

The RARE BEER CLUB

ABBAYE DE SCOURMONT BIÈRES DE CHIMAY CHIMAY, BELGIUM

GRANDE RÉSERVE BARREL FERMENTED 2018 (RBC EXCLUSIVE)

The monks of the Abbey of Scourmont at Chimay are members of the Order of Cistercians of the Strict Observance, commonly referred to as Trappists. They follow the Rule of Saint Benedict, which dates back to the 6th century, and derive the name “Cistercians” from the monastery of Citeaux, established in Burgundy in the 12th century. Devoted to a life of service to God, these monks sustain themselves through manual labor, enabling them to assist those in need. While their traditional work focused on farming, over time they have expanded into small-scale industries, primarily in the food and agricultural sectors.

For centuries, beer brewing has been



a tradition in the countries of northern Europe. In the summer of 1850, a small group of monks settled on the rugged Scourmont Plateau near Chimay, Belgium. Through immense effort, they established a Cistercian abbey and worked tirelessly to transform the region’s barren soil into productive farmland. Over time, they built a farm around the monastery, which was both beautiful and modest, followed by the creation of a cheese-making facility and a brewery.

Chimay exemplifies what it means to be a true Heritage Brand. Global recognition isn’t earned simply through longevity—it comes from steadfast dedication to core principles across generations. As an

official Trappist brewery and dairy, Chimay’s beer and cheese production has been overseen by the monks of Scourmont Abbey for more than a century. Remarkably, nearly 90% of its profits are donated to charity, reflecting its enduring commitment to both quality and purpose.

GRANDE RÉSERVE BARREL FERMENTED 2018

While many of us have enjoyed Chimay’s exceptional blue-label Grande Réserve in the past, their Barrel Fermented vintage releases

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SPECIFICATIONS

Style
Belgian Dark Strong Ale fermented & aged in French Oak, American Oak, and Whisky Barrels
Alcohol By Volume
10.5%
Serving Temperature
52–59° F
Suggested Glassware
Chalice, Tulip, Snifter, or Teku Glass

are truly special and hard to find. Each year since 2015, Chimay has taken a portion of their Grande Réserve and fermented it again in barrels – the type of which varies each year: Brandy, Whisky, Armagnac, Rum, etc. This elevates the beer’s flavor as well as its alcohol, making for a unique one-off beer capable of extended aging.

The Chimay Grande Réserve was originally brewed as a Christmas Ale by the Monks at Abbaye de Scourmont. The barrel fermented version of Grande Réserve takes this classic brew to new heights with a unique process of triple fermentation (tank, barrel, and bottle) and extended barrel aging. For this 2018 special release, Chimay Grande Réserve Barrel Fermented showcases a harmonious fusion of its signature character with the nuances of oak and whisky. Specifically, the aging process incorporates 34% French oak, 41% American oak, and 25% whisky barrels. The result is a masterful balance of smoothness and strength, highlighting the unique interplay of these elements. A favorite among beer aficionados, the standard blue-label Chimay is already a go-to for cigar pairings, but this barrel fermented and aged version elevates the experience even further.

Last winter, we had the good fortune of making a small number of bottles of this exceptional 2018 vintage available to our Rare Beer Club members via a special offer – at the time, these were the only remaining bottles of this vintage in the country. Recently, when the importer revealed they were able to bring in an allocation for us that had been maturing in the Abbaye de Scourmont’s cellar for over four years, we immediately jumped at the chance. We’re excited to feature this remarkable offering as a very special release this month to all our Rare Beer Club members.

This edition of Grande Réserve pours a deep brown hue, reminiscent of rich maple syrup, topped with a light tan foam that, despite its high ABV, dissipates into a persistent lacing along the glass. Aromas of rich caramel and brown sugar dominate, complemented by notes of oak, dark fruit, and a subtle sweetness from the whisky barrels. The whisky influence enhances the already outstanding base quadrupel-style ale, adding depth and warmth.

The mouthfeel is rich and full, balanced by delicate, fine carbonation typical of Belgian ales. Light effervescence

offsets the robust dark malts, sweet whisky, and oak flavors infused with vanilla. As the beer warms, vibrant notes of almond, vanilla, and warming whisky emerge, along with a touch of tannins that provide structure. A subtle burnt-sugar note adds complexity, keeping the flavors balanced from start to finish. This barrel-fermented and barrel-aged release is a stunning reinterpretation of a classic Belgian strong ale.

AGING & PAIRING NOTES:

Given the 10.5% ABV and Chimay’s reliability, the Chimay Grande Réserve Barrel Fermented 2018 vintage should continue to age gracefully in one’s cellar for a number of years. We recommend drinking now as the holidays are approaching. The winter holiday dinner table filled with roasted turkeys, hams, rib roasts and all the trimmings makes for the perfect pairing. We’d also include caramel pecan pie, sticky toffee pudding, and Biscoff Trifle for dessert. Cheers!

