

THE LONG ROAD HOME
BALTIMORE'S BREWING HERITAGE AND A RETURN
TO THE ROOTS

Existing documentation holds that the first brewery in Baltimore was established in 1748 by a father and son team, John and Elias Barnitz, who acquired two lots of land inside the gates of the stockade within the town, set up rudimentary equipment to manufacture product, and set about the task of making fresh top-fermented common beer and ales. Eleven breweries are known to have existed in Baltimore by 1830, all of which were oriented exclusively toward the local trade. Despite the strongly British character largely associated with the brewing industry during the era, Baltimore more than held its own in foreshadowing the future German domination of the industry. Over half—at least six—ethnic Germans numbered among these pioneering brewing entrepreneurs in the city. However, the arrival in increasingly substantive numbers of German immigrants to the East Coast generally, and Baltimore specifically, had a profound impact upon the malt beverage trade in the city, transforming the industry from primarily British in both heritage and product to strongly German in just over a decade. Beginning with the Jacob Wohlleber brewery on Cross Street, near Federal Hill, in 1838, sixty-two breweries were established in Baltimore before 1870, approximately two per year, to cater to the swelling immigrant population in the city. Of these new brewing facilities, fully sixty-one of them—all but one—were founded by ethnic Germans, leaving no doubt as to which element of the population had become synonymous with the production of malt beverages, especially lager beer, a new innovation in the field and one which revolutionized both the manufacture of beer and the tastes of beer drinkers across the nation in short order.

THE BEGINNINGS

Of the new breed of German brewers, one family above all became the undisputed leader in the city for decades to come: the Bauernschmidts. Of three brothers who came to America from Wambach, Bavaria, the oldest two—John Jr. and George Bauernschmidt—arrived together in 1856 while the third and youngest, known as Little John, followed in their footsteps eight years later. After working initially at the relatively new but growing Christian Moerlein brewery in Cincinnati, John Jr. eventually made his way back to Baltimore and, armed with a savings of some \$800,

partnered with brother George around 1858 to establish a modest brewery on West Pratt Street. Due primarily to space limitations the small firm was not able to realize a satisfactory business situation, and as a result the brothers opted to dissolve their partnership agreement and, instilled with the spirit of entrepreneurship, become friendly competitors each with his own new brewery. John Jr. established a small lager production facility, the Spring Garden Brewery, along West Camden Street in 1864. In a pattern that was repeated frequently among successful German brewers of the era, John Jr. periodically expanded his operation to meet growing demand for product, becoming one of only three breweries in the city to produce more than 12,000 barrels per year by 1875. While relatively small at just 22,000 square feet, Spring Garden nevertheless played a pioneering role among area brewers, featuring its own saloon and beer garden, known as Bauernschmidt's Park and an early forerunner to the modern American concept of the brewpub.

Still more successful was George Bauernschmidt's independent venture in the field. In June 1864 George leased twelve acres of land for what became the Greenwood Brewery just two blocks south of another fledgling brewing operation, the John F. Wiessner brewery. The choice of location appears somewhat less than coincidental: George's wife, Margaretha, in fact was the sister of Wiessner, an early example of a pronounced trend among German-American brewers toward intermarriage and a shared interest in each other's business well-being. In another representative example of the strong sense of bonding exhibited by German immigrant brewers in Baltimore, as elsewhere, George Bauernschmidt embraced the concept of employing fellow immigrants who sought experience in the brewing trade as a precursor to establishing their own independent operation. In this case George employed among others Georg Brehm, who just two years later would take over an existing brewery in the Georgetown area and build it into a highly successful independent operation all the way up to the onset of Prohibition. By 1887 George Bauernschmidt had outgrown his original Greenwood Brewery and set about the task of expanding significantly his operation. The new brewery, renamed the George Bauernschmidt Brewing Company and designed to become the largest in all of Maryland, featured a spacious five-story brewhouse and a number of outlying buildings to perform other tasks related to the busi-

ness. But modernization of the brewery did not extend solely to architecture; George also was a pioneer in the area of artificial refrigeration, becoming one of the first two brewers in Baltimore to install a Linde ammonia system that featured two 150-ton mechanical units that rendered obsolete the old practice of physically cutting and transporting unwieldy large blocks of ice during the harsh winter period and finding a practical way to store them for future use in warmer months. The George Bauernschmidt Brewery became a clear leader among Baltimore brewers, making well over 50,000 barrels of beer per year by 1890 and holding the curious distinction of sending a sizeable portion of its production overseas to Germany, of all places, via the North German Lloyd shipping line.

