

# BREWS & NEWS

**DEADLINE FOR NEXT  
BREWS & NEWS**  
January 25th

**MEMBER MEETING**  
January 3rd @  
11:00 am

**DOUG KING  
MEMORIAL COMP**  
January 23rd

**JANUARY SHOP  
BREW W/ STEVE**  
January 17th



## Happy Brew Beer Happy New Year 2016!

Hey Falcons! Can you believe we're less than 24 hours away from 2016? I don't know about you, but my 2015 was full of great beer, great friends, and great experiences. If you've been keeping up with the Maltose Falcons webpage, Facebook, and email blasts, you can probably tell that 2016 is already shaping up to be epic as well.

This month's issue of Brews and News features detailed tasting notes from the Stuffed Sandwich Holiday tasting and an article by Allen Tracy about a brewery he visited a few months back. As usual, I could always use your help on the content front, so please feel free to send me any articles for the next issue to: [newsletter@maltosefalcons.com](mailto:newsletter@maltosefalcons.com). Until next month...

Happy New Year!

Andy



# Brews & News

Vol. 41, No. 6 November 2015

PUBLISHER

Maltose Falcons Home Brewing

Society

EDITOR

Andy Ziskin

CONTRIBUTORS

Natalie DeNicholas, Cullen Davis, Lili Madrid,  
Allen Tracy, Bruce Brode

©2015 Maltose Falcons. All rights reserved.

*Brews & News* is the monthly newsletter of the Maltose Falcons Home Brewing Society. It is distributed via e-mail to the membership during the first week of every month. Members may also access the current issue and archived editions, by logging onto the Web site [www.maltosefalcons.com](http://www.maltosefalcons.com), and clicking on the Appropriate PDF file.

All material submitted for possible publication should be sent to: Andy Ziskin at [newsletter@maltosefalcons.com](mailto:newsletter@maltosefalcons.com). Materials may be edited for length.

**Deadline for December issue:  
November 25th**

## Maltose Falcons Board 2015-2016

**President**, Cullen Davis

[president@maltosefalcons.com](mailto:president@maltosefalcons.com)

**Vice-Presidents**, Ed Kochanowski, John Aitchison

[vicepresident@maltosefalcons.com](mailto:vicepresident@maltosefalcons.com)

**Secretary**, Lili Madrid

[secretary@maltosefalcons.com](mailto:secretary@maltosefalcons.com)

**Treasurer**, Kent Fletcher

[treasurer@maltosefalcons.com](mailto:treasurer@maltosefalcons.com)

**Membership Director**, Craig Frump

[membership@maltosefalcons.com](mailto:membership@maltosefalcons.com)

**Publicity Director**, Matt Myerhoff

[publicity@maltosefalcons.com](mailto:publicity@maltosefalcons.com)

**Activities Director**, Tiffany Ashrafi

[activities@maltosefalcons.com](mailto:activities@maltosefalcons.com)

**Grand Hydrometer**, Drew Beechum

[grandhydro@maltosefalcons.com](mailto:grandhydro@maltosefalcons.com)

**Burgermeisters**, Natalie DeNicholas,

Michael Covarrubias

[burgermeister@maltosefalcons.com](mailto:burgermeister@maltosefalcons.com)

**Newsletter Editor**, Andy Ziskin

[newsletter@maltosefalcons.com](mailto:newsletter@maltosefalcons.com)

**Webmeister**, Drew Beechum, Dana

[Cordeswebmaster@maltosefalcons.com](mailto:Cordeswebmaster@maltosefalcons.com)



## *This Time It's Personal!*

Closing another year amid cold weather and hot kettles, we all find our own reasons for holiday cheer, but also reasons to celebrate with others. As few other social groups can, we

Falcons toast the festivities with unparalleled style and taste (inside the glass, mostly). A dogged quest for the good life lies at the heart of our club's history and culture. Our members exemplify this with every stir of the mash, every yeast feeding, every experimental ingredient, and every delicious draught. We all know how to make good beer, but that certainly doesn't mean we stop trying to make better, more interesting, or more impressive beer. On the contrary, knowing how to make it good is the reason we strive for these other things. But not only are Falcons tireless experimenters, we are also generous to a fault. We give freely of ourselves, our time and knowledge, hoping to inspire others to take up the mash paddle. We gladly share of our best brews, deriving pleasure and pride from impressing our fellow brewers with our own ingenuity. This is not to say we are totally selfless. We relish the competition and never hesitate to let everyone know we're the best when we score a gold medal. Even so, these victories reflect well on the club. When one of us wins, we all do.

