

the DNA sequence of this yeast strain could not be matched to any of the strains which have been deposited there by researchers around the world for the last 20 years.

Even More Uniqueness



Yet another brewer whose beer reeks of tradition, Ramūno Čižo can be found in the lake country in the east near the border of Belarus. He is the sole purveyor of a forgotten style called Keptinis, in which a malt bread is baked from the spent grain and then broken into hot water before reassembly into the yet unfermented wort. This technique apparently adds light flavors of torrefaction and a darker color. Čižo doesn't boil either. Contrary to some reclusive brewers who don't feel like talking about their work, this highly charismatic man proudly demonstrates old style brewing techniques with rustic equipment in city fairs across the country. His daughter is being trained in keeping this Keptinis style alive, so there is hope for this dark quencher – if the few bars in Vilnius keep up their missionary work.

Another team of people who have been promoting quality traditional beers in Lithuania work as the Aukštaitijos Bravorai group (Breweries of Higher Lithuania), which owns six microbreweries. They've even emulated the Keptinis style of Čižo's, but with a modern flair and gusto which propels the lightly smoky, bready flavors in a polished body in a manner the original style could never achieve.



Bars featuring rustic beer are godsend for brewers and drinkers alike.

An important figure in the renaissance movement of Lithuanian brewing heritage, Aukštaitijos Bravorai has the funds to help spread the good word. The group has been able to position its creations in some supermarkets and upscale restaurants in the cities. The company has opened a few bars (like the wonderful Gyvas Alaus Krautuvelė in Panevėžys) and a few little beer stores to showcase its wares. More importantly, the brews are often as stellar in taste as they are creative. One called I.O. Boiko, brewed by the Kurkliu brewery, displays generous rye flavors and spicy hops completed by haystack aromas and banana esters. Among other delicious brews, the



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