The run of good fortune and business success enjoyed by John Jr. and George Bauernschmidt also extended to other family members who entered the field. The third and youngest brother, John Thomas Bauernschmidt—Little John—worked initially for each of his older brothers to gain experience before going on to acquire the Mount Brewery in town in November 1873. The facility was Spartan compared with those of his brothers, with just one small brew kettle capable of producing just two quarter-kegs per day. Far from deterred, Little John embraced the challenge to grow and prosper, initially delivering his beer with a wheelbarrow to nearby saloons. Frugal and efficient business practices allowed for gradual expansion over time, such that by 1889 the Mount Brewery had an output of 20,000 barrels per year. The offspring of George Bauernschmidt also entered the brewing trade, including oldest son John, who went to brewing school in Chicago and, after apprenticing at a San Francisco brewery, returned to Baltimore and the Greenwood Brewery with a free hand to produce a new lighter, more pale beer than the traditional heavier style of lager generally preferred by the German stock. The new beer, named “Dancing Girl,” utilized rice as an adjunct ingredient in place of some malt, giving the beer a lighter, less filling character. To the surprise of many traditionalists, Dancing Girl became a big hit outside the German community of Baltimore and even within it, adding substantial barrage to the company’s output and serving as a direct forerunner to the modern American-style lager beers that gained great favor among the American public after the repeal of Prohibition almost half a century later. Two younger sons of George

Bauernschmidt, Frederick and William, also worked in the family business and, like their brothers, maintained \$10,000 worth of stock each in the Greenwood Brewery. Despite bitter disagreement with the decision, both respected the wishes of their father George to sell the brewery in 1899 to a syndicate of British investors and transferred their stock to him as a matter of principle. Nevertheless Frederick took decisive action to fight the syndicate and ensure that the family would remain in the brewing business, later in the year purchasing a plot of land just northeast of downtown Baltimore near the intersection of Hillen and Monument Streets with a plan to construct an 80,000-barrel-per-year independent brewery at a then-sizeable cost of a quarter-million dollars. William, convinced of the viability of the plan, discontinued his own purchase option on an existing facility, the Von der Horst Brewery, to join his brother in the new venture. The wisdom of the decision was proven over time, as the Frederick Bauernschmidt American Brewery grew robustly from the time of its opening in April 1900, becoming the largest and most successful brewing operation in Maryland, with an output of some 400,000 barrels per year by the time that Prohibition wrought permanent change upon the industry in 1920.

NINETEENTH-CENTURY PROSPERITY

The successes enjoyed by the Bauernschmidt family were replicated on a smaller scale by many of Baltimore's German immigrant brewers. Perhaps most familiar with the Bauernschmidt model by virtue of his near proximity to the Greenwood Brewery was the aforementioned John F. Wiessner, whose own brewing operation became one of the most enduring in the history of the city. Established in 1863 during the dark days of the Civil War, the Wiessner Brewery faced the unenviable task of trying to make headway against twenty-one other brewers already operating in Baltimore at the time. The challenge was compounded by an unlikely source: Union soldiers, who frequently stopped at the brewery for unsanctioned—and uncompensated—refreshment. The experience made a negative impression upon Mrs. Wiessner, whose distrust of the troops led her to carry brewery money in her apron for security lest it disappear with the warriors as they resumed their official activities. The end of the war signaled the beginning of a boom era for the company: initial output of the Wiessner brewery, at around 1,000 to 1,500 barrels per year, grew

over the next two decades to approximately 40,000 barrels in 1886, occasioning a substantial expansion and modernization effort that, combined with similar labor by the Greenwood Brewery, transformed the Greenwood Estate area into a showplace of ultramodern brewing activity and architectural splendor.

