

Hank Speaks... So Listen by Hank Bienert

SURE IS HOT TODAY - thanks for that wisdom, Sparky!! It is New Orleans not Nome - what do you expect? It is time to stay inside, praise the name of WILLIS CARRIER and sip some cold beer. Those who have stocked up on Coors Banquet and Red Stripe might be OK but those of us wise enough to have brewed a whole lot of Kolsch are quite content, thank you.

What, you didn't brew any Kolsch even after I gave it such laudation in last month's column? I know folks in CCH who would say "Well, the little fools deserve what they got." BUT, those of you who are familiar with the kindness of Hank know that he is always there and that he gives and he gives so today I give again - a list of, in order of increasing excellence.

COMMERCIALY BOTTLED KOLSCH

Harpoon Summer Beer

Following a visit to Cologne, Harpoon founders Dan Kenary and Rich Doyle decided to craft this golden kolsch, which debuted in 1999. Capped with a foamy white crown, **Summer** is a bracing pick-me-up with a lemony zing.

COAST 32°/50°

Named after the latitude of COAST's location in Charleston, South Carolina, and Cologne, the graceful **32°/50°** is a smooth, balanced gulper with a fabulous floral complexity.

Metropolitan Brewing Krankshaft

After a stint studying brewing in Munich, Chicago's Doug Hurst fell under the spell of lagers, later founding the German-focused Metropolitan Brewing. Among the standouts you'll find the **Dynamo Copper Lager**, **Flywheel Bright Lager**, and straw-colored **Krankshaft**, which balances its bitterness with a smoothing measure of wheat.

Freigeist Ottekolong

With Cologne's **Freigeist** ("free spirit"), Sebastian Sauer and Peter Essel are on a mission to revive and update forgotten and classic styles of German beer. One of our favorites is the cheekily named **Ottekolong** ("Eau de Cologne"), a traditional, unfiltered kolsch. It's hazy, lightly sweet, and adept at assassinating thirst.

Dark Horse Kmita Kolsch

Though the Michigan brewery is known for its inventive stouts, it's also adept at the lighter side of brewing. The stronger "Polish-style" kolsch (about 5.5 percent ABV) relies on plenty of hops from Poland, resulting in a sturdy bitterness that relents to a creamy sweetness.

Mother Earth Endless River

Down in eastern North Carolina, the aptly named Josh Brewer specializes in compulsively drinkable riffs on classic styles. Among the standouts you'll find the **Sunny Daze** hefeweizen, **Weeping Willow Wit**, and **Endless River**. The golden kolsch smells of fresh-cut flowers and honey, with a crispness that rivals New York City seltzer.

Saint Arnold Fancy Lawnmower

Light enough to savor while mowing the lawn but dignified enough to drink alongside grilled fish or ceviche, the Houston brewery's snappy kolsch marries a light malt sweetness with an appealing floral bouquet.

Captain Lawrence Captain's Kolsch

While the New York brewery's rendition is a bit richer and maltier than you might expect, **Captain's Kolsch** is nonetheless a crisp drinker with mild fruity sweetness and a bright, lemony aroma.

Gaffel Kolsch

The longtime Cologne favorite partners a brisk carbonation with a grassy ,citrusy aroma and more bitterness than you'd typically expect from the style. At just 4.8 percent ABV, Gaffel is as refreshing as the day is long.

Reissdorf Kolsch

Founded in the 19th century, Cologne's Heinrich Reissdorf specializes in the city's specialty beer. True to style, the clean, refined kolsch is a balanced interplay of bready malts, light bitterness, a lighty floral perfume.

If this gift moves you to want to respond in some way, please wipe the tears of joy from your eyes and read below. As always, constructive comments are welcome via the Hopline ... for those uncomfortable with readin' n' writin' big words, please continue to mumble during meetings and look to the back row which is where I like to sit/sip/mumble...and where GIFTS OF FREE BEER FOR A THIRSTY SCRIBE beer should be delivered.

P.S. It is still hot and I still enjoy a good beer along with a good meal being spoiled by being in CCH and by having wife Georgine out in our kitchen.

August is hot everywhere in the US so we chose this week to have a staycation and in that spirit to dine out for most meals as we do when out of town.

The Gordon Biersch food and beer pairing last time we went was so enjoyable that it was an early entry on foodie list.

The group was larger than last time but that did not limit anything; included in the number were Mickey G, Steve Clark, Frank Ballero, Boom Washington and me to hold up CCH's reputation of having members who know where "the elite meet to eat".

Within a few minutes of being seated, Jucy (sp?), the serving lady, had a cold unfiltered Czech Pilsner in front of each of us, nicely balanced and as good as one can get at U Pinkasu (look it up, dear reader, this is an educational newsletter).

Chef Rolando's shrimp filled spring rolls were followed by his pasta salad which is not like pasta salad at the church potluck supper, being a spicy combo of vegetables and pasta and Brewer Daniel's hefeweizens flavors worked nicely with it.

The entree course was BIG. West Coast style Righteous Red ale was big hopped and big malt and the roast chicken with potatoes was bigger than the plate!

Dessert of peach cobbler and ice cream was sweet but perfectly matched by a shwarzbier tilting towards the roasty side giving a nice coffee finish to the evening.

Hmmm.....we liked it; we liked it a lot.

Hank