

# The Belgium Nobody Knows

Randy Mosher

AHA Conference, Cincinnati, OH

June 21, 2008

# The Lacambre Project

# The Belgium Nobody Knows

## Belgian Beer Today

- Lambics, Witbiers
- Abbey Beers
  - Strong Beers
  - Belgian Pale Ales
  - Spices & Herbs

# The Belgium Nobody Knows

**1980s**

-US Market for first time

**1971**

- Duvel turns pale

**1965**

- Celis founds De Kluis (later Hoegaarden)

**1950s**

- Recovery from WWII

# The Belgium Nobody Knows

1920-1930s

-Golden Age of (modern) Belgian Beer

1934

- Westmalle Tripel created

1930

- Orval re-founded

1920

- Chimay starts selling to public

# The Belgium Nobody Knows

1916-1918

- WWI fought on Belgian soil

# The Belgium Nobody Knows

1919 - Belgian government forbids on-premise sale of gin

# The Belgium Nobody Knows

1902–3

- Henri Van Laer/Brewers guild contest

# The Belgium Nobody Knows

1900

- Belgian brewing in shambles
- Most beers weak, locally sold
- German and British beers dominate high-end market

# The Belgium Nobody Knows

1885 Mash capacity tax repealed

1850-1870 Gueuze created

1862 Scourmont (Chimay) starts brewing

# The Belgium Nobody Knows

1851 G. Lacambre publishes: "Traité Complete de la Fabrication des Bières"

# The Belgium Nobody Knows

1822 Belgium under Dutch control

“ ... one of the most ridiculous and vexatious Excise laws that ever disgraced the annals of fiscal interference and fiscal stupidity.”

# The Belgium Nobody Knows

1812 Napoleonic war mostly fought in Belgium

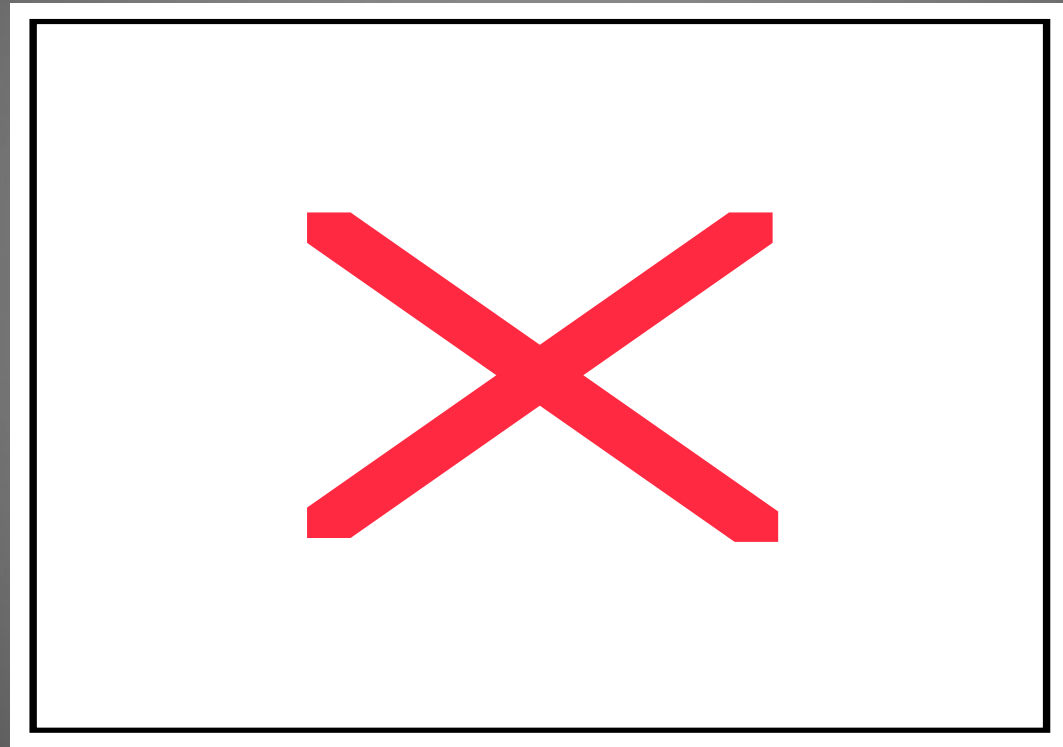
1789 French Revolution shuts all abbeys

Big Gap in information

1588 Flanders has reputation for good beer

1519 King Gambrinus enshrined (lived c. 1300?)

# The Belgium Nobody Knows



# The Belgium Nobody Knows

## Back to Lacambre

- Brewmaster for “Grande Brasserie: in Ghent
- First detailed book on Belgian beers by Belgian brewer
- 500 pages of really fun French!

# The Belgium Nobody Knows

## Belgian beer in 1851

- Big industry: 8–9 million hl/yr
  - 1 liter/day per cap consumption
  - Famous for wheat beer
  - of all beers contained raw wheat

# The Belgium Nobody Knows

## Belgian brewing in 1851

- One malt type per beer
  - Uniform strengths: 1.025 & 1.050 (mostly)
  - Multiple infusions, no sparging
  - Unmalted grain mashed separately
  - Slijm (turbid) mashes common
  - Stupidly long boils

# The Belgium Nobody Knows

## Belgian brewing in 1851

- Spices: coriander, grains of paradise, ginger, cumin, elder flowers, orange peel, sweet flag (Acorus calamus)
- Licorice and roasted chicory as colorants
- "en saison"

# The Belgium Nobody Knows

## Belgian Barley Beers, 1851

- Bièred'Orged'Anvers(barley beer of Antwerp)
- Bièred'Orge des Flandres(barley beer of East Flanders)
- BièreBrune des Flandres(brown beer of west Flanders)
- Bièred'Orge de Louvain (barley beer of Louvain)

# The Belgium Nobody Knows

## Belgian Barley Beers, 1851

- Bières de Maestricht, Bois-le-Duc, Rotterdam
- Bièred'OrgeWallones(barley beer of Verviers, Namur Charleroy; also Liège, Mons)
- BièreBrune des Flandres(brown beer of west Flanders)
- Bièred'Orge de Louvain (barley beer of Louvain)

# The Belgium Nobody Knows

## Belgian Wheat Beers, 1851

- Bières de Louvain (classic witbier)
- Peetermann(dark witbier)
- Bières de Diest
- Bière Brune de Malines (aka Mechelen)
- Bière de Hoegaarde
- Bières de Lierre(Cavesse)
- Bières de Liège(called Bière de Saison)

# The Belgium Nobody Knows

## Belgian Wheat Beers, 1851

- Bières de Louvain (classic witbier)
- Peetermann(dark witbier)
- Bières de Diest
- Bière Brune de Malines (aka Mechelen)
- Bière de Hoegaarde
- Bières de Lierre(Cavesse)
- Bières de Liège(called Bière de Saison)

# The Lacambre Project

- Collaborative brewing project
- Experimental history
- Learning by doing

# The Lacambre Project

Generally...

- Beers better than expected
- Great yields
- Pretty good sparges
- Taste for yourself