The prosperity of the most prominent pre-Prohibition Baltimore breweries served a particularly beneficial purpose for the city, when newly-wealthy German brewers opted to give sizeable portions of their fortunes back to their communities and share the prosperity they had attained as successful immigrants with others who were less privileged, of German stock and otherwise. In many cases charity began at home: some brewers, such as John Wiessner, arranged for housing for their employees in the vicinity of the brewery, a move appreciated by many as a Germanic gesture of solidarity and as described in a subsequent account of the era:

Wiessner's was an effective force in employing and vitalizing the neighborhood by bringing immigrants to the states. "Across the street is a three story townhouse surrounded by a brick and cast-iron fence, the residence of Wiessner and family. Its large size was strictly functional, for it housed not only the family but workers newly arrives from Germany." Not only did he bring immigrants from Germany to work in the brewery, he brought in skilled professionals to the area. "They brought a brew-master, Dr. Eugene Schwoerer, graduate of Stuttgart and one of the finest brew-masters in Germany". This transition helped professionals move to Baltimore and help stabilize the neighborhood with potential homeowners.

Many Baltimore German brewers also donated considerable sums of money to community-minded enterprises, designed to benefit the populace at large with little or no regard to ethnicity and in support of the melting pot culture that America had become. The Bauernschmidt family in particular proved adept at charitable giving, especially Frederick, Maryland's wealthiest brewer by the early 20th century and whose highly successful American Brewery fueled a wave of giving that continued well beyond the closure of the facility in 1923 as a result of the changes brought about by Prohibition. During his lifetime Frederick gave as much as \$40,000 per year to public and private charities, but upon his death in 1933, with an estate valued at between five and six million dollars, he bequeathed \$2.6 million to local hospitals, established an additional

\$1,000,000 trust fund designated for hospital care for needy persons, and even gave over his brewery facilities and property as a gift to the Eudowood Hospital and the Home for Incurables. The wave of generosity led many area hospitals to establish, and maintain for years to come, memorials to Frederick and his wife, Agnes, although testament to his kindness was stated already upon his death in an editorial published by the *Baltimore Evening Sun*, emphasizing the uniqueness of both the man and the gestures he had put forth:

Any man who has given away nearly \$3,000,000 must be regarded as a notable personage, but it was not merely the great size of his benefactions that made Frederick Bauernschmidt remarkable. The way in which he gave was as distinctive as the size of his donations. ... He set up a standard of good citizenship which future generations will find hard to meet, and which is not likely to be surpassed soon, if ever.

Perhaps the single most significant gesture of selflessness by a Baltimore brewer came from Frederick's father, George Bauernschmidt, who toward the end of the nineteenth century accepted without question governmental efforts to raise the tax on beer per barrel to help pay costs associated with the Spanish-American War. Despite efforts to garner his support by politicians opposed to the bill, and resisting peer pressure by other brewers who out of self-interest wished to see the measure defeated, George staunchly stood behind the initiative, proudly proclaiming that he had come to America with only the clothes upon his back, the opportunity to succeed through hard work and initiative, and his sense of honor, which was not for sale; that in a time of war, and when the government did not ask him to send his sons to fight, the last he could do to repay what the United States had given him was to serve his adoptive nation with a financial contribution toward its well-being. The spirited words won the respect and support of even Bauernschmidt's staunchest opponents, such that most other brewers quickly fell into line with his stance and, along with George, ultimately contributed at least forty percent of the total war funding generated by the federal government through the tax. Yet the gesture went forgotten, and became altogether ironic, just a decade and a half later, when the patriotism of America's German brewers was called widely into question amidst the rabid anti-German hysteria which broke out en masse upon the entry of the United States into World War I in 1917.

