

Was trinken die Deutschen? das Bier, die Biere

Mönchsbiere (monastery beers)

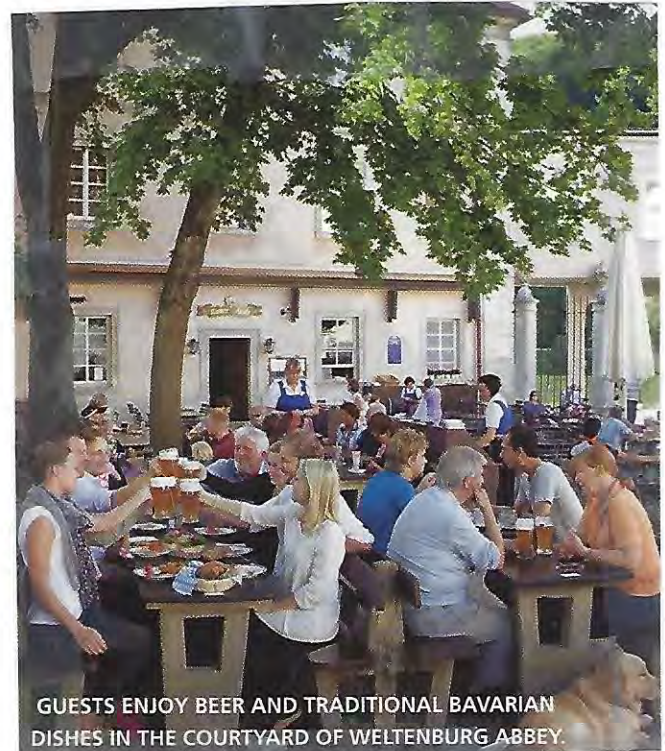
monastery, cloister, convent, nunnery: das Kloster, die Klöster
monastery: das Monchskloster, die Monchsklöster

WELTENBURG BEER: A MILLENNIUM IN THE MAKING

slightly sweet taste, the beer matures for up to six weeks in an ancient cave at the Abbey under 40 meters of rock. "This 'Felsenkellar' has been used as the fermentation and maturation room of the brewery since olden times," said Funke. "The monks would pile mountains of ice inside which would slowly melt away through the summer."

The Abbey's famed architects are honored by Weltenburg's "Asam Bock" beer, the label of which features a likeness of Cosmas Asam which the Asam brothers included within the decorations of the church. At 6.9% alcohol, this creamy brew with a hint of sweetness is the strongest beer brewed at Weltenburg. It took top prize for "dark double bock" two consecutive years at the Euro Beer Star, a contest that features over 2000 beers from 45 countries. A Bavarian legend details the long relationship between monks and double bocks. The beer is said to have been brewed very strong to help supplement the calories lost during the lean days of Lent. But such a potent and delicious brew needed Papal approval lest it be thought the monks were succumbing to sin. A barrel was subsequently shipped to Rome. "As it went shaking along in a cart with drastic temperature changes among the peaks of the Alps and through Italy, the beer was subjected to all the worst conditions a beer could face," said Funke. "So when it arrived in Rome, it had effectively spoiled." After tasting this vile brew, the Pope gave his stamp of approval, assuming that a drink so foul must be good for the state of one's soul. Apparently, since then, Popes have learned better. During the 500th Anniversary of the Vatican's Swiss Guard in 2006, Pope Benedict XVI ordered 80 hectoliters (2113 gallons) of Weltenburg beer for the celebration.

In 2000, to celebrate the 950th anniversary of the brewery, Weltenburg introduced its "Anno 1050." Full-bodied and spicy, this Märzen-style beer combines a fine fragrance with a light, fruity taste. It earned the gold medal for best Märzen at the 2011 European Beer Star competition. "Märzen takes its name from the month of March which in olden times marked the end of the traditional brewing season, which ran from October to March," Funke explained. "They needed a strong, heavy beer to survive the warm summer months. The idea behind festivals like Oktoberfest, where Märzen is the traditional brew, was to finish off all of last year's beer with a big party before beginning the new brewing season."



GUESTS ENJOY BEER AND TRADITIONAL BAVARIAN DISHES IN THE COURTYARD OF WELTENBURG ABBEY.



THE MASH TUNS ARE WHERE THE BREWING PROCESS BEGINS.