

# The RARE BEER CLUB

## YAZOO BREWING COMPANY NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

### MONTEUR DE HOUBLON (RBC EXCLUSIVE)

Yazoo Brewing Co.'s founder and brewmaster, Linus Hall, got his brewing start in a familiar fashion, purchasing a homebrewing kit from an ad in the back pages of Rolling Stone back in 1993. Linus was, as he phrased it, "a cash-poor college student living in an old farmhouse in Virginia, and brewing my own beer seemed a little less illegal than the pot-growing operation my other housemates were involved in." We're typing this from California; we get where he's coming from. His homebrewing habit continued after moving with his wife Lila back to Mississippi following college, and when the couple relocated to Nashville in 1996.

Fast-forward a bit, and Yazoo Brewing Co. opened up in Nashville in October of 2003, with a keg-only lineup of staple beers like Yazoo Pale Ale, Spring Wheat, Dos Perros (a Mexican-style beer, featuring Perle and Saaz hops) and Onward Stout. They quickly

established strong local support for their draft beer, and their Hefeweizen entered regular rotation after picking up a gold medal at the Great American Beer Festival in 2004, just a year after Yazoo opened.

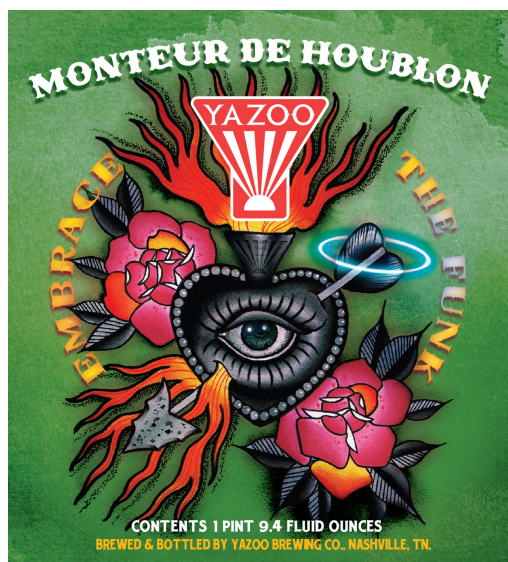
Bottling began in 2005, though much of their

production (and particularly, some of the low-volume special releases in their Embrace The Funk lineup) remain keg-only. 2009 saw their release of Yazoo Sue, "Tennessee's first ever legal high-gravity ale," a delicious 9.2% ABV beer emphasizing

cherrywood-smoked malt. (The above should also give a sense of some of the additional hurdles along the way, as it required them to get a distillery license.) In only six years Yazoo outgrew its initial home base, and 2010 brought the purchase of a new brewing facility (including a 40-barrel brewhouse) in The Gulch, a historic neighborhood in Nashville between Music Row and downtown.

Of particular note: Yazoo started up their Embrace The Funk series in mid-2012, bringing in local writer and wild-beer specialist, Brandon Jones, who runs a popular website by the same name (check it out at [www.embracethefunk.com](http://www.embracethefunk.com)). The program—from which this month's Rare Beer Club exclusive offering was born!—allows Brandon to focus on (no surprise) wild yeasts, funky bacteria, and a whole range of barrel treatments. Some highlights there include, just to give a little sense of what's ahead: their Citraluxe, a French-style Biere de Garde using Citra and Galaxy hops and a range of souring elements; and Spilled Vines, a blend with three different wine-barrel-aged beers at its core, employing Port and Cynthiana red-wine barrels, a bit of blackberries and Merlot grapes, Belgian Candi sugar, and lord knows what else.

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### SPECIFICATIONS

#### Style

Barrel-Aged Dry-Hopped Saison

#### Alcohol By Volume

6.7%

#### Serving Temperature

45–52° F

#### Suggested Glassware

Tulip, Teku or Chardonnay Glass

These were both draft-only, with Spilled Vines being offered as a Yazoo taproom exclusive—which hopefully gives a sense of how lucky we were to get one of these beers bottled for the Club!

This month, we're thrilled to offer up Yazoo's Monteur de Houblon as a Rare Beer Club exclusive offering. Brandon's put together a really magnificent beer for us: a special barrel-aged, dry-hopped version of their saison, featuring Citra, Mosaic and Amarillo hops. This is the first time this version has ever been released—and it's only available through The Rare Beer Club. We love how this BA saison turned out, and we expect you're going to dig it.

If you're in the Nashville area, be sure to swing by Yazoo's brand-new location—which they just opened up about a month or two ago. Having outgrown their downtown Nashville spot, they recently built their own facility in Madison, Tennessee, about 15 minutes away, on a 7-acre plot nestled along on the Cumberland River. The new site's got way more parking, great views from the patio, and a new canning line in the works. Learn more at [yazoobrew.com](http://yazoobrew.com).

