

Malted Barley Appreciation Society

Shmaltz Means What???

BY ALAN RICE

Our guest was **Matt Polacheck**, Art Director and East Coast Sales Manager of Schmaltz Brewing Co. SBC is a beer marketing company based in the Mission District of San Francisco. It was founded in 1996 by **Jeremy Cowan**. He was an English major from Stanford who wanted to work for himself and have some fun. After spending some time in Israel that brought him back to his roots, he was inspired to produce a line of certified Kosher beers. They would be quality microbrews with Catskills marketing: Genesis Ale ("our first creation"), Messiah Bold ("the one you've been waiting for"), and Jewbelation ("L'Chaim!").

He knew that his target audience was small. The first year, he produced just 100 cases and sold it out of the trunk of his Grandmother's Volvo. The first seven years were unprofitable, but he had no overhead. In 2003, he moved production out to the **Olde Saratoga Brewery** in Saratoga Springs. With the help of Brewmaster **Paul McErlean**, the quality improved. Sales moved beyond those who were into Jewish humor and on to lovers of any quality beer. Sales went up 5-fold in 5 years. In 2008, they



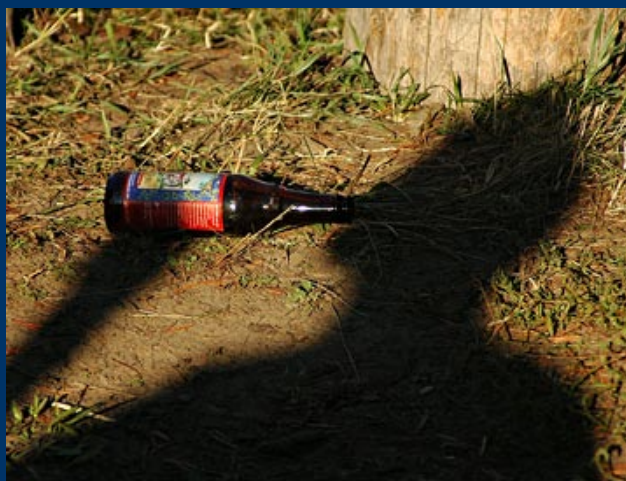
will sell 7000 bbls in 25 states, Canada, and Europe.

The Olde Saratoga Brewery

Schmaltz
Brewing Company



was founded 11 years ago by their parent, **Mendocino Brewing Company**. They will produce 40,000 bbls this year. They sell the Mendocino line on the east coast and their own flagship, Saratoga Lager. A third of their business is contract brewing. They brew for India's Kingfisher in northeast, and also for 8 area breweries and beer marketing companies, including Southampton and Blue Point. SBC is their biggest customer.



Cheers from the editor, Alan Rice
Next Meeting:
Wed., Nov. 12,
7:30pm, Mugs
Ale House. Our
guests: The team
from Sixpoint
Craft Ales

Paul McErlean credits Jeremy with helping him develop the different styles. "Jeremy has a lot of ideas, and that's one of the fun things about working with him," Paul told Doug Blackburn of the Albany Times Union. "When we're talking about beers, he'll

have very clear ideas about what he wants and what he wants it to taste like. He has a good flavor sense."

Paul concedes, though, that what helps Jeremy succeed is his creative energy. Even the brewer knows the lingo at this point. „Part of what sells Jeremy's beer is the shtick," Paul says. „The labels are really fun. He's got a lot of imagination and a lot of



creativity. I think that's the key to his success."

One big obstacle has been the huge rise in the cost of ingredients. Olde Saratoga was forced to charge their customers up-front for malt and hops. Jeremy had to take on a lot of personal debt

to buy them. The good news is that he still has positive cash flow. With the popularity of craft brews increasing and the expansion of his brands, he's expecting \$1.5 million in revenues this year.

Matt Polacheck has always loved great beer, and over the last 6 years he's become more and more involved in the direction of

SBC. Jeremy and Matt believe that "delicious shtick and delicious beer go hand in hand". Their vision is to break out of traditional package design and traditional beer recipes. To that end, they also spend a great deal of time and effort developing the beers. This often entails grabbing the best of a certain style and driving up to Saratoga. They sit down with Paul, see what they like, and try to come up with something even better.

