Supporting Statement – Alsatian Pilsner Style Proposal

About Us

La Cité des Brasseurs (https://lacitedesbrasseurs.fr) is a collective dedicated to the preservation and promotion of Alsatian brewing culture. The group brings together historians, beer specialists, and professional brewers.

Its activities include historical research, publications, podcasts, and conferences focused on Alsatian beer heritage. The collective is also involved in the development of a museum project dedicated to brewing culture in the Strasbourg–Schiltigheim area.

Rationale for Style Recognition

Alsace, along with Northern France, represents one of the oldest and most historically significant brewing regions in the country, with documented brewing activity dating back to the 13th century.

It has long been the leading beer-producing region in France and remains a key center of both brewing and hop cultivation, particularly known for traditional varieties such as Strisselspalt.

Alsatian brewers played a significant role in the developement of brewing culture in France and abroad during the late 19th ans early 20th centuries (e.g : Charles-Louis Moritz from *Fabrica Moritz Barcelona*, Emile Bieckert from *Cerveza Bieckert* in Argentina, Michael Goetz from *Goetz Brewing Company* in USA).

Despite this strong identity, Alsatian pale lagers are not currently recognized as a distinct style in major international guidelines and are often grouped under broader German categories.

However, both historical and contemporary brewing practices in the region suggest a distinct interpretation of the pilsner tradition.

Gastronomic Context of the Alsatian Pilsner

Alsace has a strong and distinctive culinary identity, with traditional dishes such as *Baeckeoffe*, *choucroute*, and *tarte flambée*, which differ from neighboring German cuisine despite historical connections.

Alsatian cuisine is characterized by well-defined flavors that are never bland, often featuring a delicate use of mild spices and subtle sweet-and-savory balance. Ingredients such as coriander, juniper, cinnamon, mild mustard, and sweet vinegar (e.g., Melfor) are commonly used.

The Alsatian Pilsner complements this culinary tradition through its balance of dryness, floral hop character, and rounded bitterness, making it particularly well suited to pairing with regional dishes.

Historical Context of the Alsatian Pilsner

The Alsatian Pilsner reflects the unique historical context of the region, which shifted between German and French governance multiple times between 1870 and 1950.

As a result, it incorporates influences from German and Czech brewing traditions while developing its own regional identity.

This identity is expressed through :

-the use of local hop varieties
-specific brewing practices (including decoction mashing)
-a characteristic balance between malt, bitterness, and floral hop expression

Historically, beers referred to as "Strasbourg beer" were already produced in the mid-19th century, notably by breweries such as Schutzenberger. Adversiting for the Fischer Brewery or the Schutzenberger brewery in 1912 during German period include the phrase « *Ersatz für Pilsener* » (replacement the Pilsner). The use of the term "Pils" in Alsace dates back at least to 1927, with Meteor Brewery, indicating a long-standing regional adaptation of the style. During the 1950s and 1960s, most Alsatian breweries produced pale lagers corresponding to what is here described as the Alsatian Pilsner style, prior to the wave of industrial consolidation that reshaped the brewing landscape in the late 1960s.
Two beer festivals, in particular, celebrate Alsatian beer (including Alsatian Pilsner) : Schiltigheim (since 1898, The Messti) and Saverne (more recent).

Historical Reference

"The golden-blonde beer of Strasbourg is a local creation that must be preserved, and the ambition of our brewers should aim for increasing refinement while maintaining its original character."
— Charles Kleinknecht, Director of Perle Brewery, 1933

Selected References (English)

• Alsace: Europe's Great Forgotten Beer Culture, by Will Hawkes, BeerAdvocate, 2019
• The French Pilsner of Alsace, by Ryan Pachmayer, Zymurgy / Homebrewers Association, 2025
• A survivor over four centuries – Brasserie Meteor in Hochfelden, Alsace, France, by Anaïs Lecoq, Good beer Hunting, 2024
• In search of the Alsatian Pilsner, by Pat Woodward, PatsPint, 2025
• Alsatian Pilsner, by Jack Horzempa, Morebeer, 2024

Appendixes

Figure 1 – Adversiting for Schützenberger Brewery in 1912 with the mention « Ersatz für Pilsener », in Freie Presse Elsass-Lothringen, during german period.



Figure 2 – Meteor brewery label referencing "Pils", for the first time, ca. 1930



Figure 3 – Ancre Pils label from Esperance Brewery (Schiltigheim), designed for international export, ca. 1950



Figure 4 – Fischer and Meteor brand with Pils reference, ca. 2024





Contributors

Hervé Marziou,
Zythologist and Co-founder, La Cité des Brasseurs
Maxence Creusat,
Brewing Historian specializing in archival research and brewing artifacts, Co-founder, La Cité des Brasseurs
Patrick Gauger,
Master Brewer and Brewing consultant