THE BEGINNING OF THE END

Ironically, the strong success that Baltimore's German brewers had attained by the 1890s also began to plant the seeds of their demise. Aware of the profit potential of some of the city's largest brewing operations, syndicates of British investors sought to acquire as many plants as they could and in the process essentially obtain total control of the local beer market. In 1889 the Bauernschmidt Spring Garden Brewery became the third such facility in Baltimore to sell to the speculators, following the lead of the Darley Park Brewery and Little John Bauernschmidt's Mount Brewery. The combine, organized under the name Baltimore United Breweries Company, Ltd., had attempted one year earlier to purchase the George Bauernschmidt Brewing Company in a move that ultimately would have put all Bauernschmidt brewing operations under the control of the British. But George refused to sell his interests to Baltimore United, a move which soon proved wise when that organization began to experience substantial business setbacks borne of mismanagement and a lack of experience in beer manufacturing and marketing. After years of continuous decline, the group sold its interests in 1899 to another British investor syndicate, the Maryland Brewing Company, which maintained a total of seventeen breweries in Baltimore under its umbrella. However, just two years later the Maryland Brewing Company also faltered, for the same essential reasons experienced by Baltimore United, and soon thereafter reorganized as the Gottlieb-Bauernschmidt-Straus Brewing Company. The failure of the British syndicates to gain traction in the Baltimore market came at a high price for many of the individual firms, including what had been John Bauernschmidt Jr.'s Spring Garden Brewery, which was shut down early in 1903, reopened under different ownership in 1906, and closed permanently in 1909. The George Bauernschmidt Brewing Company, despite rebuffing the advances of Baltimore United in 1888, ultimately was sold to the Maryland Brewing Company in March 1899 for \$3,000,000, over the opposition of sons Frederick and William. In this case the sons knew better than the father: after years of steady business declines, the corporation closed the George Bauernschmidt Brewery for good in 1915, the last of the three original Bauernschmidt breweries to close given that the other plant, Little John's Mount Brewery, was shuttered by the Maryland Brewing Company in

1899, with its equipment scattered among remaining breweries operated by the Gottlieb-Bauernschmidt-Straus combine early in the twentieth century.

PROHIBITION AND THEN REPEAL

The final nail in the coffin of Baltimore's golden age of brewing came with the onset of national Prohibition in January 1920. The relative freedom of Baltimoreans to engage in the treasured German-American pursuit of "personal liberty" could not help save the local brewing industry, as the onset of Prohibition meant the extended shutdown or ultimate demise of virtually all of its respected breweries. Of the thirteen Baltimore breweries still operating as the 1910s drew to a close, only four opted to remain open during the dry years. German-Americans and others in Baltimore long accustomed to slaking their thirst with hearty glasses of lager beer thus found themselves obliged for the next thirteen years to sip soft drinks, soda waters, milk shakes, and—worst of all to some—near beer, a dealcoholized version of the real thing that quickly fell out of favor; as one oft-told joke of the era held, "The person who called it near beer was a very poor judge of distance."

The repeal of Prohibition in 1933 was hailed by many in Baltimore for its positive impact upon the city and its populace, both materially and spiritually. The prospect of the return of legal brewing held the potential for employment of some 40,000 people locally, in both the brewery setting and related industries that catered to the brewing trade, such as keg and bottle makers; delivery truck manufacturers; label producers; industrial machinery makers; independent wholesalers and distributors of beer and ale; and tavernkeepers. The surge in jobs was a most welcome development during the Depression era and an important morale booster for a populace weary of economic instability. Reassuring also was the return of several traditions related to the industry that reestablished a connection with the glory days of German-American brewing in the city. Springtime once again meant the arrival of bock beer, a dark, roasted seasonal lager brew released by most local brewers with great fanfare and designed to signal the end of winter and the welcome signs of spring. More prominently, the saloon trade, with its real and perceived vices that helped usher in prohibition legislation, came back in amended form and with a modified name: the tavern. Before Prohibition the number of saloons shrank

substantially when they were targeted by local government; the city had some 1,900 saloons at the time of the eleventh United States Census (1890), but in 1909 alone some 500 Baltimore saloons were put out of business when license fees were raised from \$500 to \$750 per year, the hardest hit being German proprietors whose shops were located in the poorest parts of the city. While Baltimore taverns continued to prosper for several decades to come, their patronage and, consequently, their number dropped over time with the increased prominence of packaged beer—in bottles and, from 1935 onward, cans—and a growing propensity for American consumers to consume the beverage in the privacy of home and in restaurants over prepared meals.