Matt is originally from Milwaukee. He studied advertising and design at the Univ. of Wisconsin. He's lived here for 11 years, so that makes him a New Yorker. His background is in graphic design and art direction. Before working for Shmaltz, he was an art director at a small agency in NYC. A friend that he grew up with went to Stanford with Jeremy, and introduced them. In 2003, Jeremy hired Matt to create a website and design a label for Miraculous Jewbelation (8). Since then, Matt has created all the 22oz bottle labels for He'Brew, and collaborated on all the Coney Island Craft Lager labels.

To commemorate the 40th Anniversary of Lenny Bruce's death, Shmaltz brewed **Bittersweet Lenny's R.I.P.A.**, and sponsored a comedy all-star benefit show at the 92nd Street Y. It was hosted by Lewis Black, and featured Sarah Silverman, Judy Gold, Todd Barry, Eugene Mirmin, Jonathan Ames, and Jeff Garlin. After the show, Jeremy met one of the directors of Coney Island USA. He truly got the sense of humor, and wanted to get in on it. After some arm-twisting, Jeremy came around. Their partnership let him turn even further from the mainstream.

A portion of the CI Craft Lager proceeds directly benefit **Coney Island USA**, a 501(c)3 Non-Profit Arts organization dedicated to defending the honor of lost forms of American popular arts and culture



Matt Polacheck and Jeremy Cowan at Freaktoberfest. On short notice, they put together a beer and music fest with performances by the CI Sideshow and Cabaret. Those who went said it was one of the best fests they've ever been to. If you go next year, pony up for the VIP ticket for backstage access and rare beers. Photo By Mary Izett



through innovative exhibitions and performances. It is based on the Boardwalk in the amusement park area of CI, which is in the southernmost corner of Brooklyn. Founded in 1980, they developed and produce a number of different programs including the Mermaid Parade and the Coney Island Circus Sideshow. They also operate the CI Museum and produce Ask the Experts, Burlesque at the Beach, the CI Tattoo and Motorcycle Festival, Creepshow at the Freakshow, and the CI Sideshow School. They also produce the CI Film Society and the CI Film Festival.

Coney Island Lager was released in June last year. At first, the draft version was produced at **Greenpoint Beer Works** to reinforce the Brooklyn connection. This beer's success led to the expansion of the line this summer. But to streamline production, all of Schmalz's brewing is now in Saratoga. However, they'd like to produce the He'Brew flagships Messiah Bold and Genesis Ale back in CA, to save on shipping to their largest market. Discussions are ongoing with Mendocino Brewing.

Much of the success of the Coney Island brand is marketing. As art director, Matt came up with all the concepts, created the compositions, and chose the typefaces. He hired his friend **Dave Wallin** of Tattoo

Culture in Williamsburg to do the illustrations of the performers and their own mad version of the Tilly face.

Albino Python is a white lager brewed with spices. SBC is the first to brew a lager in a Wit style. They used 40% wheat malt, flaked oats, and caramel PILS. They also used



Photo by Wally Gobetz

Weyermann Acidulated, which is produced with lactic acid. For each 1% of the grain bill, it lowers the wort's pH by about 0.1, depending on the buffering capacity of the mash and minerals in the brew water. The Warrior, Saaz and Summit hops take a back seat to the spices. Ginger, orange peel, coriander and crushed fennel are all apparent at some time from nose to swallow. This is a very drinkable beer at 6%.

There is a lot to learn in this business. They stored the first batch of kegs upright. Because Albino Python uses so much wheat malt, it should be stored upside down to keep the foaming to a minimum

when tapped (all wheat/white beers are stored upside down). What made things worse is the lager yeast. Since they're bottom fermenting and the beer is unfiltered, they clog the stem and create even more foam. They are now using less yeast and have no more problems.

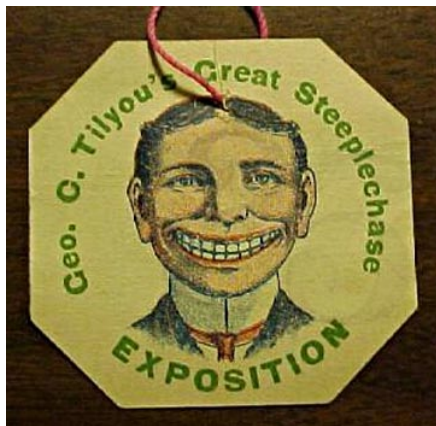
That is **Stephanie Torres**, aka **Serpentina** on the label with her 13-foot giant albino Burmese python. They can grow to over 20 feet and 200 pounds. Stephanie is 6 feet tall and strong, so she should be able to handle her pet for a few more years. And when it gets too big, Stephanie's bifurcated tongue should stop the snake from mistaking her for a big rabbit.

