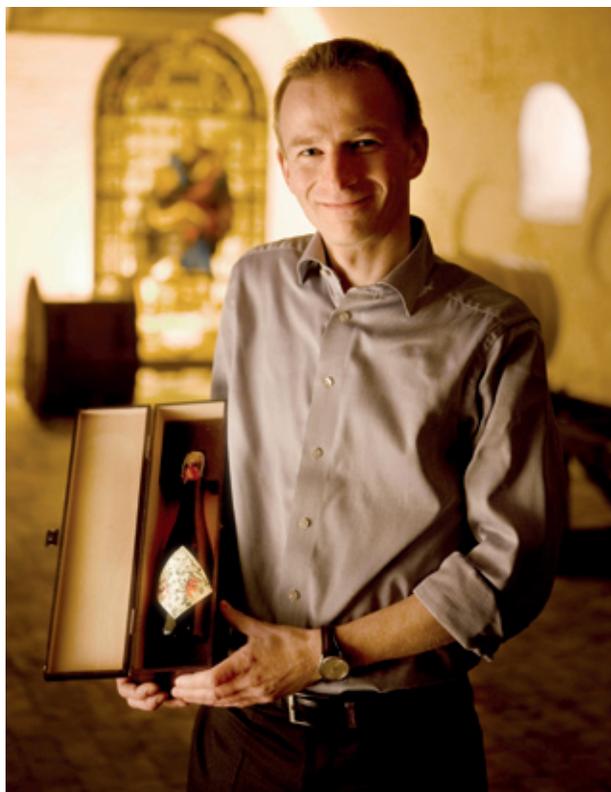


A MASTER OF DETAILS

 CHARLOTTE FROST ANDERSEN. JOURNALIST

Beer should have the same status as wine, both at the dinner table and at the fine dining restaurants. That is the ambition of the newly appointed brewmaster at the Jacobsen Brewhouse, Morten Ibsen. Morten is dedicated to the pursuit of quality and he is passionate about his job, which, among other things, allows him to use all his senses.

Many people envision a brewmaster as a slightly overweight craftsman with leather apron and perhaps a slightly reddish nose. Meeting with Morten Ibsen challenges that perception. Morten Ibsen is tall and slim, and he meets you with a strong, clear look that leaves little doubt that he is a man with a mission. Morten Ibsen wants to revolutionise the way Danes perceive beer. 'Beer is



much more than a thirst quencher. There are plenty gastronomy cases in which beer suits better than wine, and that's what I want people to know and acknowledge,' says the brewmaster.

For the last 10-15 years, Morten has worked relentlessly to persuade the finest Danish restaurants to endorse beer in their menus. It is not an easy task to make them accept beer as equal to wine, partly because of the strong ties to the wine-based haute cuisine and partly due to misconceptions among staff and chefs. 'I firmly believe that beer equals wine, not in the sense that the two beverages have the same taste and features, but rather in the sense that they both offer great matches with food. Most people know the merits of wine, but only a few know the excellence of a well-brewed beer served with a well-prepared meal,' says Morten and continues, 'In the last couple of years, speciality beers have gained ground, making the professionals increasingly interested in the possibilities of beer and food matches. We've found strong allies among some of the finest chefs in the avant-garde Nordic cuisine. But still the work continues, because the big change only happens, when regular people pick a beer for the occasion where they used to drink wine. I consider it my finest task to encourage this development.'

FROM CHEMICAL ENGINEER TO BREWMASTER

Morten Ibsen grew up in the suburbs of Copenhagen, where beer played an integral part of everyday life. Sharing a beer with your neighbours over the hedge or enjoying a pilsner with the family at a Sunday lunch was as common a practice in Morten's neighbourhood, as it was in the rest of Denmark. 'Beer was really not something you gave a lot of thought in my childhood and youth →



– it was just there and everybody enjoyed it.' Thus, it was not at all obvious that Morten one day would end up being the brewmaster of Carlsberg's flagship The Jacobsen Brewhouse.

Morten was just about to finish his master's thesis in chemical engineering when he noticed a job ad from Carlsberg looking for trainees and promising a career as brewmaster. Morten was thrilled about the idea, applied and was accepted as one of four candidates out of 100 applicants. As part of his employment, he graduated as brewmaster in 1998.

CARLSBERG'S UNIVERS

To Morten, Carlsberg proved to be everything he hoped for. He found plenty of opportunities to investigate and pursue details that stimulated his scientific talents, and at the same time, he got acquainted with a range of professionals and experts from Carlsberg's international subsidiaries and partners that became a great source of inspiration and aspiration. He especially liked the grand focus on always pursuing the best possible quality, something that has been in focus since the days of the founders J.C. Jacobsen and, not least, Carl Jacobsen, whose Latin phrase *Semper Ardens* – always burning – embodied the constant pursuit for improvement. These thoughts were manifested in a speciality beer project started in 1999, now known as the *Semper Ardens*.

Morten had only been working for Carlsberg for a few years when he became interested in speciality beer and the *Semper Ardens* project. In 2002, he became involved in the project, and in 2004, he even contributed with his own creation, *Semper Ardens Christmas Ale*, which was awarded the title 'Beer of the Year' by Danish Beer Enthusiasts. With the opening of The Jacobsen Brewhouse in 2005, Morten became involved in the development of Jacobsen Beer in corporation with leading brewmaster Jens Eiken. In 2007, Morten was chosen as official brewmaster of Kongens Bryghus with a

portfolio that received a lot of attention. And finally, in January 2009, Morten Ibsen was appointed brewmaster of The Jacobsen Brewhouse, taking over the position of his former colleague Jens Eiken, who accepted a new position at Molson Coors Brewing Company Ltd. in England.

DESIGNING GREAT BEERS

What fascinates Morten Ibsen the most in his work as brewmaster for The Jacobsen Brewhouse, is the innovative work that allows him to make experimental brews and perfect existing brews, always using supreme quality malt, hops and raw materials. Morten Ibsen gets his inspiration in his everyday work from many different sources of both domestic and international origin. 'Making good beer is all about imagining the relations between the materials and methods and the specific outcome in terms of taste, flavour and appearance. It is easy just to brew a beer, but to make your vision come true requires a lot of dedication and sense of detail.'

Even though he is very focused on using Nordic ingredients, thereby continuing the previous work of Jens Eiken, he also acknowledges that he needs to look at foreign beer environments for inspiration, especially in the effort to attract attention to beer and food matches. Morten explains, 'I think the beer gastronomy in countries like Belgium and USA is innovative and a great source of inspiration. I would even say that these beer markets are perhaps 10-15 years ahead of Scandinavia. At the East and West Coast of USA, you will easily find cafés and restaurants that have given which beer to which food a lot of consideration in their menus, and in Belgium you even have a distinct beer cuisine with several Michelin Star endowed restaurants specialised in beer. It's my ambition, my hope and my passion that the Jacobsen Brewhouse will help elevating Denmark as a country where beer plays as a major role at the fine dining table as does wine.' ☺

