That Was a Very Good Beer

ODD COUPLINGS FROM A BEER SOMMELIER
(YES, THERE IS SUCH A THING)

At the très French Café d’Alsace in Manhattan, Aviram Turge-
man—one of the country’s first beer sommeliers—advises
diners on pairing gourmet brews with haute cuisine. (Coors
Light befits a burger, but one avoids the Silver Bullet when
choucroute garnie is served.) Here are five of his favorite food-
friendly bottles and suitably fancy entrées to drink them with.

Deus, Brut des Flandres
“Brewed in Belgium and sent
to Champagne to age in the
bottle, this bière de Cham-
pagne is delicate and com-
plex, with a lot of citrus peel,
herbes de Provence, rosemary
and lavender, and a creamy
finish. It’s the perfect comple-
ment to our saumon fumé,
which is a salmon fillet
smoked with hickory and then
finished on the grill.”

Wostyntje
“This Belgian mustard beer
starts with some slightly sweet
fruitiness on the palate, and it
ends very tart. I pair it with
quenelle de brochet, a pike
mousse seasoned with tarra-
gon. The tartness balances
the fatty consistency of the
mousse, and the mustard
seed in the beer highlights
the tarragon.”

Aecht Schlenkerla Rauchbier
“This is a dark, intense beer.
The malt is smoked with
Bavarian beech wood, which
lends it touches of smoked
ham and bacon. There’s a lot
of malt and vanilla going on.
It’s good with strongly fla-
vored dishes like choucroute
garnie, an Alsatian classic
made with sausage, smoked
pork and sauerkraut.”

3 Monts
“I serve this French bière de
garde with cuisses de gren-
ouilles (frogs’ legs) sautéed
with garlic, parsley and fresh
tomato. The beer’s acidity cuts
through the butter, and its
herbal notes highlight the gar-
lic and parsley in the dish.”

Rodenbach, Flemish Sour Ale
“Rodenbach is the only brewer
in Belgium that ages beer in
oak, and this is a very good
food beer. It smells like green
apples and cranberries, and its
tart finish balances well with
the fattiness of a dish like la
moelle, which is bone marrow
with sea salt and toast.”