This brings me to the point of all this glad-handing and back-patting. All of these things are part of Falcons culture because of the contributions of our members over the past four decades. As with any organization some members are more active and involved than others. Some of us are happy to participate and that's perfectly fine, but others feel compelled to assume responsibility for the direction of the club. These people are driven by passion for brewing and all of the qualities I mentioned above. Next month, we will pay tribute to the life of one such person with our annual Doug King Memorial Homebrew Competition. Doug exemplified all the best things about being a Falcon with his generosity of spirit, conviviality and amazing ability as a brewer. The most fitting tribute we could think of was to start the DKM comp. This is our most personal and heartfelt event in the Falcons' calendar. We owe it to our foundational history to do it right. So I ask you, my friends to join me in making this competition the best that we can make it. Enter your beers and sign up to judge or steward. We need your help (and we'll feed you lunch)! Find more details on the Falcons' website: [www.maltosefalcons.com](http://www.maltosefalcons.com).

In the meantime, I wish you a very pleasant holiday season full of good friends and good cheer. See you in January. Cheers! cd

By Cullen Davis





# December Board Meeting Notes

Tuesday, December 13, 2015 7:00pm

Location: Fletcher Residence

Attended: Tiffany, Drew, Matt, Ed, Cullen, Kent, Steve, John, Kale, Andy, Craig, Bernard & Lili

## Agenda & Topics

### I. Next board meeting date and location?

Board Meeting will be on Monday, January 18th at Homebrew Shop/TBD  
Member Meeting will be on Sunday, January 3rd at Homebrew Shop

### II. Treasurer's Report

1. Usual Financial info- We have \$\$\$
2. Swag – Do you believe in the power of hats?!

Kale will be looking into purchasing the hats.  
Kent will be taking an inventory of shirts.  
Possibly selling patches individually

### III. Activities

1. Stuffed Sandwich Christmas tasting event – How'd it go? - Very well indeed! Bruce has a write up.
2. SCHF/CHA – We have our 10 spaces, have we set prices?
3. Plans for Brew With a Falcon? Who, when, where?

Start thinking of hosts

4. Ideas for bus trips or brewery crawls? Downtown maybe?

Possibly sometime on April 16th?

Tiffany has created a map of all the breweries in the Downtown area

Kale will have lunch ready at Iron Triangle  
Bus pick up at 10am on a Saturday from the shop and pick up at union station around 11am

A total of 8 stops and possibly end trip around 7pm

### IV. Vice President

1. DKM Comp.

Glass mugs will need to be ordered for judges.  
We will need 80-100 mugs to be ordered.



Your board hard at work, or hardly working?

Cullen will be providing the artwork.  
Lunch- Natalie?? Budget for food will be \$500  
- Any leads for a head steward?  
Chief Steward for this event will be Matt.  
Add Matt to the competition committee group.  
2. Sponsorship coordination for Mayfaire.  
Dana confirmed that Courtney and Jonathan are still willing to help.

### V. Webmaster and Grand Hydro

1. January style, demo? TBD
2. Website hosting fee coming due in Jan. Have we paid already?  
\$150 due in January for website hosting fee. About \$250 will be spent for the entire year.
3. Grand Hydro wishes to move that we adopt the CA State tartan as the club's official tartan. Has been ruled in favor per board
4. What else can we do with YouTube and Persicope thing?



Tiffany brought Vegan truffles... Yummm!

*Possibly purchasing a better tripod  
 Promote Persicope during our meetings  
 Have someone reply to people while we are  
 live on Persicope  
 VI. Membership*



A very special bottle was shared to end the night.

*1. Anything new? How many are we up to now? - Total of 250 members  
 List of members was given to the shop on Dec. 6th*

*VII. Publicity*

*1. Raptor Center visit was nifty! What will we do with them in the future?  
 2. Shop Brews: Who's up next? Shall we plan some brews for SCHF, Mayfaire, etc?  
 Matt will be deciding when the kegs are required for specific events  
 January shop brew will be for Mayfaire judges swag. This will be conducted by Drew. Possibly a Saison. We should can the entire 40 gallons and not have anyone take any home.*

*VIII. Newsletter*

*1. President's article – Talk about DKM, things coming up, etc.  
 2. Who else contributing? I would still like to see more articles from board.  
 All items should be emailed to Andy by Friday.*

