

San Francisco

Published on *San Francisco online* (<http://www.sanfranmag.com>)

The cure for what ails you

Drink Night Watch March

Wine bars keep popping up across the city, but until recently, anyone looking for a sizable beer selection usually had to endure a rock 'n' roll dive (Toronado, Lucky 13). But a rash of new beer bars—three debuted within two weeks of each other in December—is now providing more refined alternatives. In a welcome convergence, these new pubs, along with such restaurants as Spruce and Bar Crudo, are showcasing Belgian beers—a cherished style with Old World allure.

The Monk's Kettle in the Mission serves draught craft brews from Belgium, the States, and elsewhere, all in a deli-sized space. Monk's also serves food in booths and at the bar, while those on liquid diets can stand in the space between the two. Previously home to several failed restaurants, this corner venue has been remade with sideways light fixtures and a back bar that was once a large fireplace frame. It's decorated with carved roaring beasts. But if they're meant to scare away customers, they're slacking on the job; Monk's has been jammed since its doors opened. Crafty craft-beer lovers know to come for their fix when the bar is quieter, either during lunch or late on weeknights.

Rarities alert

Monk's carries selections from four of the world's seven Trappist breweries—eschewing the popular Chimay to make room for ones you can't find at the corner store.

The crush

Behoodied Missionites looking for beverage variety share limited space with foodies from other neighborhoods.

Pub grub

The menu of Niman Ranch burgers, vegan chili, and giant pretzels suggests a beer pairing with each item.

Spice of life

If the two dozen taps don't suit you, choose from more than 100 beers by the bottle.

Overheard

"I think I'm gonna need another minute to decide."

3141 16th St., S.F., 415-865-9523, monkskettle.com

Elsewhere

Locals took an immediate liking to casual spot The Trappist for its 15 rotating selections on tap and about 120 mostly Belgian ales by the bottle. 460 8th St., Oakland, 510-238-8900, thetrappist.com

The subterranean bar at La Trappe serves beer from a 13-page menu to North Beach partiers and canoodling couples in the little lounge. 800 Greenwich St., S.F., 415-440-8727, latrappesf.com

Though not exactly new, City Beer Store, the beerier version of a wine shop, crams in nearly 400 varieties with a heavy Belgian focus, plus six on tap if you want to linger. 1168 Folsom St., S.F., 415-503-1033, citybeerstore.com

Source URL: <http://www.sanfranmag.com/story/cure-what-ales-you>