



AMERICA'S TOP 100 WINE RESTAURANTS

Birch & Barley: In addition to a top-notch wine selection, this restaurant is famed for its collection of 555 artisanal beers.

Modern American cuisine by Chef Kyle Bailey and Pastry Chef Tiffany Maclsaac is accompanied by an unparalleled collection of 555 artisanal craft-brewed beers, most of which are in constant rotation.

Destination Bottles:

Trappist Westvleteren 12 (Belgian Trappist Ale; Brouwerij Westvleteren, Belgium), Mikkeller Beer Geek Brunch Weasel (Imperial Oatmeal Stout; Nøgne Ø, Norway) & Three Floyd's Dark Lord (Russian Imperial Stout; Three Floyd's Brewing Co, IN)

In addition to an excellent wine list, Beer Director Greg Engert curates a menu comprised of five authentic cask ales, 50 drafts and 500 bottles, with specials rotating in constantly.

Q&A with Greg Engert

While vino is strong at Birch & Barley, Greg Engert is helping to highlight beer, offering 555 selections and beer-and-food pairings for the sixcourse tasting menu.

Wine Enthusiast: Was there an epiphany moment for you when it came to pairing food and beer?

Greg Engert: It really happened when I visited Belgium. Two restaurants I ate at over there really blew my mind when it came to beer pairings. One [restaurant] was T'Hommelhof, they cook with beer and serve the food with the beers of the West Flemish countryside, and the other was De Drie Fonteinen, a restaurant located right next to a lambic producer, which they pair with the food.

WE: What beers are you loving right now?

GE: Hanssens Oude Kriek, a traditional Belgian lambic. This spontaneously fermented beer is aged for one year in oak casks, then whole, fresh cherries are added and the beer ages for an additional year or so. Also the Founders Canadian Breakfast Stout, an imperial stout aged in Bourbon barrels that previously held maple syrup.

WE: What's your favorite pairing that you and chef Bailey have put together at Birch & Barley?

GE: Probably the crudo of mackerel with strained yogurt, yuzu, cucumber and dill, which we pair with a Saison Athene from Saint Somewhere Brewing Company. It's a Belgian-style saison that is light and fresh, with yeast-driven citric and spicy aromas. The acidity balances against the briny flavors of the mackerel, while the citrus complements the yuzu and the herbal-spicy-floral aromatics dovetail with the cucumber and dill.