Sword Swallower **Steel Hop Lager** is brewed with some wheat and rye. The latter gives it a golden orange color. Most of the 8 different hops are Pacific NW varieties. Like the flagship **Coney Island Lager**, it's dry hopped, but with more. With the use of some German malts and hops, and Czech Pilsner yeast, these are mash-ups of American and European styles. SS is a less sweet with a big, crisp finish. I wouldn't call it an Imperial lager, but it's close at 6.8%. Given the hop bill, it'd be an American IPA if it wasn't a lager.

This beer features **Heather Holliday**, who at 19 years old is the world's youngest female sword

swallower. You may be wondering how someone that age would end up in a circus near the terminus of the D, F, N, and Q lines. Perhaps it's from growing up a Mormon in Utah and getting struck by lightning, twice.

- Under-aged kid, check.
- Provocative label, check.
- A 6.8%, 22oz bottle sent home to the land of 4% beer, check.
- Ultimate rebellion without getting naked or arrested, priceless.



Freaktoberfest is both freaky and 'fest. The marketing dept. somehow got the brewer to dial in at precisely 6.66%. And when his back was turned, they dumped in enough dye to turn the Nile River red. The beer pours with a bright pink foam that quickly dissipates. I didn't see this under the sickly yellow-orange floods out back of Mugs. In normal light, the color is almost cranberry juice. So far, this is an end of October beer that would best be chilled with dry ice in a goblet. There is not much hops in

the nose, and it could use a bit more for my tongue. This is not a Munich fest beer. They have a different crowd in mind for this seasonal. It's an easy drinking, malty American amber with broad appeal.

The label is the same rendering of the **Tilly Face** that is on the CI Lager and all of the line's bottle neck-labels and caps. The most notable difference is a bloody typeface. The illustration is Dave Wallin's twisted version of the **Steeplechase Park** logo, affectionately known as Funny Face. It was designed by Worth Thomas in 1897 as an homage to **George C. Tillyou**, who founded SP. Asbury Park in New Jersey used a similar face and it was named Tilly after the SP owner.

Steeplechase Park competed with Luna Park and Dreamland. All that remains of SP is the Parachute Jump, because it was too expensive to tear down. No worries about it being taken down now—it's been land marked, twice. Today, Keyspan Park is on the site. It's the home of the Mets minor league affiliate Brooklyn Cyclones.

Matt rooted around in Mugs' cellar, and found the last known keg of **Human Blockhead**. This is an 8.8% bock beer that was hot when it was released in May. But after about a half-year of aging it mellowed out nicely. However, drinkability right out of the box is the goal, with aging potential for collectors a bonus. They've tweaked the recipe, and batch 2 will be a 10% strong lager. It will be their winter seasonal, going on sale in January on draft and in bombers. This monster of the CI line is brewed with the geeks in mind. In fact, they're talking about testing four different versions throughout 2009. They'll be looking for the beer raters to score them

fresh when released. The most popular one returns in 2010.

The first batch was just 60 bbls, and only available on draft. **Donny Vomit**, the beer's namesake, is featured on the sell sheet. He's looking forward to getting a bottle in his hands. He wanted to be an action figure when he was a kid, but now, having his own beer is so much cooler. I met him at a CI event at the Spring Lounge this summer. Donny is a nice, quiet guy from Oklahoma who learned to project his voice and ham it up as MC of the Sideshow. He doesn't just inhale a nail or swallow or a sword – theatrics make the show. Only the most jaded won't get a shiver down their spine or a tremor in their tummy, when he pulls out the power drill and shows the spinning snot.



I asked Mr. Vomit if he ever revealed his secret. He indignantly shot back that he was not a "slimy magician." That's his X-ray – it's not a trick. He feels the nail through his palate. And unlike magicians, the CI Sideshow holds classes for aspiring freaks. Tattoos and piercings are not required, but are encouraged. If you take a wet Q-Tip and repeatedly push on your sinus in a certain way, given time, it will stretch straight back. Hmm – there's got to be another way to get my own beer label. I wonder if being a human numbskull qualifies?