Nine breweries opened in Baltimore in the immediate aftermath of the repeal of Prohibition, each trying to recapture some measure of the success enjoyed by dozens of their predecessors during the previous century. Like a number of German immigrant brewers from the 1840s onward, the new firms attempted to enter a crowded field and out of necessity sought to find a way to differentiate themselves from the pack. Some were underfinanced and without a well-defined plan for success in a very different marketplace than that which existed before Prohibition. Still others misread the demand for beer as a result of the wild celebrations that took place with repeal and were ill-prepared for the softening of demand which occurred once the realities of Depression economics recaptured the public mindset and beer drinkers realized that the beverage had returned to stay. A few were known to produce subpar product, less concerned with quality control than whatever quick profits could be derived from consumers who sought whatever beer could be had at a price they were willing to pay. The result was an early and inevitable consolidation in the industry that weeded out weaker competition in favor of financially stronger, better prepared, and more experienced brewers.

Despite the failure of these firms to attain anything more than a token presence in the Baltimore market, several other local brewers made a more enduring mark upon the city and its revived beer culture. The Free State Brewing Company reopened shortly after repeal in 1933 in the former Frederick Bauernschmidt American Brewery, along Hillen Street, and operated with modest results for seventeen years on the site. In May 1950 the firm came into the ownership of Morton Sarubin, a local cloth-

ing merchant, and was renamed the Wiessner Brewing Company in honor of the German-American longtime pre-Prohibition brewers George and John Wiessner. A further nod to tradition took place with the employment of John F. Neumeister as brewmaster; his father, John G. Neumeister, had been brewmaster at the pre-Prohibition Wiessner Brewery on Gay Street. The connection was played up in brewery advertising in the local media and reinforced the sense of history that the new Wiessner operation sought to emphasize, including the fact that the company's new brew, Wiessner's "Regal Beer," was based on the recipe of the original Wiessner breweries. Although production capacity was increased to 200,000 barrels per year, sales never came close to approaching that level, and the firm closed for good in 1952 after losing over \$180,000 in 1951 and becoming embroiled in several lawsuits that drained the firm of resources needed to continue operations.

The Globe Brewing Company, with its history as Baltimore's oldest brewing operation dating to 1748, converted easily back to beer production, having survived the dry years by manufacturing "Arrow Special Near Beer," and thus became the first Baltimore brewer to have real beer ready for the local market at the precise moment of repeal on April 7, 1933. The early post-Prohibition years featured a range of new and traditional brews, including flagship Arrow labels Beer, Ale, and a seasonal Bock Beer; Shamrock Pale Ale; Hopfheiser; and two products which also harkened back to the glory days of German-American brewing in the city: Eigenbrot Beer and Ale, once made by the Eigenbrot Brewery under the banner of the Gottlieb-Bauernschmidt-Strauss Brewing Company. Sales grew and capacity soon was expanded to 225,000 barrels per year, a move undertaken again in 1947 with the construction of a new four-story brew-house which effectively doubled capacity to upward of a half-million barrels per year. However, postwar expansion by other local rivals and increasingly cutthroat competition from external brewers gradually began to take a toll on Globe, and sales of Arrow Beer slid gradually but consistently throughout the next decade. Unable to stem the tide through increased advertising and the introduction of several new beers, such as "Hals Beer" and "Arrow 77," Globe made the decision to discontinue brewing in Baltimore and shifted production of "Arrow 77" to the nearby Cumberland Brewing Company in August 1963, ending 215 years of

continuous manufacture at the South Hanover Street site.