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## MONTEUR DE HOUBLON

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One of our featured beers this month is an exclusive release from Yazoo Brewing Co., made special for our Rare Beer Club members. Monteur de Houblon is a barrel-aged, dry-hopped saison that features a higher-hopped version of the brewery's saison as its base, aged for 10-ish months in neutral white oak barrels that had previously held the brewery's grisette. This beer uses Tennessee oats and wheat (from north of Nashville), and has a bit of the

brewery's foudre-aged sour blonde blended in (around 20% of the total). It's dry-hopped with Citra, Mosaic and Amarillo, and even employs some tangerine peel. The final result is a complex, deftly composed barrel-aged saison that's dry, zippy and bright—a perfect beer for summer.

This is well-hazed saison, with a strong depth of color and very finely bubbled foam. Creamy off-white bubbles, strongly retained with exceptional lacing when you give the glass a tilt. A huge impact of tart saison in the aromatics, providing intense grapefruit and candied lemon, lots of crisp lime and other tree fruit, along with dense herbaceous character and underlying touches of oak. (The barrel character is soft, nicely integrated, and provides some welcome secondary structure throughout this beer.) There's mouthwatering lambic-like funk present: subtle and salty and highly refreshing. Overall, first impressions of this saison are that of an especially serious tart beer, with overlays of vibrant, herbaceous, subtly tropical hops.

We absolutely love barrel-aged saisons here at The Rare Beer Club, and Yazoo's Monteur de Houblon is one of the tastiest we've been lucky enough to sample. Yazoo's sours have long been a favorite of our tasting panels, and longstanding RBC members may recall their stellar Vérifiez Vos Fruits! we featured a few years back. This saison is another perfect example of what Brandon Jones and company at Yazoo manage to bring to the table when it comes to sour beers: super complex, brilliantly citrusy and funky, with firm salinity and a well-layered acidic structure. A modest carbonation and welcoming oak-barrel character provide a great framework for digging in, with subtle

oak and almond and a touch of light tannins, while a core saison framework of white pepper and sourdough add more layers to what's often kind of lambic-like in overall expression. This is brilliantly complex, refreshing and lean, with tons of tree fruit and peppery saison notes and subtle barrel-aging taking things to the next level.

There's just a ton of things to dig into with Monteur de Houblon. Allowing this to warm up yields further layers of fruit: tart tangerine, bitter grapefruit pith, and some subtle grassiness and herbal character from that dry-hopping. The Citra and Mosaic fit in seamlessly with the citrus-focused acidity, providing additional notes of grapefruit and tart passion fruit and mango elements that take that tart citrus into the stratosphere. We're super thrilled to be able to offer this saison as an exclusive release to our Rare Beer Club members, and we hope you love this beer as much as we do. Definitely one worth sharing with your favorite people.

### AGING & PAIRING NOTES:

Brandon from Yazoo subscribes to the 'drink one, save one' philosophy, and given the dry-hopping here, we would encourage folks to enjoy a bottle of this one as fresh as possible to get the most out of that aspect. That said... a year or so in the cellar will take this beer to a whole other space, and it's certainly sturdy enough for some cellaring time. We suggest you hit up your sour beer go-tos as far as pairing options go. We're thinking a variety of creamy cheeses as smooth counterpoints, or fresh seafood dosed with lemon and butter.

# The RARE BEER CLUB



DOVETAIL BREWERY  
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

## VIGNETTE (RBC EXCLUSIVE)

While Dovetail's founders Bill Wesselink and Hagen Dost are both from Chicago, they first met while working on their Master Brewer Certifications at Doemens Institute in Munich. Sharing an appreciation for the traditional brewing methods of Europe, as well as the finer points of high-quality beer culture, the two decided to combine their talents and launched Dovetail Brewery back in Chicago in June of 2016. As they put it: "We decided to join our talents and shared vision into a stronger form, like a dovetail joint. Our goal is to produce beer of the highest quality, similar to the level of craftsmanship found in fine woodworking." Not long after opening, Dovetail was named one of *BeerAdvocate's* Best New U.S. Breweries.

Dovetail Brewery has built a highly customized brewhouse toward these ends, making use of Hagen's previous experience as a mechanical engineer. Their setup includes a custom-built and -designed coolship for traditionally cooling wort, a

custom water processing plant and malt handling system, and maturation tanks made from reconstructed stainless steel dairy tanks. Their copper kettle is itself over a century old, acquired from the millennium-plus-old Weiherstephan brewery in Germany. Dovetail sources their specialty malt from Franconia, while their raw wheat and fresh fruit additions come from farmers within 150 miles of their brewery in Chicago. Noble hops are used exclusively. Lagers and hefeweizens both receive a double-decoction mash for its added benefits in flavor and head retention, while lambic-style releases are turbid mashed for better yeast complexity and allowed to rest for up to 24 hours in their custom coolship, to inoculate with wild yeasts native to Chicago. Throughout all the processes, Bill and Hagen aim to combine the very best of traditional and modern brewing.

The options on-site strongly reflect the brewers' respect for traditional European styles, with German classics like Helles, Vienna, Altbier, Pilsner and Rauchbier. Their Kriek is fermented for over 2 ½ years in the Belgian tradition—using 2,300 pounds of Balaton cherries sourced from Michigan.

