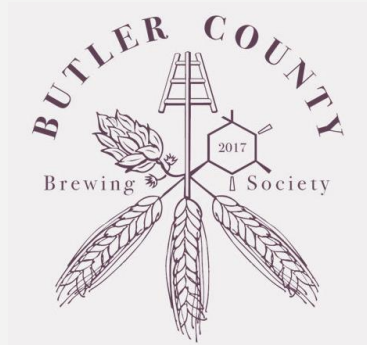


SAISON

A RENAISSANCE NUEVOS



BCBS SEPT 2019 - BOUVETTE



HISTORY — **WAR & INDUSTRY**

STYLE — **EULER DIAGRAMS & BUREAUCRACY**

VARIANTS — **A BIÈRE BY ANY OTHER NAME**

CRAFTING — **THROW CAUTION TO THE WIND**

HISTORY

THE ROMANCE

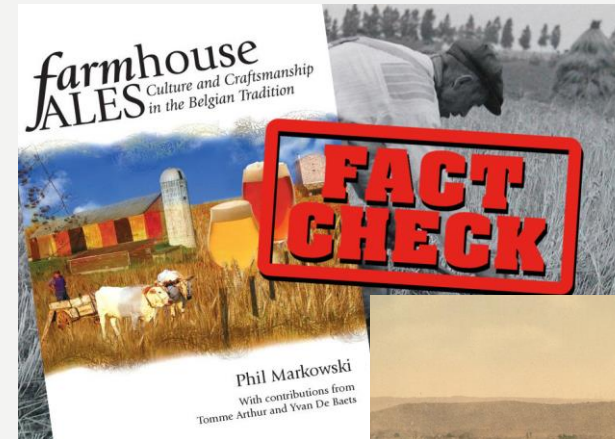
- French pronunciation: [sɛ.zɔ̃] – meaning “season(al)” – the ‘original’ farmhouse ale
- Rooted in Wallonian (Hainaut) tradition of pastoral agriculture / self-contained farm breweries
- Low ABV pale ale brewed seasonally as a means of clean hydration for workers – ‘saisonniers’
 - Variation farm-to-farm (harvest dependent)
 - Cooler temps during off-season
 - 3.5% vs 5-7ish% of today
- Variations inspired by regional influences
 - Bière de garde
 - Grisette
- Advent of industry led to a natural progression of farm to contract to commercial operation through the 20th century



HISTORY

THE REALITY

- Centuries of occupation (Dutch / French / Austrian)
- First and most heavily industrialized country in Europe through 1800's
- No historical evidence to support 'romance' story – Circa 1989
 - Single source: Yvan De Baets contribution to Phil Markowski's *Farmhouse Ales* (2004)
 - Oldest 'saison' ref is 1823 (Liège) – Context: seasoned / aged / conditioned (ie. not fresh)
- Commercial breweries (Dupont-1950, etc.) likely started as farms (Dupont-1759) – urban not rural
- Market trends resulted in aged versions of local 'fresh' beer; the dry / light Grisette of Hainaut winning the popularity contest in the 1900's
- History written by the victors...





