

GOOD LIBATIONS: REINHEITSGEBOT TURNS 500

By: Gordon Kendall

LITTLETON, Colo., May 25, 2016 12:00 AM - Fans of the Nightly Show's Larry Wilmore know that he likes to "Keep it 100." Germany's famous beer purity law of 1516, the Reinheitsgebot, will now be "Keeping it 500." That's because April 23 of this year marked the 500th anniversary of Bavaria's Duke Wilhelm IV's edict that beer could only contain water, malted barley and hops.

I was able to catch up by phone with the CEO and president of Paulaner USA, Stephen Hauser, who educated me about the Reinheitsgebot and other facts pertinent to German beer. Hauser should know because Paulaner makes the largest selling Hefe-Weizen and Oktoberfest in Germany. The company also imports Bavarian Hacker Pshcorr and Fullers from England.

The Reinheitsgebot was mandated as a consumer protection measure. "Brewers were using a broad array of ingredients, some potentially harmful," Hauser explained.

"People want to know what is in their food these days," he said. "The Reinheitsgebot is a living, breathing way of helping people understand what is in their beer."

Many commercial beers, such as those filling the coolers at the grocery store, use rice, corn or even corn syrup as ingredients, primarily because they are less expensive than malted barley. Some brewers use chemicals such as glyceryl monostearate as foam stabilizer and isinglass, which is derived from fish bladders.

"Americans are addicted to sugar," Hauser pointed out, "and it is reflected in many beer products in the marketplace. Sugar makes products more appetizing, but consumers are becoming more aware of the hazards of sugar."

Hauser informed me about Brother Barnabas, the monk depicted on the Paulaner label. In the 1600s, the friars at the cloister Neudeck ob der Au were brewing a strong double bock style beer to sustain themselves through the fasting time of Lent when they had to abstain from solid food. The monks did not have much money so they sold some of their beer in local taverns to defray expenses. The beer was delicious and became popular in Bavaria. Since the beer was brewed at a monastic order, they were tax exempt, unlike their competitors. On Feb. 24, 1634, a commercial brewery filed a complaint with the local government concerning their tax status and hence the Paulaner Brewery was born! The founding beer was a double bock known today as Salvator, meaning "Savior."

Hauser covered the origins of the Hacker-Pschorr brewery. The first record of the Hacker brewery is in 1417. They were a family-owned business and not a monastery like Paulaner. In 1793, Joseph Pschorr, an employee of the Hacker Brewery, married Therese Hacker, the daughter of the owner, and bought the brewery from his father-in-law. In 1820, Joseph founded the Pschorr brewery, which was operated separately from the Hacker Brewery. In

1841, Joseph died and passed the Pschorr brewery to Georg Pschorr, his oldest son, and Matthias Pschorr, his second oldest son, received the Hacker Brewery.

In 1972, the two breweries merged, forming the Hacker-Pschorr Brewery that we know today. The land in Munich where the Oktoberfest festival is held today was donated to the city by Hacker-Pschorr.

Where does Paulaner stack up in the beer market? Corona is far and away the largest selling import, and although Paulaner will likely never catch up, Hauser believes that it provides a “richer and more satisfying beer drinking experience.” Ironically, craft brewers, who originally based their recipes on the Reinheitsgebot, now criticize it because they feel that it restricts their creativity. I have pointed out in previous columns the vast array of exotic and unusual ingredients craft brewers now employ. Hauser feels that Paulaner represents the standard against which others are judged.

He mentioned that there are now 4,000 craft brewers in the United States, and Jim Koch of Sam Adams has predicted that will expand to 10,000 in the next few years. The challenge is maintaining shelf space for Paulaner with so much domestic competition. He does not envy a distributor portfolio manager trying to figure out a product mix with the overabundance of choices available today.

Hauser, a St. John’s graduate from New York, has been in the import beer business for more than 30 years. He started with All Brand Importers, which brought in Moosehead, and has worked for Heineken and Labatt and launched the German non-alcoholic beer Clausthaler. He has fond memories of All Brand, which at one time was the third largest beer importer in the United States. It will be interesting to see where the market goes from here. I will be “Keeping it 500” and enjoying a Savior.

Paulaner Hefe-Weizen

Munich, Germany

The Reinheitsgebot was amended in 1906 to allow malted wheat in top fermented brews or ales. The label actually says “Ale” on it. The brew has a thick creamy head and a hazy light amber color due to active yeast present in the beer. Hefe is German for yeast. The beer has distinctive clove and bread notes that follow through on the palate. The finish is crisp and refreshing. Swirl the bottle after pouring approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of the liquid into the glass to distribute the yeast for a better head. Try it after mowing with grilled bratwurst and onions. 5.5 percent alcohol by volume, \$11/six-pack of 11.2 oz. bottles.

Paulaner Original Munich Lager

Munich, Germany

This is about as pure and refined as beer can be. Comprised of light Pilsner malt and Hallertauer hops, the beer reflects a perfect balance of rich malty flavors and bitter hops. The brew has a golden color and a creamy white head. Aromas of malt and aromatic, pine-scented hops waft from the glass. The palate is crisp, clean and balanced with just a hint of citrus. This well-rounded brew pairs with about any food, but since it is grilling season, how about burgers on the grill? *4.9 percent ABV, \$10/six-pack.*

Paulaner Salvator Double Bock

Munich, Germany

Paulaner's master brewers use dark Munich malt, light Pilsner malt, aromatic German Hallertauer hops, Herkules and Taurus hops for bittering. The recipe has changed little since the Pauline monks brewed it in the 1600s. The brew has a thick tan head and dark amber color. Aromas of malt and caramel greet the nose, and the palate is malty and rich with notes of caramel and chocolate. The brew is strong enough to pair with hearty foods such as a savory roast. *7.9 percent ABV, \$11/six-pack.*