*IX. Burgermeister (hold for a later discussion)*

*1. Jan. club meeting – ideas?  
 2. DKM comp. lunch?*

*X. Other business?*

*1. Dark Heart of the Forest! Bernard wants to know what to do with the club's portion. Craig will be holding on to it and will return the keg back to Bernard at the next meeting.  
 2. Beanie wants out of the bar biz, have we made any arrangements with him? Craig is willing to modify it for us to use. He will look into how much Beanie is asking for the bar.*



# Maltose Falcons

## Spark of Love Toy Drive

Falcons,

I just wanted to send a note out to thank you again for ALL the wonderful gifts you brought to the meeting for our 6th Annual Toy Drive. I was overwhelmed by your



generosity in bringing so much for the kids. I believe that this was the biggest collection of gifts that we have ever gotten. I am humbled and so proud of our club. What wonderful hearts you all have.

The Fire Department was amazed to see how many bags and boxes that we brought to them. They wanted me to thank you from them as well. There are a couple pics on the Falcons Facebook page. And yes, it was nice posing with the firemen (need you ask??).....

Have a very Happy Holiday and only the Best for the New Year.

Take care,

Irene (aka The Alewench)



# THE BIG TEXAN

By Allen Tracy



It's true that everything is bigger in Texas, and while the ten beer sampler at The Big Texan is quite large (just like their 72oz steak), their brewery however is a lot smaller than you'd think. Located in Amarillo, TX, The Big Texan is right along side the old Route 66 and impossible to miss. Limos with steer horns, a shooting range inside, and a large gift shop make it hard to forget you're in Texas.

I was surprised to see they had 12 different onsite brewed beers on tap ranging from your standard blonde, raspberry wheat, different ranges of hopped beers, a pecan porter, and a barrel aged stout. Most of the beers were a little on the sweeter side, definitely not west coast style hoppy beers. Some of them I wasn't a huge fan of and could taste some shortcuts like extract flavoring, wood chips, and felt like some may have been fermented a little warm. Some of them were quite tasty though.



As I tasted one, moved to another, then back to the same one, then onto another, a guy with a beer sat down next to me and said with a Texan accent "I've never seen anyone taste my sampler like that, they usually just finish one and move onto the next one". Turns out he was the one and only employee of the brewery. He was very open about the

whole operation which he called “a very redneck setup.” It’s brewed in one barrel pots as partial mash with extract and topped up to fill the fermenters. He even gave me a tour which started in the kitchen.

His pots had to be scheduled with the kitchen to make sure they weren’t using them to make mashed potatoes or chili in. The fermentation room was a cooled semi truck trailer backed up to a hole cut in the building with a small lagering room at the far end. The fermentation vessels were normally sold for bio diesel which he re-purposed with rubber bouncy balls ratcheted down over the opening. True to his word it was definitely a “redneck setup.” I was truly surprised the beers I was drinking came from this setup.



Then on the wall I see a plaque from Draft magazine that The Big Texan was awarded “Top 10 Places to Drink a Beer.” This just goes to show you that even without a ton of money and the best equipment around, as long as you’re in the right location you can still make a great variety of beer and make a lot of people happy. They plan to expand in two years into a “more proper brewery.”



**the Maltose Falcons**  
 want **YOU** for the  
**Doug King Memorial**

**Homebrew Competition 2016**



**\$9 Per Entry**

Entries Due on  
 Jan 8, 2016

Judging is:  
 Jan 23, 2016  
 9:00 am at  
 MacLeod Ale  
 Brewing Co.  
 Van Nuys, CA

Entries **MUST**  
 be paid online!



**Ship to  
 or Drop-off:**  
 Home Wine Beer  
 Cheese  
 Making Shop  
 22836 Ventura Blvd  
 Woodland Hills  
 CA 91364

**Drop off at:**  
 Culver City  
 Homebrew  
 Supply  
 Culver City, CA

Eagle Rock  
 Homebrew  
 Supply  
 Los Angeles, CA

Steinfillers  
 Long Beach, CA



For entering, judging, and stewarding go to: <http://competitions.maltosefalcons.com>

It's that time of year again when we fondly remember our compadre Doug King. Doug was a brewer's brewer - always there to lend a hand to the club or another brewer. He was also fond of experimentation and was well known for his crazy experiments (loafs of rye bread, potatoes, tortillas - all in the mash) and his love of lagers. He won the 1996 California State Fair for his Dougweiser.