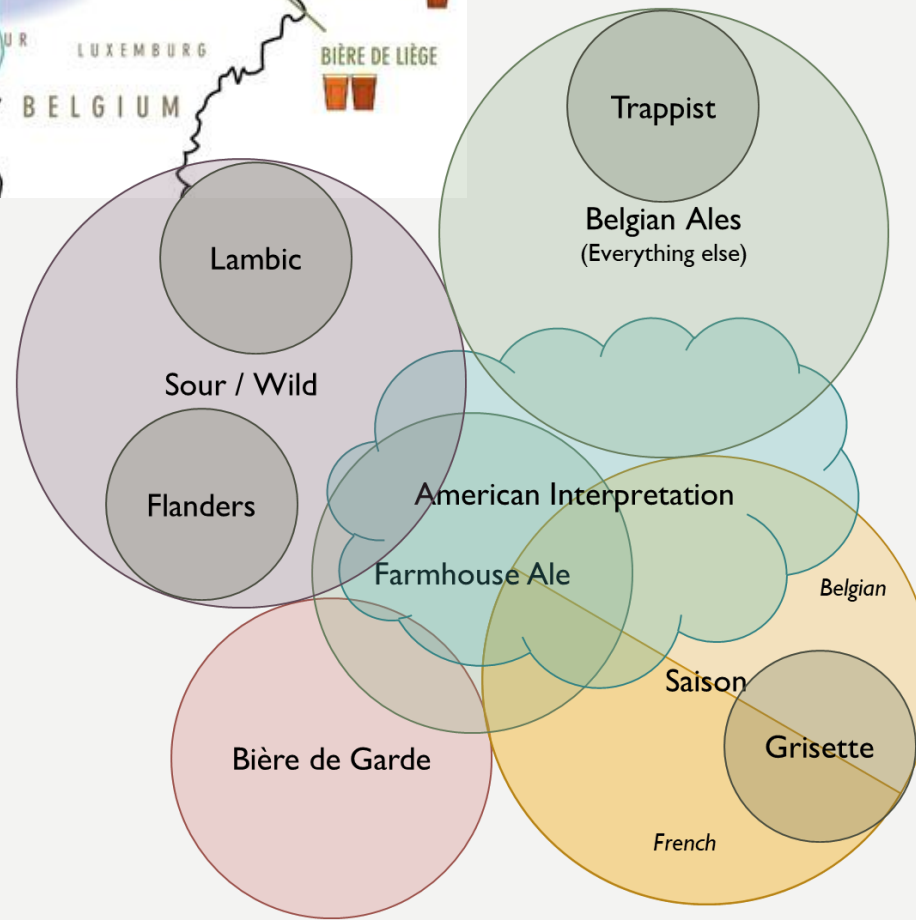
STYLE BELGIANISH

Beer map of Belgium circa 1850:

- Beers from Flanders have survived
- Beers from Wallonia are mostly extinct

Per current beer culture trends (BJCP)

- Flanders Ales are well defined (historical)
- Wallonian beers are less so...



2008

2015

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Vital Statistics:
 IBUs: 20 – 35
 SRM: 5 – 14
 OG: 1.048 – 1.065
 FG: 1.002 – 1.012
 ABV: 5 – 7%

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Vital Statistics:
 IBUs: 20 – 35
 SRM: 5 – 14 (*pale*)
 15 – 22 (*dark*)
 OG: 1.048 – 1.065 (*standard*)
 FG: 1.002 – 1.008 (*standard*)
 ABV: 3.5 – 5.0% (*table*)
 5.0 – 7.0% (*standard*)
 7.0 – 9.5% (*super*)

SUPER???

STYLE

BJCP ('08 vs '15)

- Saison seems to be a moving target
- A beer with such a rich history seems like it should be better defined...
- BJCP seems to be catering to American trends of 'bigger = better'
- Or maybe just trying to capture the wide variety of Wallonian beers
- “Specialty Ale” now part of “Saison”

VARIANTS

“CLASSIC”

Belgian Saison (Dupont, circa 1950)

- “THE” classic saison in Tourpes (Hainaut)
- 6.5% ABV, Kent/Styrian Goldings, Pilsen Malt
- Wyeast 3724 / WLP565 / Lallemant Belle S.
- Likely the result of ‘saison’ing a grisette

Grisette (Nine Giant has a tasty one)

- Originates in western Wallonia (Hainaut)
- Low ABV (3%), very light, crushable
- Fresh thirst-quencher to miners, circa 1800
- Likely precursor to modern Saison

French Saison (Trois Monts, cir)

- Not a definitive style or historical brew
- More earthy / floral, less citrus / pepper
- Wyeast 3711 / WLP590
- Think body / char of BDG in form of Dupont

Bière de Garde (Trois Monts, circa 1600)

- Cellared beer of Nord-Pas-de-Calais (France)
- Bigger (body / ABV) than saison
- More malty, less ‘hoppy’, still earthy / spicy
- Perceptually sweeter, but still very dry
- Wyeast 3725 / WLP072 / Wyeast 3864

VARIANTS

AMERICAN FARMHOUSE

Local Specialty Ingredient(s)

- Grains of Paradise / Peppercorns
- Flowers / Herbs
- Honey

Brettanomyces / Mixed Fermentation

- Not a bacteria, just different kind of yeast
- Some strains can ferment clean when treated well
- Performs well in stressful conditions
 - Add late (secondary)
 - Let work over months for more flavor

Wood (Barrel) Aged

- Med-toast French Oak
- Wine barrels (Merlot / Chardonnay)
- Foeder(ing)



VARIANTS

“IT HAS TO BE... BALANCED”

