Wharton Victory Tour
(The Wharton Brewmasters Guild Goes to Victory)
5 December 2008

The Wharton Beer Club has been reborn as the Wharton Brewmasters Guild, and as one of our early outings this year we took a tour of The Victory Brewing Company (website http://www.victorybeer.com/home.html). Interestingly, since the Guild is not just about drinking, the tour of the plant took an hour and a half, a full half hour longer than planned, resulting in a half hour delay in both dining and drinking. Even for MBAs, this was more interest in the operation of a business than we anticipated.
We saw stuff. We smelled hops. We found that the hop freezer was very cold, the steam was very hot, and the equipment was shiny and new and kept spotlessly clean.
And Bill and the Wharton Beer Guild officers all appeared quite pleased at the end of the tour. And, yes, we did get to eat and drink. Bill Covaleski, the President and Co-Founder of Victory, hosted and provided an extremely interesting and useful guided introduction to beer styles, brewing, and food pairings. Everyone started off cheerful.

The food was excellent. But it quickly became apparent why we had a strict rule — “no one comes by car ... everyone goes home on the bus!” Bill served 10 beers ... each with a purpose, each carefully paired to illustrate something about the grain, the hops, or the yeast. We learned about beer yeast and ale yeast. We learned about American hops and European hops. We learned about barley and wheat. A lot of beer was poured!

This being a serious Brewmasters Guild, and not some badly behaved drinking club, we approached our beers in moderation. We had 10 full pours, not small flight glass samples. Everything was enjoyed; not everything was finished. Still, paired with food or not, carefully explained or not, finished or not, the last ones were pretty potent, the smiles widened, and the bus rule appears to have been much appreciated, or at least universally understood.
**Flight 1** - Demonstrates how malt types (roasts) and hops affect the flavor of lager beers — Victory Festbier - Prima Pils - Braumeister Harvest Pils.

Served with smoked trout with a ragout of Kennett Square mushrooms and roasted red peppers.

**Flight 2** - Demonstrates how alternatives to barley malt (wheat malt) and spicing affect ales — Whirlwind Witbier - Mad King Weiss - Golden Monkey.

Served with duck cordon bleu rolled with cranberries and blood orange beurre blanc.

**Flight 3** - Further demonstrates how American hops differ from the European hops previously enjoyed and how dark roasted malts when combined with hops can add complexity — Hop Devil Ale - Hop Wallop Ale - Storm King Stout.

Served with smoked brisket and salmon duo with a sweet potato and green onion flan.

**Finisher** - Old Horizontal, so named because no one remains vertical after drinking an entire bottle.

Further Guild events are planned for the spring term, including brewing competitions (who can brew the best beer), national chauvinism competitions (whose home state or home country brews the best beer), and additional hosted tastings. Carol Stoudt, one of the first American women to run a brewery since Prohibition (website [http://www.stoudtsbeer.com/brewery.html](http://www.stoudtsbeer.com/brewery.html)), will be hosting the January Guild Event.

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