. Both styles are made with a combination of wheat and barley malt, but the Berlin style uses much less wheat, typically around 30%. Also, much less hops are used in Berlin, just enough to provide the necessary preservative value. The biggest difference, though, is in the fermentation. *Berliner weisse* begins its fermentation with the addition of a lactic culture, *Lactobacillus delbrückii*, that was developed specifically for these beers. This culture, similar to that used in yogurt production, lends the finished beer its distinctive acidic twang. The beer is then fermented using a top-fermenting yeast, then cold-stabilized before being filtered. Just before bottling, a dosage of yeast is added (*kräusened*, in German) to promote secondary fermentation in the bottle. This is what gives a *weissbier* its cloudy haze. The *Berliner weisse* is very low in alcohol, and quite refreshing on its own (the way I like it!), but in Berlin it is typically offered with an addition of either *Himbeeren* (raspberry) or *Waldmeister* (woodruff) syrup. This addition sweetens the beer as well as adding color and flavor, but I find that it dominates the delicate flavors of the beer. For those who would like to try it Berlin style, we do have both syrups available in the store. The traditional *Berliner weisse* glass is almost like an extra-large Champagne saucer, wide open at the top, but you can use any open-mouthed glass. Make sure you drink this beer very cold, as it is most refreshing when well chilled.

The Berliner Kindl Weisse pours a rich golden color, with a hint of orange at the core. Its head is big and foamy, with very small, Champagne-like bubbles, but diminishes quite quickly. The nose is crisply fruity, with lemon and orange, but also hints of something tropical, like passionfruit. On the palate, it is so bright and lively, one can hardly believe it is beer at all. Bright, crisp, citric fruits dominate, but the lactic culture shows through in that hint of acidic tartness in the mid-palate. Hops are barely evident at all, and the malt flavors are so light and crisp that the whole package just dances across the tongue, stopping just long enough to quench the thirst. This is the perfect summertime beer for bratwursts boiled in beer and grilled in the sun, and it pairs well with a variety of other German and American foods, as well.