The Best of Show winning beer in DKM will have their beer brewed at the Eagle Rock Brewery and entered into the pro-am competition at the Great American Beer Festival. In 2010, Eagle Rock Brewery won a Gold Medal at the GABF with the winner of the 2010 DKM, the renowned imperial red ale, "Red Velvet."

As always, the Doug King Memorial Competition features lagers and specialty categories. This year we will also be including meads! The popular category first featured in last year's Doug King Competition, "The British are Coming," will also be on the menu this year!

<http://competitions.maltosefalcons.com/>



# December Members Meeting Minutes

Sunday, December 6, 2015  
Location: Home Beer & Cheese Making Shop

## Agenda Topics

**Grand Hydro:** Christmas of the Belgians  
Avec les Bons Voeux- Dupont Belgian Saison Ale, 9.5%  
Mission Brewery- Holiday Ale Belgian style Dark Ale, 8.6%  
Monkish Magnificat- Belgian style Christmas ale with holiday spices, 10.1%  
La Resolution- Unibroue Dark Ale, 10%  
The Bruery- Autumn Maple Belgian style brown ale with yams, molasses, maple style and spices, 10%  
The Bruery- 8 maids Imperial milk stout, 11.3%  
Stone- Winter Harvest Belgian style golden ale aged in white wine barrels with stone farms Merlot grapes, 11.3%  
Scaldis- Noel classic Belgian ale, 12%  
Anchor Brewing Company- 2010 Magnum, 5.5%  
Crowd favorite: Scaldis Noel



Guest Breweries: Thank you for stopping in and sharing!  
The Bruery- Terreux Belgian style ale with rye and Brettanomyces, 8.5%  
Iron Triangle- Dark, 5.2%  
Iron Triangle- IPA, 6.7%  
MacLeod Ale- The Blunder, 4.7%

*This year's Spark of Love toy drive was a great success! Thank you everyone for supporting this great cause.*

**Homebrew Winner:** Allen & Beanie's Brownwine Barrel Aged

Ever find yourself unable to make the meeting at the last moment? You can watch the Grand Hydro presentation live on periscope: <https://www.periscope.tv/maltosefalcons>

*Welcome to our newest members:*  
Carlos,  
David,  
Rick,  
Jessica and  
Nate



*Cold Brew demo by John*

Upcoming Competition is Doug King Memorial. All entries are due on January 8th and judging will be at MacLeod's on January 23rd at 9am. Registration information will be posted on our website and other social media outlets.

Come join us on December 12th at the world famous Stuffed Sandwich in San Gabriel CA. Together we'll taste awesome sandwiches and a selection of the best and most interesting holiday beers that Marlene can coax out of her distributors or the Sandwich's legendary cellar. Buy your tickets on our website. Lunch is not covered in your ticket price and lunch is mandatory at the Sandwich due to their liquor license. Tasting begins at 2pm, so get there before 1pm to get your food and a starter beer!

BJCP Mead Class and Exam will begin on Tuesday, January 5th at 7pm. Email John at [malty@earthlink.net](mailto:malty@earthlink.net) if you are interested in joining the class.

Stay tuned for the December shop brew session, more information to come.

**Next Meeting will be on Sunday, January 3rd at 11am.**

## STUFFING WITH ALL THE TRIMMINGS

By Bruce L. Brode

Saturday, December 12, 2015 brought us the latest in the long line of annual Holiday Beer Tastings at the Home of the Stuffed Sandwich in San Gabriel, the venerable sandwich shop that opened in 1976 and happens to have one of the most stunning beer lists on the planet. As far as anyone can recall, the first such tasting took place in December 1991 (and I was there and published my tasting notes in *Brews and News*, the first time I had done such a thing), making this one in 2015 our 25th. And it was an event fit for such an auspicious anniversary, with another great and varied and special tasting list put together for us by the proprietor, Marlene Samaniego, who really knows her beers. Those familiar with the sheer scale of the bottled beer list at the “Stuffed,” as it is affectionately known, understand the magnitude of the task of keeping track of, and maintaining, such an awesome and wide-ranging collection of beers, including many lovingly aged to perfection, that typifies what this unique establishment has to offer. There's a good reason, actually many, why we have continued to hold this tasting there for 25 years (with the exception of 2002, when it was held at Lucky Baldwin's as the Stuffed was preparing to move to its current location), and the biggest question is why it took the Falcons 15 years to discover the place!