- **Dry** – Not dry? Then not a Saison. These beers require an amazing level of attenuation (90+%)
Any sweet characters should be perceptual - e.g. a sugar top note, herbal sweetness, etc.
- **Earthy** – A dry beer with nothing interesting is just a boring moisture suck.
The best Saisons have a middle character of malt and earthy tones that set up the finish.
- **Spicy** – You need tones on the palette that grab and wake you up.
A cardamom tickle, a pepper bite, an herbal tease.
This spice breaks the earthy middle and leads right to the CO2 sting of the finish.
- **Lively** – Needs to be alive in the glass with plenty of carbonation (3-3.5 Vols).
Nothing worse than a “dead” Saison.
- **Tangy?** – Not actually a requirement. “Funk” and “Horse Blanket” are not the same as sour.
- **Yeast Driven** – More than any other style, Saison is defined by its yeast.
Treated properly, the various strains produce all the necessary characteristics to varying degrees.
- **Bottle Conditioned** – Aged by definition. Needs time to fully mature / clean up / get funky.
Some strains taste great fresh, others are only fine initially, but all become **amazing** in time.

THE EXPERIMENT

15 Gal MBW 'Scout' wort - 1.062

88% 2Row - 6% Vienna - 6% Honey Malt

GRISSETTE

3.5 gallons wort
1.5 gallons water



Vol 5 gallons
OG 1.045
FG 1.002
ABV 5.6%
IBU 35
Wyeast 3711

S. DUPONT

5 gallons wort



Vol 5 gallons
OG 1.055
FG 1.005
ABV 6.5%
IBU 40
Wyeast 3724

BIÈRE DE GARDE

6.5 gallons wort
boiled down to 5 gallons



Vol 5 gallons
OG 1.067
FG 1.005
ABV 7.9%
IBU 29
Wyeast 3725

Hops profile consistent across all 3 batches:

French Aramis - Styrian Goldings - French Strisselspalt
0.3oz Each at 30 - 20 - 10 minutes

Malt and Sugars

- 40-100% Pilsen or 2-Row (think ‘basic blonde’)
- 5-40% some variety of Wheat (Red, Spelt, ground flour, etc.)
 - High proteins in unmalted grains or flours
 - If unable to do a protein rest (122° for 15-20 minutes), single infusion on the low side (149° for 60 minutes) should be fine – add more Pilsen malt to compensate
- 0-10% Rye, Honey Malt, Vienna, etc. (complexity / balance)
- 0-30% Honey (add at flame-out / end of boil)
- Want to avoid “Cara” or “Crystal” to darken - unfermentable
 - I usually put about 5% Cara-Crystal Wheat in all my beers for head retention

Hops

- Goldings (Kent, Styrian) – 3-5% AAU
- Saaz, Hallertau (Czech, German) – 3-5% AAU
- Strisselspalt, Aramis (French) – 2-7% AAU
- Amarillo, Mosaic, Simcoe (non traditional) – 7-13% AAU
- Balance – Aiming for enough bitter to match malt
 - Enough flavor and aroma to balance bitter – staggered additions

CRAFTING RECIPES

Saison per BJCP 2015:

Vital Statistics:	OG: 1.048 – 1.065 (<i>standard</i>)
IBUs: 20 – 35	FG: 1.002 – 1.008 (<i>standard</i>)
SRM: 5 – 14 (<i>pale</i>)	ABV: 3.5 – 5.0% (<i>table</i>)
15 – 22 (<i>dark</i>)	5.0 – 7.0% (<i>standard</i>)
Style Comparison: At standard strengths and pale color (the most common variety), like a more highly-attenuated, hoppy, and bitter Belgian blond ale with a stronger yeast character. At	

Bière de Garde per BJCP 2015:

Vital Statistics:	OG: 1.060 – 1.080
IBUs: 18 – 28	FG: 1.008 – 1.016
SRM: 6 – 19	ABV: 6.0 – 8.5%
Style Comparison: Related to the Belgian Saison style, the main difference is that the Bière de Garde is rounder, richer, malt-focused, and lacks the spicy, bitter character of a Saison.	

Spices (dry ground)

- Personal Opinion: Orange and Coriander are for a Witbier's
 - Change my mind...
- Less is More – You can always make it again if lacking the first time
- I generally add late-boil, but could go into secondary – longer to infuse

Herbs (fresh or dry)

- Less is More – You can always make it again if lacking the first time
- Make a tea, or teas of varying strength to see what you like
 - Add to the finished base beer to taste
 - Can be added in primary, secondary, or at bottle (I recommend primary)

Fruit (fresh, dry, other?)