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The RARE BEER CLUB



SCHLOSS EGGENBERG
VORCHDORF, AUSTRIA

SAMICHLAUS CLASSIC 2023

The history of Brauerei Schloss Eggenberg is steeped in centuries of brewing tradition, rooted in its picturesque location in the Salzkammergut region of northern Austria. Its story dates back to at least the 10th century, with records suggesting brewing activities were already taking place on the site during this time. The brewery as it stands today is intricately tied to Schloss Eggenberg, a castle that has become synonymous with its legacy.

Early brewing records indicate that the area around Schloss Eggenberg was known for producing beer, likely catering to local communities



and religious establishments, dating back to the 10th century. The Eggenberg Castle, which houses the brewery, was constructed in its current form in the 14th century. It served as a focal point of the region, blending aristocratic heritage with practical agricultural and brewing functions. The current iteration of the brewery came into prominence in 1681 when it was purchased by the Stöhr family. The family began a legacy of brewing excellence that continues today, now under the stewardship of the ninth generation.

By the 19th century, Schloss Eggenberg had grown into one of Austria's most

respected breweries. It embraced modernization while retaining its commitment to traditional brewing methods, particularly the art of lagering, for which it became internationally recognized. The brewery has garnered acclaim for producing unique, high-quality beers such as the iconic Samichlaus, one of the strongest lagers in the world. First brewed in Switzerland and later adopted by Schloss Eggenberg, Samichlaus is a prime example of the brewery's ability to innovate while

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SPECIFICATIONS

Style	Strong Doppelbock
Alcohol By Volume	14%
Serving Temperature	52–59° F
Suggested Glassware	Snifter, Tulip, or Teku Glass

respecting tradition.

Today, Schloss Eggenberg is Austria's third-largest independent brewery, exporting its beers to over 40 countries worldwide. Its range of products, from traditional lagers like Hopfenkönig to specialty brews like Samichlaus, represents the pinnacle of Austrian brewing. The brewery remains a family-owned and operated establishment, celebrated for its artisanal approach and commitment to quality. With a history spanning more than a millennium, Schloss Eggenberg seamlessly blends ancient brewing traditions with modern expertise, cementing its place as a cornerstone of Austria's brewing heritage. The Rare Beer Club was allocated the only portion of the 2023 Samichlaus Classic bottled in 750ml bottles.

SAMICHLAUS CLASSIC 2023

To ring in the holiday season, the Rare Beer Club has obtained the 2023 vintage 750ml bottling of Schloss Eggenberg's Samichlaus Classic. This world-famous beer gets brewed once a year on December 6th (the day of St. Nicholas), then gets matured for ten months before being bottled. At 14% ABV, it's one of the strongest lagers in the world. Bottles can be cellared for years, and vintage examples can be perfect

for celebrating a special occasion. We found this 2023 bottling of Samichlaus to be one of our best experiences ever with this classic.

Samichlaus Classic pours a deep, rich amber to mahogany color with ruby highlights when held to the light. The beer forms a modest, tan head that is retained nicely, then dissipates to a rim around the inside of the glass. It leaves minimal lacing but showcases its dense, high-alcohol nature. The nose is intensely rich and complex, with an initial wave of caramelized sugar and toffee. Notes of dark fruits such as raisins, prunes, and figs emerge, accompanied by a hint of molasses. Subtle undertones of toasted nuts, brown bread, and a whisper of chocolate balance the sweetness. A warming, almost brandy-like aroma lingers, contributing to its luxurious depth.

Samichlaus greets the palate with a bold sweetness that mirrors its aroma—layers of caramel, toffee, and dark molasses dominate. These are followed by ripe dark fruit flavors of dates, cherries, and figs, which add a fruity complexity. As it warms, notes of vanilla, toasted oak, and a touch of sherry-like oxidation appear, enhancing the beer's depth. The alcohol is warming but well-integrated, reminiscent of a fine

liqueur or dessert wine. The body is full and velvety, with a syrupy, almost decadent texture. Despite its high ABV (14%), the beer's smooth carbonation provides just enough lift to keep it from feeling overly heavy. The finish is long and warm, with lingering notes of caramel, dried fruit, and delicate malt.

Samichlaus Classic is a masterpiece of balance and complexity, perfect for sipping and savoring on a cold evening. It's an ideal candidate for pairing with rich desserts like chocolate cake or crème brûlée, or even enjoyed on its own as a contemplative after-dinner drink. With its ability to age gracefully, this beer only grows more complex over time, developing deeper sherry-like qualities and even smoother integration of flavors.

AGING & PAIRING NOTES:

Schloss Eggenberg Samichlaus Classic drinks very well now and will continue to age gracefully for years to come. The brewery suggests pairing with hearty dishes and desserts, or with chocolate, or as an after-dinner drink all on its own.