

One of the first nouveau-Belgian breweries in America has adventurously brewed the first Lambic-style beer traditionally brewed with the use of spontaneous fermentation in a koelschip in the U.S. The beer without a name, but already a reputation, is appropriately called [Allagash Spontaneous](#)

The brewery first started the extreme project in December 2007. The very first debut of the wild lambic took place last week in Belgium at The Day of the Lambic, a festival featuring more than fifteen unblended Lambics from nine breweries. Rob Tod, owner of Allagash Brewing debuted the chancy artisanal beer in the U.S. today, in a Tria Fermentation School class in Philadelphia. Rather than adding fresh hops during the boil, Allagash added aged hops (aged a minimum of three years), which adds the stabilizing properties of hops to the brew without affecting the bitterness. This necessitated an extra-long boil, lasting several hours.

I would venture to guess that Tod would subscribe to Michael Jackson's impressions on the diversity of Lambics: [blockquote] The lambic family are not everybody's glass of beer, but no one with a keen interest in alcoholic drink would find them anything less than fascinating.[/blockquote]

Instead of cooling the beer in a sterile environment and adding a brewer's yeast culture, the hot wort was pumped to a cool ship in a special room designed specifically to make these beers. The cool ship is a commonly used brewers tool in Belgium, but is rarely seen in the U.S. It's a massive, shallow basin serving to cool the wort and naturally inoculate it with wild yeasts.

The cool Maine air, containing natural bacteria and wild yeast, drifts in to the 12 feet long, 8 feet wide and 1 foot deep pool. After briefly aged and cooled, the natural airborne yeasts and bacteria are able to survive in what will eventually be the spontaneously fermented beer.

Allagash used a mixture of used French oak wine barrels, "virgin" barrels and barrels they had aged beer in a few times. The brewery is experimenting with a lot of different fruits like cherries, raspberries, and Maine blueberries.

Jason Perkins, Head Brewer: [blockquote]...we're making a much different wort today than 99.9% of the breweries in the world make ...a fermentation done by a series of organisms that most breweries want nothing to do with...we're really trying to extract as much of the tannins and proteins out of the malt as we can, whereas normally we try to avoid that.... [/blockquote]

Check out the Allagash You Tube video here:

[The Atlantic's Clay Risen](#) also had a nice write-up on Spontaneous that is worth reading.

The idea developed incrementally, beginning with the discovery of a culture of brettanomyces (commonly referred to as "Brett") in one of their beers. For a brewery looking to explore the world of Belgian-style brewing, finding a native strain of brett and letting funky nature have her way, was cause for celebration.

Thus far, there are no plans to bottle, distribute and sell the beer, however if popularity of the funky beer continues, I wouldn't be surprised to see a special holiday edition sometime in the near future. One can hope.

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