



February 2017

Life on the Ridge

A Social Publication Exclusively for the Residents of The Ridge at Hiwan

MEET
ELLIE COTHRAN
OF AFTON LANE



A Glass of the Best Beer in the World: Westvleteren XII

A "BEERCATION" of a lifetime

By Telluride Lane Residents **Diana and Michael Kearns**

As REALTORS, we get to visit faraway lands like Pine, Idaho Springs and Denver, with an occasional conference in Las Vegas. As owners of the Stapleton Tap House, our craft beer bar in Denver, we visit breweries throughout Colorado. So, when we learned of a river barge "beercation" that would take us through Holland and Belgium we decided that it would be the perfect choice for Michael's 50th birthday.

After our overnight flight from Denver to Amsterdam we took the 20 minute train ride to our hotel in Haarlem. In addition to being a wonderful small

town to explore, Haarlem provided an ideal base station for day trips to Amsterdam (don't miss the canal cruise - Alkmaar where the cheese museum staff taught us to pronounce Gouda like locals with American accents - its actually "how-da") and to the windmills in Zaanse Schans where it seemed that every store claimed to be a "museum" (the Bakery Museum, the Grocery Museum, even the "Likeur-en Distilleermuseum").

Breakfast Saturday was at the outdoor Haarlem Market (held in the Grote Markt square since the Middle Ages) and then we headed to Amsterdam to board the barge "Fiep" and meet up with our fellow travelers and Mike and Ruth, our guides from Bon Beer Voyage. After a walking tour of the city we arrived at our first beer destination, the Brouwerij "Tij" located in a windmill (well, technically in the building next door).



Our Host at De Struise



Evening in Bruges



Photobombing the Westvleteren XII



Morning from the Deck of the Fiep



Diana and Michael at La Trappe

On the first full day of our trip we boarded a luxury bus for a visit to a cheese farm where we impressed no one with our ability to pronounce Gouda and then the Brouwcafé de Molen. The day's highlight was our visit to The Koningshoeven brewery in Dordrecht. Founded in 1884 and located within the Abdij Onze Lieve Vrouw van Koningshoeven, it is one of just eleven Trappist breweries in the world and the makers of the La Trappe beers. After a tour, beer tasting, and a hearty lunch we headed back to the barge.

Day two took us into Belgium with our arrival in Antwerp and a walking tour of the city with a local character named Eddie. We were on our own for the afternoon, so we headed to the zoo for a picnic lunch of bread, cheese and meat and then some refreshments at Bier Central - over 300 Belgian beers and a glossy magazine (The Beer Encyclopedia) that doubles as your beer menu. After more exploring and a gourmet dinner back on the barge, we headed out with new friends to explore the city at night - and a bit more beer tasting!

With daily excursions to Dendermonde, Ghent, Bruges, and Brussels, the story of our trip could fill this entire magazine. Since the editor would not allow us that much space, here are a few more highlights:

- Our private tasting at La Brasserie Malheur (the Malheur Brewery) where our guide Johann taught us the proper way to pour a Belgian beer and then gave us free reign over the taps to pour our own beers.
- A visit to the draught horses at Brouwerij 't IJ Palm (imagine the Budweiser Clydesdales but transporting better tasting beer) followed by a beer-paired gourmet dinner in Palm's Diepensteyn castle.
- Attending one of the day's services with the monks at Saint Sixtus Abbey, followed by lunch and glasses of Westvleteren XII - our second Trappist brewery and considered by many to be the best beer in the world.
- Guided tours of Ghent and Bruges (in the rain) and tastings with the brewers at De Struise Brouwers and De Dolle Brouwers.
- ...and we haven't even had a chance to talk about the Belgian chocolates, the frites, or the amazing architecture we visited!

All in all, it truly was the beercation of a lifetime, yet we are already talking to some of our fellow travelers about a reunion in Colorado, Oregon, or some far away land with great beer. If this adventure sounds exciting to you, check out Bon Beer Voyage's other trips at www.bonbeer.com - or give us a call and we can tell you more over a beer closer to home at the Evergreen Tap House, Lariat Lodge Brewing, or El Rancho!

Diana and Michael Kearns are Ridge residents and REALTORS at RE/MAX Alliance in Denver and Evergreen. They are also owners of the Stapleton Tap House in Denver. They would love to hear from you to discuss real estate or craft beer - give them a call at 303-598-2076 or email info@kearnsteam.com.



If you have "Travel Tales" that you would like to share, please let us know: Tim.Grace@N2Pub.com.