The American Brewery had considerably less pedigree than Globe, but ultimately stayed in business longer in the volatile post-Prohibition era. Operating in the former John F. Wiessner plant in the 1700 block of North Gay Street, American was created upon repeal via a conversion of the American Malt Company back into a brewing operation. Its flagship brew, American Beer, frequently utilized a familiar red, white, and blue color scheme, while additional beverages such as “Old Baron Beer” and “Nut Brown Ale” added needed diversity to the product line. Solid early sales of over 100,000 barrels per year justified the decision to expand the physical plant, such that by early 1942 over \$600,000 had been expended to create one of the most modern breweries in all of Maryland. The patriotic name served the company well during the World War II era, though during the 1950s American returned to its German roots from the Wiessner years, introducing “Dortmunder Beer” and billing it as an all-malt product “brewed in the tradition of Dortmund, Westfalia, famous German brewing center.” However, success was fleeting for both Dortmunder Beer and, as it turned out, the American Brewery. In 1960 American acquired the Pittsburgh-based Fort Pitt Brewing Company, in an increasingly common practice by medium-sized American brewers of acquiring the beers of failing competitors to add barrelage that would offset sales declines shown by their own fading brands. In 1967 American was sold to Allegheny Beverage Corporation, and in October 1969 the company attempted to shake off the traditional conservative image associated with the brewery, and court the growing market of eighteen- to twenty-five-year-old drinkers, with the introduction of “Heibraü Premium Bolder Beer.” The brew took a lighthearted approach to the German language in the process—right down to the misplaced umlauts over the “u” instead of the “a”—under the premise that it would blend “the idea of premium quality and prestige implicit in the leading German brands with the strictly American concept that drinking beer is fun.” Promotional slogans such as das “Der beer mit schticktoderibs” and “Der Beer mit bootinderend” made for clever quotes but ultimately did little for sales, and by 1973 American was forced to concede defeat, closing its doors permanently and selling its brands to the Pittsburgh Brewing Company.

RECAPTURING PAST GLORY

The post-Prohibition failure of smaller firms such as Wiessner, Globe, and American was due not to mismanagement or poor product quality, nor, unlike the closure of the German-Americans breweries before 1920, was it due to legislative intervention that brought about an early demise. Instead such firms, in Baltimore and across the nation, failed in increasingly large numbers for competitive reasons, from an inability to generate sufficient revenue for publicity purposes and compete on level footing with larger, wealthier, and more efficient brewers. Invariably the most successful post-Prohibition breweries were those most skilled in the art of marketing and mass media advertising, such that large regional and national brewers first gained and then exploited an upper hand at taking away customers from smaller rivals and keeping them in a time of overall sales stagnation. The most successful of the post-Prohibition Baltimore brewers either attained regional status or were owned by large regional brewers headquartered elsewhere. The Gunther Brewing Company reopened after repeal in its plant at 1101 South Conkling Street and, after facility expansions in 1936 and 1950, successfully manufactured Gunther Premium Dry Beer and a seasonal bock beer. By the late 1950s Gunther had hit its stride with strong ties to the local community and a catchy advertising campaign centered on the catch phrase, “What’s the Good Word? Gunther!” As a result Gunther became the second-largest brewer in Baltimore, with fifteen buildings in the overall brewing complex, sales of some 800,000 barrels per year, employment of 600 workers, and sufficient advertising revenue to sponsor Baltimore Orioles baseball broadcasts. Yet in 1959 Gunther bowed to overtures by a much larger brewer, the Minnesota-based Theodore Hamm Brewing Company, to purchase its plant for expansion into the lucrative East Coast market. The move backfired when Hamm quickly discontinued production of Gunther Beer, alienating loyal longtime customers, and when traditional Hamm’s Beer advertising, stressing it as being “From the Land of Sky Blue Waters,” fell flat upon Baltimoreans understandably disinterested in the upper Midwestern motif, and in 1963 Hamm sold the brewery to a still-larger eastern rival, the F. & M. Schaefer Brewing Company. Schaefer utilized the plant as a valuable third brewery in its chain of eastern facilities, alongside those located in Brooklyn and Albany, New York,

and operated it successfully until declining market share and excess capacity brought about its closure in 1978.