Dovetail's Framboise and Pomme are both spontaneously fermented for up to 10 months atop Michigan-sourced raspberries and apples, respectively. Their draft-only Petit Gueuze is a particularly limited blend of one- and two-year-old batches, while the more experimental Xo2 Wild Table Beer combines Dovetail Lager with spontaneously fermented lambic-style beer. They even offer radlers—including a particularly intriguing blend of their Dovetail Rauchbier blended 70/30 with Filbert's Draft Root Beer (also made in Chicago).

As a Rare Beer Club exclusive offering this month, we've managed to secure bottles of the brewery's Vignette: a celebration of the brewery's first three years in operation.

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## SPECIFICATIONS

### Style

Spontaneously Fermented Blended Sour Ale (lambic/gueuze style, aged up to 3 years in oak)

### Alcohol By Volume

6.5%

### Serving Temperature

45–52° F

### Suggested Glassware

Tulip, Teku or Chardonnay Glass

**DOVETAIL VIGNETTE**

Our first 3 years in a glass. A snapshot of ten select spontaneously-fermented barrels, blended in tribute to nature, time and our growing labor of love.

750 ML / 1 PINT 9.4 FL. OZ • 6.5% ALC. BY VOL.

Dovetail's Vignette combines ten selected spontaneously fermented barrels that vary in age, up to 3 years, in the tradition of Belgian Gueuze. It's a perfect showcase of what the folks over at Dovetail have been up to, and we're pumped to be able to offer it exclusively through the Rare Beer Club. We really dig what these folks are up to, and definitely swing by their spot should you happen to be in Chicago. They're open seven days a week, with food trucks and frequent special releases, with tours every Saturday at 11am. More at [dovetailbrewery.com](http://dovetailbrewery.com).

## VIGNETTE

As one of two exclusive Rare Beer Club options this month, we're pleased to offer members the first taste of Dovetail Vignette—the brewery's inaugural take on a Belgian gueuze. Made with a turbid mash and spontaneously fermented in the brewery's custom coolship—using local wild yeasts native to Chicago, for an entirely unique fermentation profile—Vignette's a blend of ten specially selected barrels from the brewery's first three years in operation. It's a brilliantly handled take on

blended Belgian-style lambic, with its various components aged in oak barrels for up to three years, and the final blend proves to be exactly what we're looking for from the style: especially nuanced, vibrantly tart, and impeccably drinkable and dry. The folks at Dovetail have been doing amazing stuff with their sour program, and there's simply no better beer for getting a clear sense of what Bill and Hagen and company are capable of.

Dovetail Vignette pours a deeply honeyed golden color approaching orange, with a modest coverage of off-white foam capping things. The aromatics are full-on gueuze from the start, with tart lemons and grapefruit, a mélange of sourdough and expressive funk, and just a bit of salinity around the edges. Hints of tangerine, and very subtle oaky vanilla from its time in barrels. It's incredibly well blended for a U.S. take on gueuze, and even moreso for a brewery that's barely been open three years. It would hold its own beside some of our fav Belgians.

The mouthfeel on this is phenomenal—modestly carbonated, for just a lift of bubbles, with assertive core acidity steering

things. Lots of vibrantly tart fresh lemons and assorted citrus, with complex tartness and a toasty underpinning of subtle white pepper and sourdough. It could very well pass for traditional Belgian gueuze at first sip, firmly funky and lemony and sour, but those secondary notes of sourdough and pepper, even some limes and tangerine, bring Vignette into a very unique expression of blended, spontaneously fermented beer. It avoids an onslaught of sourness in favor of the superb drinkability of great gueuze, while a subtle blend of less-traditional citrus character and yeast presence fits in seamlessly here. A huge success from the Dovetail folks, and a perfect way to celebrate their first three years.

### AGING & PAIRING NOTES:

This should continue to age gracefully over the course of another year or two (at least). For food pairings, this should work nicely beside the same suggestions we provided for Yazoo's Monteur de Houblon: some creamy and/or funky cheeses, buttery seafood—but especially the traditional option of mussels and Belgian-style frites.

## BEYOND THE BOTTLE: THE SELTZER MONSTER

BY KEN WEAVER

Hard seltzer has been making a lot of noise this summer... This segment of bubbly alcoholic water has seen a 193% increase year-over-year in a recent Nielsen survey, and some industry analysts predict it'll reach a \$1-billion industry by the end of the year. U.S. Today (admittedly not the most immediate barometer for cutting-edge beverage trends...) named it "the boozy beverage of summer 2019." Your mileage may vary... But White Claw memes abound, and I have spent a nontrivial part of my week sketching out seltzer monsters for Massive Potions.

It's well outside the core Rare Beer Club wheelhouse—but it's been kinda hard to ignore.

I did a roundup of hard seltzer for my column at *All About Beer Magazine* a few years back, to the degree that I'm pretty good with never having to drink another one. But I'll presume that the segment has improved at least a little bit from those earliest days, and I'm curious to hear from Rare Beer Club members who've ventured to hard-seltzer land. Have you actually tried anything interesting in this space? Or is it all nostalgic sugar water, masquerading as a health-conscious option to pull in the light-beer crowd? Chime in on Twitter via [@RareBeerClub](https://twitter.com/RareBeerClub).

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