It's been almost two years since Marlene's business partner and husband of nearly 35 years, Sam Samaniego, passed away on January 8, 2014, one week shy of finishing his 78th year. Sam's passion for and devotion to beer, and to people, were apparent to all who knew him. He often played the role of the “affable curmudgeon” in order to stimulate some good banter with the customers, and it worked famously and acquired him a worthy reputation as one not to be trifled with when it came to beer – he knew beer extremely well, having spent his life in the beer business. The Stuffed Sandwich is a place that has brought the great beers of the world to the greater Los Angeles area for 40 years, and is a pioneer in doing so! We certainly miss Sam and honor his memory, and we salute Marlene for keeping the place going so brilliantly. She and Sam have long been big supporters of homebrewers, and we provide our strong support in return. We are all colleagues in the search for great beer!

On to the tasting event. First, one must get stuffed with some of the great food available here. For me, it was a corned beef sandwich on a French roll, and a cup of clam chowder, accompanied by current-release winter holiday beer “Six Suits A-Hanging” from Karl Strauss of San Diego. This is a strong brown ale with a lot of depth and complexity (and alcohol). And the corned beef stood up to it magnificently! It seems to be getting harder to find good corned beef these days, but you can find it here. Yum!

Once our quorum had assembled, our Grand Hydrometer and longtime moderator of these tastings Drew Beechum kicked things off and provided his extensive background information on each beer and brewery, coordinated discussion of tasting impressions, and took numerous polls of which beers the tasters preferred. One classic poll rates each beer on the Falcon scale of 1 to 5, a 5 rating representing “a beer you would go to the ends of the earth to find, and pay for.” I'd best not say what a 1 rating represents.

First on the list was a Belgian ale billed as a Gueuze, that is to say, a Lambic “spontaneously fermented” beer comprising a blend of aged and younger beers and known for its fruity and acidic complexity. Brouwerij DeTroch Winter Gueuze Ale 2014 from this brewery in Wambeek, Belgium,

imported by Wetten Importers of Sterling Virginia, and weighing in at 5.5% alcohol by volume (ABV), displayed a complex bouquet of esters, phenols, and a touch of mustard and honey, fairly recognizable among the many aromatic factors one can find in Gueuze. It had a slightly hazy red-gold color, and the flavor was rather sweet and soft and thus providing less of the acidity and complexity most typical of the style. There was a candy character to the sweetness, and I found a distinct lemon-lime soda aspect to the finish and aftertaste. It is apparently brewed with raisins, and some also found it cider-like. An interesting and refreshing way to start the tasting. Rated at 2.75 Falcons.

Next up was a familiar holiday beer, Winter Welcome from the Samuel Smith Tadcaster Brewery in Yorkshire, England, imported by Merchant Du Vin of Seattle, WA. This has been a longtime holiday favorite, usually showing up in our good beer outlets earlier than any other brewery's holiday offering, and generally quite consistent year-to-year. This was the 2015 - 2016 version at 6% ABV. The aroma had a rich malt/honey complex with toasty edges, a recognizable profile to that of previous years. However, the flavor was fairly dry and toasty with honey-malt essences and some lingering bitterness, marking it as drier and more bitter in residual flavor than I remember previous years' brews to be. It was rated at 2 Falcons.



Our third beer in the tasting was a fascinating collaboration project of a sort: New Belgium Brewing Ben & Jerry's Salted Caramel Brownie Brown Ale. An ice cream-styled brownie in a beer? Quite a project for this Fort Collins, CO brewery's 2015 offering channeling one of the iconic ice cream maker's styles. There was a malty-caramel aroma with a chocolate edge, and lots of lingering complexity, atop a deep garnet brown color, nice! The flavor matched the aroma well, rich but with a reasonably dry finish and thus tasting like a beer rather than a brownie or ice cream. As it warmed, a touch of hazelnut and a very light salty edge emerged. Its disappointing rating of 2.5 Falcons doubtless reflects a sense among the raters that the ice cream and brownie aspects were perhaps oversold, but I found it a well-structured and enjoyable beer displaying the elements it purported to have. Hey, sometimes you get outvoted and have to live with it.

Next it was time for another well-known American craft brewery to strut its stuff. Boulevard Brewing Company of Kansas City, MO produced a winter warmer beer they call Nut Cracker Ale, coming in at a sobering (hmmm, maybe that's the wrong word) 7.8% ABV. This brewery was recently acquired by Duvel Moortgat of Belgium in an interesting cross-pollination between Europe and the U.S.A. Aromatically, there was a big hop blast that was earthy, with a bit of grapefruit pith, fruity, and herbaceous – nicely over the top! (As hopheads worldwide will readily understand). My hazy sample had a medium amber color. Although this is a beer brewed for the 2015 holiday season, I found an oxidized malt palate with plenty of surrounding hops, and a substantial bitterness that was not overdone. However, the hop bitterness and the oxidation dominated the aftertaste for me, and not so pleasantly; it struck me and others as something of a “Winter IPA” for its substantially hoppy character. Despite my own relative disenchantment with it, this beer did have its supporters, and garnered a rating of 2.5 Falcons.