More memorable to most Baltimoreans was the National Brewing Company, a name which still evokes fond memories among many local residents who recall it as the most successful Baltimore brewing operation of all time. The firm, operating in the plant founded by Johann Baier in 1850, was modernized extensively under the leadership of Samuel Hoffberger, but the most fruitful years in the history of company came under the leadership of his son, Jerold (Jerry) Hoffberger, who was named secretary of the brewery in 1945 upon his return from service in World War II and, one year later, was elevated to president, a position he would hold for the next twenty-eight years. Sales of National Premium and National Bohemian Beer amounted to some 230,000 barrels per year in the mid-1940s, but under the aggressive leadership of Jerry Hoffberger National grew rapidly, producing 1,355,000 barrels in 1961 and then 2,218,000 barrels at the end of the 1960s, good for seventeenth place among brewers nationwide. Such rapid growth necessitated expansion beyond what was possible at the Baltimore plant; over a two-decade period National acquired other breweries in Detroit, Orlando, and Phoenix and attained a semi-national presence in the beer marketplace, becoming by far the Baltimore brewery with the widest sales base in its history.

Key to the growth of National was broad acceptance of its two principle products, "Premium" and "Bohemian," in an ever-increasing range of eastern states. National Premium, as a beer designed to rival fine imports in quality, contained at least eighty-five percent malt content and selected European hops, and was brewed and packaged at a higher gravity, offering more flavor than most American beers. National Bohemian, on the other hand, was brewed to the standards of leading American-style lager beers, but over time managed to carve out its own substantial sales niche through an integrated advertising program that produced one of the iconic beer marketing figures of the era. Mr. Boh, with its single eye and appealing handlebar mustache, achieved the rare distinction of universal appeal, liked by both young and old people, men and women, and in external markets as well as Greater Baltimore. Local identification also helped the brand and brewery make great strides: billed as being from "The Land of Pleasant Living," National Bohemian reinforced the

Chesapeake Bay image in the minds of countless real and potential customers around Baltimore, and both literally and figuratively put the city as well as the brewery on the map for beer drinkers elsewhere. Mindful not to rest on its laurels, National attempted to market other brews that would solidify its presence among more diverse beer drinkers, but with mixed results. “Malt Duck,” a flavored malt liquor that sought to win over female and young consumers and compete with similar entries by brewers such as Theodore Hamm (“Right Time”) and Pittsburgh Brewing (“Hop’n Gator”), gained more in publicity than sales, never quite attaining the sales potential that brewery executives envisioned for it over the two decades or so of its life. On the other hand, another National malt liquor brand, “Colt 45,” became a leading seller in that category, after its introduction in 1963. Named not after the gun of the same appellation, but rather a member of the Baltimore Colts football team (Jerry Hill) who wore uniform number 45, Colt 45 featured the image of a bucking horse on the label, a sly reference to the brew having “more kick” to it than standard beers on the market.

At the same time that National was reaching a peak of sales success in Baltimore, a new rival emerged to challenge it for preeminent status in the city. The Carling Brewing Company, headquartered in Cleveland and with plants in roughly half a dozen cities by the late 1950s, opened an ultramodern production facility along the Baltimore Beltway in 1961 and quickly amplified sales of its two core products, Black Label Beer and Red Cap Ale, in Maryland and other East Coast states. While Carling competed effectively with National for local beer sales, and provided a solid base of employment for the community for some years to come, it was never able to capture the hearts of Baltimoreans who had come to embrace “Natty Boh” on an emotional level as its hometown beer. The two brewers sliced into each other’s sales over time, but in fact during the cutthroat competitive years of the 1960s and 1970s, the two brewers came to see that their biggest rivals in fact largely were based elsewhere. Regional rivals such as Schaefer, based in Brooklyn but with its own Baltimore plant until 1978, C. Schmidt of Philadelphia, Ballantine, and Rheingold made steady progress in capturing the Baltimore beer market, while national brewers such as Anheuser-Busch, Schlitz, and Pabst likewise converted massive advertising budgets and sophisticated distribu-

tion networks into growing sales success in the city. The one-two punch was devastating to the local brewing trade. With production dropping yearly into the 1970s, Carling and National laid the groundwork for merger in 1975 in an attempt to stave off closure. The new operation, Carling-National Breweries, became the ninth-largest brewing company in America with its combined barrelage, but sales continued to drop precipitously, from 4,348,000 barrels in 1977 to 3,464,000 in 1978—a decline of twenty percent in just one year. In 1979 Carling-National conceded defeat and sold its operation to the G. Heileman Brewing Company of La Crosse, Wisconsin, which, not needing two breweries in one city, consolidated operations by closing the venerable National plant along Dillon Street in 1980. The Baltimore Beltway facility fared slightly better, remaining open in subsequent years as a brewery for Heileman, Stroh, and Pabst before it finally was shut down in 1996.