- This could be a whole other topic...
 - It's come up in several side conversations over the last 2 years for various club beers
- Fresh should be ripe as possible – freeze, thaw, put in secondary
- Dry - reconstitute in small volume of very hot water, put in secondary
- Canned purée – sanitize can, pour in secondary (beer will be cloudy)

CRAFTING ONE OFFS



Standard (Saccharomyces)

- Lots of examples (and more) previously mentioned:
 - Dupont: Wyeast 3724 / WLP565 / Lallemant Belle S.
 - French: Wyeast 3711 / WLP590 / OYL O26
 - Bière de Garde: Wyeast 3725 / WLP072 / Wyeast 3864
 - Others: WLP566 / WLP568 / WLP585 / SafAle BE-134
- Dupont strains are notoriously finicky
 - Tend to stall out at 1.02-1.03 (only 40-60% complete)
 - Standard advice tends towards pitch big! Testing shows more likely a backpressure issue (open ferment until secondary)
- Don't be afraid to pitch warm and ferment hot – Free rise up 95°
 - Temp control is key!

Brettanomyces and Wood Aging

- Hundreds of strain in the wild, only a few commercially available
- Traditionally not added on purpose, naturally found in wood barrels, on fruit skins, floating in the air.
- Flavors / aromas can range from neutral to cherry pie to barnyard
 - Brett character in beer will be very slow to develop (months to years)
 - Usually only develops big character when yeast is stressed (added to secondary or bottle, when little or no sugar remains for yeast to eat)
- I tend to use virgin medium-toast French oak, Chardonnay staves also
 - Lends to funky, wine-like quality over time
 - Wyeast 3726 / Wyeast 3031-PC / WLP670

CRAFTING YEAST

Brett Beer per BJCP 2015:

Overall Impression: Most often drier and fruitier than the base style suggests. Funky notes range from low to high, depending on the age of the beer and strain(s) of Brett used. Funkiness is generally restrained in younger 100% Brett examples, but tends to increase with age. May possess a light acidity, although this does not come from Brett.

Style Comparison: Compared to the same beer style without Brett, a Brett Beer will be drier, more highly attenuated, fruitier, lighter in body, and slightly funkier as it ages. Less sourness and depth than Belgian 'wild' ales.

Wood Aged Beer per BJCP 2015:

Overall Impression: A harmonious blend of the base beer style with characteristics from aging in contact with wood. The best examples will be smooth, flavorful, well-balanced and well-aged.

History: A traditional production method that is rarely used by major breweries, and usually only with specialty products. More popular with modern American craft breweries looking for new, distinctive products. Oak cask and barrels are traditional, although other woods are becoming more popular.



REFERENCES & RESOURCES

-*Farmhouse Ales: Culture and Craftsmanship in the Belgian Tradition*
Phil Markowski, 2004

-*Lostbeers.com – Various articles*
Roel Mulder, 2018

-*“Everything you know about beer history is wrong”*
Randy Mosher, AHA National Conference 2016

-*Maltosefalcons.com – Guide to Saison / Saison yeast*
Drew Beechum, 2015

-*HomeBrew: Beyond the Basics*
Mike Karnowski, 2014

-*Radical Brewing: Recipes, Tales, & World-Altering Meditations in a Glass*
Randy Mosher, 2004

FIN

BACKUP RECIPES

BOUVETTE – VIOLET FARMHOUSE

- 3 Gallons of tea from 1 lb of dry violets
- 2X Silver metal winner
- OG: 1.058 / FG: 1.007 / 6.3% ABV / 45 IBUs EKG / Hallertau / Strisselspalt
- Blend of WLP670 and WLP720

DENT DE LION – DANDELION FRENCH SAISON

- 3 Gallons of tea from 2 bunches of fresh greens
- Karnowski's 'Basic Blonde' recipe with OYL O26
- OG: 1.048 / FG: 1.007 / 5.4% ABV / 36+ IBUs Simcoe

LA FEMME NIKITA – FRENCH SAISON

- MBW's 'Approachable Blonde' recipe with WLP590
- I can't find my brew record sheet for this...
- I think I used Amarillo

Bouvette Grain Bill

Ingredient	Portion of OG
Raw Wild Flower Honey	31%
Cara-Crystal Wheat Malt	6%
Red Wheat Malt	13%
Spelt Flour	12%
Rye malt	5%
Honey Malt	6%
Base Malt (2-row)	19%
Rice Hulls	0%
Dried Viola Odorata	8%

DARK MALTY SAISON DUPONT

- MBW's 'Our 2 Cents' recipe with Wyeast 3724
- OG: 1.054 / FG: 1.004 / 6.6% ABV / 23? IBUs Amarillo