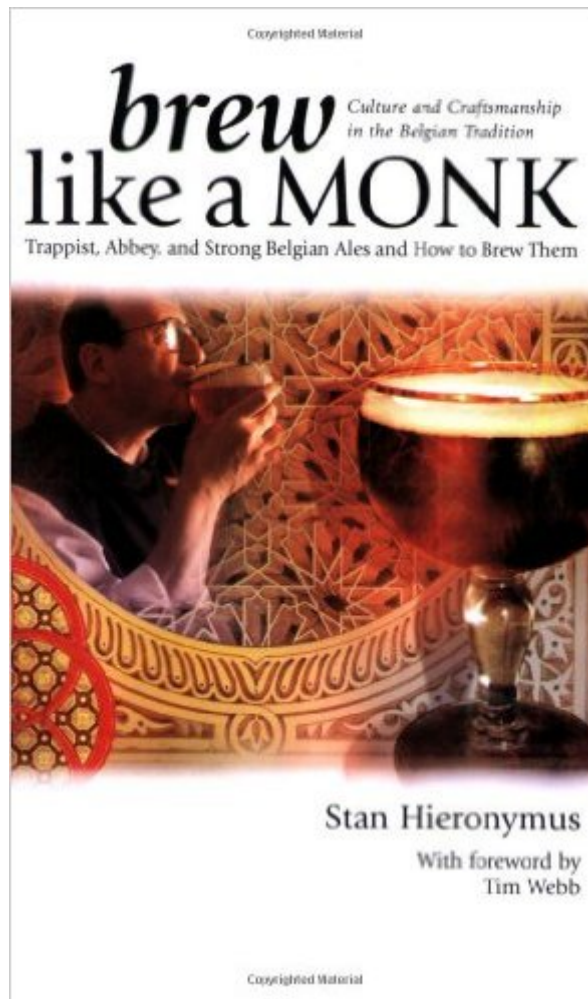


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Brew Like A Monk: Trappist, Abbey, And Strong Belgian Ales And How To Brew Them



Synopsis

Brew Like a Monk delves into monastic brewing, detailing this rich-flavored region of the beer world. It also examines methods for brewing these unique ales suited to commercial and amateur brewers.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

As other reviewers have pointed out, it's a good idea for the reader to have several years of all-grain brewing experience. That, and an existing appreciation of abbey-style beers; words alone cannot adequately portray the unique flavors of Belgian fermentations. Homebrewers often set out to create trappist-inspired beers with the goal of high alcohol content. From reading the book, one will learn that this is a flawed approach; these beers are about allowing the yeast to contribute flavor and attenuation, about embracing the quirky qualities of the yeast, and about retaining balance and "drinkability" in the beer. Higher alcohol content is serendipitous, but almost incidental. Insightful interviews with trappist brewers, and secular brewers of superb abbey-style ales, introduce the reader to this brewing "philosophy." These discussions, and the technical data of the beers they brew, are of enormous value. (As are the lessons they learned from brewing less-than-spectacular beers.) In fact, the differences in malt bills between the two schools is radical at times. I found it amusing that many of the most revered examples of the styles do not fit neatly into the "guidelines" that are supposed to define them. All aspects of abbey-style brewing are explored in depth... from water, ingredients, and mash temperatures to pitching rates, influences on yeast behavior, and bottle conditioning. Questions about two of the most controversial topics among homebrewers...

yeast origins and sugars... are definitively answered. Finally, the text is a joy to read! At once both thoughtful and passionate, the book conveys the reader on a journey of exploration and teaching.

Of all the books in my library, this book is by far the best and is hands-down the most detailed text on Trappist ales. Even if you are not a homebrewer, anyone who is even slightly interested in Trappist ales and the monastic way of life will not be disappointed. I have read this book cover to cover many times and I am always finding helpful and interesting info that propels my love for Trappist ales even further. Stan Hieronymous takes the reader inside the walls of the abbeys where these beers are made and not only presents the history and beers of each abbey but even manages to list a few ingredients for each beer. Because the monks and lay workers who work in the breweries are quite secretive regarding their recipes and ingredients, one can only imagine the effort that was put in by the author when writing this book. Above anything else, the author reminds the reader that each of these places is an abbey with a brewery and not the other way around. Despite the fact that the beers are truly amazing, Stan Hieronymous does not let the reader forget the reason for the existence of these beers (to add extra income to the abbey and serve as a form of manual labor according to the Rule of Saint Benedict). The author does a wonderful job of outlining the monastic way of life and mentality, and how this life of silence and harmony manages to produce some of the finest beers in the world time and time again. In addition to the famous Trappist Ales, Stan Hieronymous also provides extensive information on other commercial examples that are produced both in Belgium and the United States.

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