Check out the "Coney Island Maybe" photographic, sound and



Coney Island was the westernmost barrier island off Long Island until the late '30s. The shallow part of Coney Island Creek was filled in during construction of the Belt Parkway, and it became a peninsula. Photo by Jacob Uriel

art exhibit at **The Puffin Room** (puffinroom.org) in Soho (435 Broome, east of Broadway) through Dec. 14. Come for special benefit performances by the **Coney Island Cabaret** on Nov. 22, and the **Coney Island USA Sideshow** on Dec. 6

(both shows at 8pm, \$20). Get in the mood with a bottle of your favorite Coney Island Craft Lager at the Spring Lounge (at Mulberry), just a few blocks away.

We were the first outside the brewery to try **He'Brew**

Jewbelation 12 from the bottle, just a few days off the line. It debuted on draft at the GABF, where Jeremy Cowan was a guest speaker. It's their 12th anniversary ale at 12% with 12 malts, and 12 hops. If you're into lists or geeky about grain bills, go their website and check out the poster. You'll also get a better look at the artwork, which has miniatures of all their

previous labels. And if you're into numerology, read through Jeremy's copy. There are probably a dozen-dozen references to the number 12.

They created **Miraculous Jewbelation**, an Imperial Porter, to celebrate the miracle of Chanukah lamp burning 8 days, and the fact that they still had a beer company after 8 years. Each year since they've added one malt, one hop variety, and 1% alcohol to the recipe. They have no plans to stop any time soon. Matt thinks Jewbelation 12 may be the best beer in the series, so they're going to continue having fun with it and pushing the boundaries as long as they can. They brewed four times as much J12 as J8, and it was all pre-sold. They will lose a few states with alcohol caps along the way, but hopefully their distribution will have increased by then.

Sorry, no tasting notes, since it was the end of the night and they're not legible. Try one yourself. As you read this, the bottles have just been released. The kegged version debuts on Tuesday at Great Bar Harry. Check the calendar for the amazing list. It includes **HJ 9**, which Matt poured for us, and we were lucky to get some. It was left over from Freaktoberfest. I remember that it changed from an American strong brown ale to something completely different. Sherry aroma and stone fruit flavor, almost prune juice? I've got one more chance to get some, this time at the beginning of the night...



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Photo By Jason E. Kaplan

Congratulations to the New York winners at the 2008 GABF

Gold Medals

- American-Belgo Style Ale, 36 entries, **Xtra Gold, Captain Lawrence Brewing**
- American-Style Brown Ale, 47 entries, **Kick-Ass Brown, C.H. Evans Brewing**
- Foreign-Style Stout, 28, **Whiteface Black Diamond, Great Adirondack Brewing**

Silver Medals

- German-Style Marzen, 48 entries, **Saratoga Lager, Olde Saratoga Brewing**
- American-Style Amber/Red Ale, 65 Entries, **CascaZilla, Ithaca Beer**
- American- or German-Style Sour Ale, 34 Entries, **Brute, Ithaca Beer**

Bronze Medals

- Wood- or Barrel-aged, 79 entries, **Golden Delicious, Captain Lawrence Brewing**
- Belgian- or French-style Ale, 34 entries, **Rare Vos, Brewery Ommegang**
- Baltic-Style Porter, 18 entries, **SMP, Sixpoint Craft Ales**
- Foreign-Style Stout, 28 entries, **Black Hole XXX Stout, Chelsea Brewing**



Calendar

Underlined text indicate hot link.

Tue. Nov. 11, Schmaltz at Bar Great Harry. Draft: Barrel-aged Bittersweet Lenny's R.I.P.A., Jewbelation 12, Barrel-aged Messiah Bold, Coney Island Sword Swallower. Vintage Bottles: Jewbelation 8, 9, and 11.

Tue. Nov. 11, 11:11am, 6th Annual Elfter & Karneval Party at Loreley. Celebrate the beginning of the '08-'09 Karneval season in style at the only true Cologne bar in the US. Great selection of German beers including massive amounts of Gaffel and Reissdorf Koelsch. Karneval and Deutsche hits, dance music by DJ Foosh & Friends at 7pm.