Moving on, we changed continents and encountered a German Doppelbock from Schlossbrauerei Au-Hakkertau, called “Schnee” (snow) Winter Festbier. It was certainly in the doppelbock range at 7.9% ABV and is produced by a castle brewery in the Hallertau region (famous for its hops) established in 1590, imported by Northwest Beverage Group in Bothell, WA. As a 2014 beer, the aroma displayed malty depth as well as some oxidation of age, along with nice elements of caramel, molasses and dark dried fruits. The deep red-brown color was authentic. The substantial malty

flavor was neither too sweet nor cloying, with a thinnish body and a lingering malty finish balanced by a drying hop bitterness. Melanoidins were present in abundance, as John Aitchison would tell us we should be looking for in this style. Drew characterized its flavor collection as reminiscent of “brown bread,” no doubt owing to his time spent in New England during his college days. It is always nice to have a good representative of the sizable lager branch of the beer family tree represented at a holiday tasting, doppelbock in particular, and this one garnered a very respectable rating of 3.75 Falcons.

After suitable and protracted discussion, we proceeded onward to another Belgian offering from the well-regarded Het Anker brewery located in Mechelen, which specializes in characterful dark ales. Having a bit of fun with the ecclesiastical seasons, we sampled Gouden Carolus Easter Ale (April in December?), bringing some substance at 9% ABV and some age from the 2012 season. There was a deep complex aroma of malt, honey, esters, licorice, and an edge of spice including fennel and even a touch of raspberry detected. Wow! The murky dark brown color didn't really prepare me for the rich malty-sweet palate flavor with a similar depth and complexity to that of the aroma. Many essences were detected, including such diversities as mint, horehound, and raisin. Impressively for such a strong and complex beer, the aftertaste was surprisingly light (it “lifted well,” as I put it), marking it as a beer even more drinkable than its alcohol content would otherwise suggest. Quite popular, and rated at 3.75 Falcons to reflect that.

As has become Marlene's custom, we took a brief break at this midpoint of the tasting while a special presentation was prepared. She appropriately dubs this a “very, very, very special Holiday surprise,” and she isn't kidding. This year, our surprise turned out to be a vertical tasting of three different years of the esteemed Vintage Ale from Fuller's of London. This is a bottle-conditioned strong ale, produced each year since 1997, and obviously intended for longer-term aging. We were

treated to samples from 2005, 2007, and 2014 to help us assess how well this beer ages. The comparison was all-the-more interesting because this beer is reformulated year-to-year in generally subtle ways, accordingly to the brewmaster's whim.



2005: A fruity-malty aroma, with a very slight note of malt vinegar though no overt sourness or acidity – just an aromatic note I found, and not inappropriate to the complex bouquet, and Drew notes gingerbread (he appears to be in full gingerbread-molasses holiday mode). The deep red color was festive. A rich malty palate flavor displayed tangy caramel and fruity-spicy ginger, with a reasonably dry finish. A magnificent 10-year-old beer aged to perfection, meriting a stunning (and deserved) rating of 4 Falcons.

2007: Aromatic essences of maple, raisins, and malt. This had a slightly lighter red-amber color than the 2005. The flavor had plenty of malt, also oxidation of

age, hop bitterness, brown sugar notes, an edge of licorice, and a lingering bitter-herbaceous aftertaste. Complex and edgy compared to the 2005, and no less impressive in how it was staring the ravages of time in the face! Less popular than the 2005, although it did have its fans, gaining a rating of 3.25 Falcons, and probably better than that.

2014: A significantly more recent vintage for comparison. The aroma displayed hops, esters, and toasty-caramel malt character, with a medium amber color suggesting either that the recipes have yielded more pale beers with time or that the aging process deepens the color, or both. This beer had a hop-driven palate in distinct contrast to its elder brothers, yet with good malt support, giving it a bit of an IPA-like profile. Overall I found it less complex and much more hop-driven than the older versions, but it was quite popular as its 3.75 Falcons rating establishes. We should hope to see how it tastes a few years down the road.

