

Ich Burp ein Berliner

I was trying to pinpoint why all things beer were starting to lose their luster these last few weeks and I realized it was more the cumulative effect of having punished my liver across various continents that probably did me in. As I am writing this I will have gone five full days without a beer and the enthusiasm is beginning to perk up again. The assault on internal beer filtering organs kicked into overdrive in late October as a pilgrimage to Berlin compelled me to Germany, following in the footsteps of



great men that labeled themselves...donuts. How much damage could I really do? We spent our first night in Frankfurt which is not great in terms of beer variety, although they have a few local brands that include a schwartzbier or two. The city is actually known for its apple-wine – which despite its name is roughly 5% and tastes like dry cider – I wasn't too enthused after visiting a couple "apple-wine bars". They do have a historic section of town which like most historic old towns in Germany was completely rebuilt to look "old" after the massive bombings of WWII. If you are in Frankfurt head to this old part of town as it is bar central and the best bet for decent beer selection (Andechs for instance). Berlin was the next stop and is again not a big brew-tropolis despite the fact it is the birthplace and home to the Berliner-weisse style, of which there are at least three remaining

producers in the area. In the Eastern section you can find the Weissebierstuben which serves Schultheiss Berlinerweisse in traditional goblets (www.prostmahlzeit.de/altberlinerwbs). They will always push red or green syrups and if you want to know what woodruff tastes like go for it, and if like me you want to taste the beer by itself don't be surprised if they look at you weird. Pick out the colorful straw they expect you to drink out of, tell them you're a donut and do a sprockets-like dance – they'll understand. If in this part of town there are a couple of other good bars including Zum Nussbaum, a charming old house (again completely reconstructed) that reminded me of a



small English pub that served Landmans beers including a very nice Schwartz. Another brewpub within walking distance of these two is Georgbrau which seemed very commercial and had two beers, a lager and dunkel that both boasted plenty of diacetyl. Add to that their prices were relatively high. Not too far away but a long walk (or short subway ride) there is a decent brewpub called Brauereie Mitte in a shopping mall that was a little surrealistically traditional think looking one way and seeing a traditional Oktoberfest decked bier hall and turning to see shoppers coming up an escalator. They had great beer, especially the fest which was malty and ruby in color (most breweries make fest beers for Oktoberfest). We tried to hit one of the last historic standing beer halls in town, the Letzen Instanz (which actually hadn't been rebuilt) but at 6pm on Tuesday we were told they were full if we had no reservations –

only place that happened by the way. Another brewpub, Lemke's we didn't make it to, although around the corner from it we stopped in Deponie 3, a bar under bricked railroad tracks in a space that used to house T-62 tanks for the East German Army (www.deponie3.de). OK so maybe there were a few more places to drink beer in Berlin than I had originally accounted for, but that I guess is in the context of what we know in the US, because compared to other destinations in Germany Berlin is as mundane as Houston. If you are going to the continent do some research, a good online source I found is www.europeanbeerguide.net. Or feel free to contact me.

- Brother Gavin McBeerstalker