

THE BEST BAVARIAN BEERS TO TRY

by Peter M. Gianott

April 19, 2016, 10:54 AM - "As far as I can tell, the Reinheitsgebot is totally irrelevant." April 23 marks the 500th anniversary of "Reinheitsgebot," or the Bavarian Purity Law. Decreed by Bavarian Duke Wilhelm IV, It stipulated that water, hops and malted barley could be the only ingredients used to brew beer.

The law is among the oldest governing food and beverages. And it was enacted because so many questionable ingredients were being added to beer. About three centuries later, yeast joined the purity-law group, as wheat did in 1906.

It's still part of German tax law. But in 1987, the European Court deemed it a restriction of fair trade against other European beers. German brewers then did not have to adhere to the purity.

But Bavaria was an exception. The state with the world's most ingrained beer culture stayed with the Bavarian decree. You won't find caramel coloring or corn syrup, cornstarch or fake fruit flavorings.

To get a taste of what this means, sample a beer from, for example, Hacker-Pschorr, Paulaner, Ayinger or Erdinger, a quartet of excellent Bavarian brewers.

Hacker-Pschorr Munich Gold is a mild, full brew, appropriately gold-yellow, and fine as a sipper or with food. Hacker-Pschorr also produces a lush mailbock. A six-pack of Hacker-Pschorr beer is about \$11 at Superstar Beverage in Huntington.

From Paulaner, try Salvator, a double-bock, strong beer originally made by monks to ease the intensity of the Lenten fast. Salvator has a hint of chocolate. It's also about \$11 for a six-pack.

Ayinger's outstanding brews come in typically about \$14; Erdinger's, about \$13. Look for Ayinger Celebrator double-bock; and Erdinger Urweisse wheat ale.