My oversimplified characterization of the 3 Fuller's Vintage Ale samples was that the 2005 was malty, the 2007 was spicy, and the 2014 was hoppy. All were terrific, and very special indeed!

Now we began the home stretch of the tasting, when the “big guns” come out. And blaze they did! From Portland, Oregon's Hair of the Dog Brewery (my vote for best brewery or beer name since Delirium Tremens) we were served “Doggie Claws Barleywine-Style Ale” from the 2009 season, at a substantial 11% ABV. This strong-ale specialty brewery was founded by Southern California native Alan Sprints, who is always good friends with the Maltose Falcons, and this beer is one of the few he brews that does not appear to be named after a person, like “Adam” or “Fred” or “Ruth.” The rich aroma of malt, oxidation of age, hops and alcohol was very powerful. There was a murky red-brown color. The flavor was rich, smooth, and intense with a palate presence like Tawny Port (a cogent observation made by my brother, Duncan Brode, enjoying his first visit to the Stuffed Sandwich for this event), and a rum-like finish noted by Drew, who also found gingerbread and molasses (clearly two of his favorite things this time of year!). The powerful flavor certainly is not for everyone, but the intensity and complexity were understandably impressive and popular, and this one was pegged

at an utterly outstanding 4.25 Falcons. Start booking your flights, and saving your money, to find this stuff worldwide. Or get it at the Stuffed Sandwich, and save yourself a lot of hassle.

Next up in our order of ever-increasing alcohol levels was the venerable Scaldis Noel from the 2011 season, brewed by the Belgian brewery Brasserie Dubuisson, located in Pipaix, Hainault province, and dating from 1769, although the very strong Noel beer was not introduced until 1991. This weighed in at a resounding 12% ABV. The aroma of caramel malt and esters shortly hinted at an even deeper malt profile. The murky red-brown color led to a rich flavor of caramel malt, with the slightest edge of mint-spice and anise, with a drying hop bitterness in the finish. Best described as malt-centered, with some complexity, as well as some fusel alcohols which might actually convince one to consume a bit less of this amazing alcoholic brew than one might otherwise be inclined to do. An impressive beer, often one of my personal favorites among the Belgian holiday beers, and rated at solid 3.5 Falcons.

Nearing the end of our course of beers, we next encountered “Santa's Little Helper” from Port Brewing in San Marcos, California. This is an Imperial Stout, which in this case had been aged in second-hand bourbon whiskey barrels. The wood-aged beer trend has been strong and impressive over the last

several years, and seems to work best with the stronger and bolder styles, so Imperial Stout seems like a natural for this, and certainly so in this 12% ABV example. Aromatically, there was ink, malt, oak, vanilla, and some alcohol, atop an appropriately totally black color – it seemed to suck the light out of the room as if it were a “black hole among beers.” Can you say Stout? A rich full body, including a caramel-vanilla flavor center, had edgy malt and burnt roast giving it some provocation. There was a fairly long and complex aftertaste dominated by bitterness and burnt flavors, as well as some wood presence. A very well-executed brew, garnering the stellar rating of 4 Falcons.



There's always a last beer to the tasting, and in this case the final beer was brewed under the auspices of the eccentric Copenhagen-based Danish brand Mikkeller, often described as a “gypsy” brewery whose beers are brewed by contract at various European breweries, notably the DeProef Brouwerij in Lochristi, near Ghent, Belgium which dates from 1996. Gypsy or not, Mikkeller has had its growth and now counts bars, bottle shops, and tasting rooms in Copenhagen and Aarhus, Denmark; Bangkok, Thailand; Reykjavik, Iceland; Seoul, South Korea; Tokyo, Japan; Barcelona, Spain; and San Francisco and San Diego, California. Recently, Mikkeller (originally the project of Mikkel Borg Bjergso and Kristian Keller, whose respective first and last names were merged to create the brewing company's name, with Keller later departing the company) has entered into an alliance with San Diego's well-regarded small ale brewery Alesmith, owned by lawyer and former award-winning homebrewer Peter Zien. Mikkeller had the typical audacity to create a beer dubbed “Big, Bad, Worse, Worst Barleywine-Style Ale” and we sampled the 2010 version, at a whopping 17.6% ABV. The complex aroma toyed with soy sauce, malt, oxidation, esters, and alcohol. The murky brown color did not distract from the rich, mouth-filling malt flavor with sour-bitter notes at the edges, leading to a sweet finish with an herbaceous quality in the aftertaste accompanied by some tannins. Disappointing to some, fascinating to the rest of us who seldom encounter beers of this strength, it merited a rating of 3 Falcons.