Wed. Nov. 12, Goose Island at Blind Tiger. Session Sour Brown, Session Saison "Clausenii," Session Saison "Lacto," Session Saison "Lambicus," Cerveza de Juerez, Pappy Van Sherry, Red Felt, Doppelbock, Wil's Saison, Schwartz Bier, Blue Czar, Debbie's Little Helper, Bourbon County Stout, Organic Pale Ale, Matilda de Bois, Brian's Saison, Honkers Ale, IPA, Nut Brown, Oatmeal Stout, Harvest Ale, Pere Jacques, Matilda, 312, Mild Winter, Juliet.

Tue. Nov. 11, 5:05pm, Karneval at Zum Schneider. Costume party, free Reissdorf Koelsch as a welcome, and the Karneval hits and Schneider classics played by DJ Volka

Racho. He'll be back every Tue. from 10pm-1am, until the actual Karneval week Feb. 19-24, when the infamous Zum Schneider Kneval cabaret and party takes place. **Thu.**

Wed. Nov. 12, Arcadia at The Gate. Introducing Cereal Killer Barleywine for the first time on draft. Also, Shipwreck Imperial Porter, Hop Rocket DIPA, Coco Loco Chocolate Stout on nitro, Scotch Ale, Whitsun, HopMouth DIPA, Big Dick's Olde Ale '06, Jaw-Jacker Pumpkin.

Nov. 13, 6pm, Dogfish Head at Standings. 5 taps including Punkin, and free pizza.

Thu. Nov. 13, Arcadia at East Village Tavern. Owner Tim Suprise will be on hand. Cereal Killer Barleywine, Hop Rocket DIPA, London Porter, Big Dick's Olde Ale.

Fri. Nov. 14, 7-9pm, Autumnal Beer Pairing Cruise at Pier 59 near Chelsea Brewing, \$85. Sail NY Harbor inside the observatory with fancy hors d'oeuvres paired with seasonal beers.

Wed. Nov. 19, Very Special Kegs at Blind Tiger. List TBA.

Wed. Nov. 19, 7pm, Dogfish Head Dinner at East Village Tavern, \$75. Start with hors d'oeuvres and Pangaea, then a 4-course gourmet pairing. Menu and reservations at link.

Wed. Nov. 19, 6:30-8pm, Beer Pairing at Murrar's Cheese, \$65. Bacon, chocolate, cheese and more. Reservations required, click link.

Nov. 20-23, 11am-2am, English Real Ale Fest at Rattle N Hum. Featuring about a half dozen firkins from Dark Star, Ridgeway, and Coniston. Come early, they may kick before the weekend.

Calendar continues ...



Calendar, cont.

Sat. Nov. 22, Great Int'l Beer Expo at the Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum, \$49. Two sessions, 50+ breweries, 100+ beers.

Mon. Nov. 24, 6pm, Grand Opening of Rattle N Hum. With the opening of the back bar, they'll have over 60 taps. If that's not enough, look for 10 cask ales, and meat and cheese pairings. Garrett Oliver and other guests will be on hand.

Fri. Nov. 28, 7-9pm, Autumnal Beer Pairing Cruise at Pier 59 near Chelsea Brewing, \$85. See Nov. 14.

Wed. Dec. 3, 3rd Lagunitas and Frank Zappa at The Gate. Lots of Lagunitas taps, featuring We're Only in it for the Money, and as many other past Zappa inspired beers as

they can find. Don't bother with the jukebox; Frank and his friends will fill your ears.

Thu. Dec. 4, Abita at Barcade. Owner David Blossman will be on hand. List TBA.

Dec. 6 & 7, 11am-11pm, Belgium to Brooklyn III at Mugs. Too many Belgian and Belgian-style beers for one day. List TBA.

Tue. Dec. 9, Rogue at Pacific Standard. Brutal Bitter, Shakespeare Stout, St. Rogue Red, Imperial Porter, Santa's Private Reserve, Morimoto Soba, and more.

Fri. Dec. 12, 10am-11pm, 5th IPA Project Day at Sly Fox in Phoenixville. The largest offering of IPAs by a single brewery in one place at one time. Rumor has it that next year they will be brewing a different style, so don't miss this if you're a hop-head.