

ANOTHER BOTTLE OF BEER ON THE WALL

Yves Claude, a graphic designer, is getting professional about his passion for beer.

A native Luxembourger, Yves Claude went to school in Diekirch across the street from the local brewery. When his teachers failed to capture his attention, he acquired the habit of staring out the window at the brewery and entertaining thoughts about what was happening there—a habit that continues to this day.

When he was 17, Claude drank his first beer—a Diekirch, of course. Now he keeps about 30 different brands in his kitchen, two or three bottles of each, so there are about 90 odd bottles on hand. He enjoys at least one a day “to keep the doctor away.” He doesn’t have a favourite, but if you press him, he’ll tell you he prefers white beer, a Belgian Rochefort.

Claude went to university to study graphic design and many years later took a job with ArcelorMittal, where he has been for about 15 years. He stayed close to home throughout the years and his love of and devotion to the first beer he ever tasted has grown into a genuine passion.

Around 2001, there was a merger between the Diekirch and Mousel breweries and, having established himself as something of a beer guru, Claude was asked to help fill out a collection of related memorabilia. He embarked on a mission to find all of the beer brands in Luxembourg bought by Mousel after World War II. Every week, he visited the national archives to do research. “I found breweries that had closed, and this led to more research about more breweries,” he says. “I found connections between breweries. I found contradictory stories and stories about three that had been destroyed, which made me want to know even more. I created a map of all the breweries.”

MY OTHER LIFE

In the midst of his research, Claude started a simple collection beginning with a bottle opener from the 1930s that his grandfather had given him. By 2011, he had the biggest private collection of its kind and topped it off by buying an old brewery close to the Belgian-Luxembourg border. The facility had shuttered its doors in the 1960s and no one had entered the space until Claude walked in about 50 years later. “Everything was still there,” he recalls. “All the materials, the wall machines, the tools, the vehicles, everything dates back to pre-war.” He keeps his cache in a hangar, which he hopes to move into a museum one day soon.

Currently, there are 150 beer museums in Europe. He hopes his will be in the top ten, offering visitors an opportunity to buy every kind of beer produced in the region. “There are six breweries with 32 kinds of beer, 27 Belgian and 5 Lux, with 50 labels,” he says. “That’s really crazy!” In addition, Claude hopes to serve regional Luxembourg cuisine. “You can see who created a beer museum,” he says. “If it is a brewer, you will see brewery machines, if it’s a collector, there will be ad merchandise. This museum will be both—and a lot more.” <



YVES CLAUDE
Mousel memorabilia are part of the Musée brassicole des deux Luxembourg's collection
www.luxem.beer