The best beers of the tasting? Unquestionably, the Hair of the Dog Doggie Claws Barleywine-Style Ale 2009 led the way and had the most legitimate claim to being the favorite beer of the tasting flight. Other personal favorites, which also garnered many other votes, included the Gouden Carolus Easter Ale and the 2005 Fuller's Vintage Ale. I will make Honorable Mention of the New Belgium Brewing Ben & Jerry's Salted Caramel Brownie Brown Ale, the Schlossbrauerei Au-Hakkertau Schnee Winter Festbier Doppelbock, the 2007 Fuller's Vintage Ale, the 2011 Scaldis Noel, and the 2013 Port Brewing Santa's Little Helper Imperial Stout aged in Bourbon barrels. Having that many beers noteworthy of mention is an indication of the sheer high quality of this tasting.



Our undying thanks to Marlene Samaniego and her staff at the Home of the Stuffed Sandwich for putting together such a wonderful tasting for us, once again, for the twenty-fourth time in twenty-five years!

## JOIN THE STRAND BREWERS FOR ANCHOR BREWERY BASH

Hey Maltose Falcons,

We're glad to say The Strand Brewers were awarded the 2015 Homebrew Club of the Year award, which means Anchor is hosting us to a banquet and run of their brewery on Saturday, February 13th. You've been there. Want to go again?

We are going to organize a trip to San Francisco to celebrate the event and want to invite members of the Falcons to come along for the fun.

If you want to sign up for the trip, please contact The Strand Brewers Activities Director, Jay Ankeney, at: [Jayankeney@mac.com](mailto:Jayankeney@mac.com)

Time is short, so please let him know as soon as possible.

Our hope is to arrange for a big, comfortable highway cruiser bus which will let us stop at some other breweries along the way.

And we'll be arranging a block of hotel rooms in near the Anchor Brewery where we can sleep it off.

General plans are to leave SoCal on Saturday morning and return Sunday evening.

Costs will depend on participation.

So please sign up with Jay as soon as you can.

If you have done this trip before, you know it's something that must be experienced. If you haven't, don't miss out!





**Maltose Falcons Membership Benefits:**

**10% Discount:**

---

Home Wine, Beer &  
Cheesemaking Shop  
22836 Ventura Blvd. #2  
Woodland Hills, CA 91364  
818-884-8586  
(Applies to purchases only)

Tavern Services  
18228 St.  
Northridge, CA 91325  
818-349-0287  
(Applies to CO2 and all purchases—  
except beer)

Vendome Wine & Spirits  
10600 Riverside Dr.

Toluca Lake, CA 91602  
818-766-9593  
(applies to beer only)

**30% Discount:**

---

Barbarella Bar  
2609 N. Hyperion Ave  
Los Angeles, CA 90027  
(323) 644-8000  
(applies to beer only)

**15% Discount:**

---

Ciao Cristina!  
4201 West Olive Avenue Burbank, CA 91505  
818-563-2426 (applies to beer, except happy  
hour, and food)

Join our Shop Brews on the 40-gallon pilot brewing system—and our many festivals, camp-outs and parties throughout the year!

**Show Your Card!**

All of the above benefits are only avail-able to you if your membership is current. Your membership expires on the last day of the month printed on the front of your membership card, and in the year that has been punched.

Check out one of our monthly meetings and check out our Club House.

Cost? A mere \$25 per year. For more details e-mail the membership director at [membership@maltosefalcons.com](mailto:membership@maltosefalcons.com) you can pay at the meeting, at the shop or on-line through PayPal at <http://www.maltosefalcons.com/catalog/fees>





## The Home Beer, Wine and Cheesemaking Shop

22836 Ventura Blvd #2  
Woodland Hills, CA 91364  
818-884-8586 (or) 800-559-9922

**[www.homebeerwinecheese.com](http://www.homebeerwinecheese.com)**

**The best and freshest selection of grains, hops & yeast ANYWHERE...  
...and we ship OVERNIGHT to all of Southern California!**

Business Hours:  
Mon - Fri: 11:00 AM– 7:00 PM  
Sat-Sun: 10:30 AM–5:30 PM

**SUPPORT THE SHOP THAT SUPPORTS THE MALTOSSE FALCONS!**

Try our CO2 refilling station! Fill your cylinders at the shop conveniently—for less!

Check the Web site for the latest beer-related events and brewing goodies. Everything for the dedicated brewer, wine- or cheesemaker!