BALTIMORE BREWING IN THE TWENTIETH-FIRST CENTURY

The closure of the former Carling brewery in a sense signified the end of a Baltimore brewery tradition that had existed for 248 years. But by no means did it spell the demise of the brewing industry in the city, nor was it the end of the period of Germanic influence upon beer culture there. The blossoming microbrewery trade, with its origins on the West Coast, gradually made its way eastward over time and eventually gained a tentative but lasting foothold in Baltimore. One of the earliest microbrewing operations in the city, and over time quite possibly its most beloved, was the Baltimore Brewing Company, established in 1989 by Theo DeGroen on Albemarle Street in downtown Baltimore. DeGroen, although Dutch by birth, gave heavy emphasis to German beer styles in his product line, brewing traditional top- and bottom-fermented beverages such as Altbier, Dunkel, Hefeweizen, Pils, Bock and Doppelbock, and even a Rauchbier to great fanfare from a public mostly unaccustomed to the luxury of having authentic Germanic brews made and served fresh from the source, replete with sausages and other German-themed foods to eat, a full copper brewing setup, and high vaulted ceilings reminiscent of continental Europe. The DeGroen beers won various prizes and awards in refereed competitions and rare reviews from fiercely loyal patrons over time. But the brewery was not destined to enjoy a long life; after DeGroen accepted a position with a large German brewery in 2002, product quality

exhibited some inconsistencies under subsequent brewers, and when construction projects around the brewery made it difficult to impossible for patrons to arrive and park in the area, profitability dropped to the point that the brewpub no longer was financially viable, and the fate of the firm was sealed.

Other microbrewers made their own impact upon Baltimore beer culture into the 2000s and continued the trend of reviving German and other specialty beer styles and celebrating traditional aspects of German culture in the process. Among those, the Wharf Rat Brewery opened a production facility at 801 South Ann Street at Fells Point and over time incorporated several German beer styles into its regular and seasonal beer offerings, such as Heavy Seas Märzen, Troegs DreamWeaver Wheat, and Troegenator Double Bock. The Clipper City Brewing Company was established in 1995 by Hugh Sisson, founder of the first brewpub in Baltimore under his name in 1989. After acquiring the Oxford Brewing Company, the first craft brewer in Maryland, in 1998 and expanding its product line in 2003 and 2009, Clipper City looked to expand distribution and packaging opportunities, and in 2011 the brewery was home to twenty-one different styles of beer, including a German-style Classic Lager, a Kölsch-style Gold Ale, Hang Ten Weizen Doppelbock, and Prosit! Imperial Oktoberfest Lager. On North Charles Street, The Brewer's Art brought a new, upscale dimension to the Baltimore microbrewing scene upon opening in a grand Mt. Vernon townhouse in the early 2000s. Although most of the brews served pay tribute to unique Belgian styles of ale, popular German varieties also are represented on an ongoing basis, such as "Proletary Ale," a top-fermented version of the increasingly popular German Schwarzbier; "7 Beauties Rye Ale," brewed to resemble a tradition Roggenbier; and "Nein! Kölsch Ale," clearly in honor of the legendary specialty of Cologne.

While the days of the big brewers in Baltimore have come and gone, the city's long journey from small English-style ale breweries from the mid-1700s to the mid-1800s; larger German lager breweries from the mid-1800s to the onset of Prohibition; the ultramodern brewing facilities of the first five decades after Prohibition; and the arrival of the microbreweries, has come full circle. Baltimore has rediscovered its roots in enjoying freshly brewed ales and beers at the source, in the company of



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