

# “Together We Are Stronger”

**OPENING EVENT** | European brewers can add a new event to their calendars: From June 7 to 8 2018, The Brewers of Europe invite to their new event format “Beer and Beyond” to Brussels. BRAUWELT International wanted to find out what is hidden behind the concept and interviewed *Pierre-Olivier Bergeron*, Secretary General of The Brewers of Europe, Brussels, and *Luc De Raedemaeker*, Director of Becomev, Brussels, about the organizers’ plans.

**BRAUWELT International:** You have participated in the development of the *Brewers Forum* concept, how did the idea to organize such an event come about?

**Pierre-Olivier Bergeron:** For some time now we have been considering hosting a major event for the entire European beer and brewing sector. Europe is the cradle of modern beer. Beer and breweries are proving to be increasingly successful. The European beer sector is undeniably in growth mode. As a result the European brewing landscape is experiencing a renaissance with the opening of more than 1 000 breweries in the last five years. This revival is a unique and exciting opportunity to connect with all brewers and foster a culture of togetherness within Europe’s beer value chain. With the ambition to transfer and cross-fertilise knowledge, expertise, experience and ideas, we created this new *Brewers Forum* conference.

**BWI:** What does the target group look like?

**Bergeron:** “Beer and Beyond” is the central theme of the conference programme featuring about 50 top speakers from Europe and beyond. The conference programme provides strategic and practical sessions covering various aspects of the brewing business: brewing & beer quality; marketing & innovation; beer pubs & food pairing; changing customers and societal needs and the 2018 EBC Symposium on filtration. The *Brewers Forum* will offer inspiration for brewers and the brewing sector as a whole as they come together to prepare a bright future for beer.

**BWI:** The event will be held at Brussels. What was the deciding factor for choosing the

Belgian capital as venue and where exactly will the event take place?

**Bergeron:** The ambition is for the event to be hosted in a different European city every other year, very much in the same way as the EBC has been operating. We feel this will help act as global platform showcasing the variety, breadth and quality of European beer. Since the decision of the EU member states in 1997 to further establish Brussels as the seat of the Council and Commission, Brussels has de facto become the capital of Europe. The Brewers of Europe provides a voice in Brussels to promote beer and represents the interests of Europe’s 8500 breweries, so Brussels seemed the obvious starting place.

**Luc De Raedemaeker:** The event will take place June 7th and 8th at Square venue

which very conveniently sits next door to the main transport hub of Brussels – the Central Station – where train, tram, metro and bus all meet. The fast train to Brussels international airport takes less than half an hour.

**BWI:** What is the programme all about? What may the participants expect from the event?

**Bergeron:** The four stages will be taken by names like *Gianni Campari*, *Susanne Hecht*, *Kevin Verstrepen*, *Mikkel Borg Bjergsø*, *Steven Hindi*, *Frank Boon*, *Roger Ryman* and many, many more. This speaker line-up covers as many different topics as cultivating your own yeast, the science of food pairing, targeting millennials, reducing your environmental footprint and the 2018 EBC Symposium on filtration. Given the variety of subjects there is something for everyone.

**BWI:** Will you offer a general programme including excursions?

**De Raedemaeker:** We opted for an open approach to informal after-hours gatherings in Brussels. The city makes no secret of its passion for the good life, good food and good beer. Despite all the different languages spoken on the corner of every street and its European dimension, Brussels has a

very village-like feel about it. Any local organization or individual can organize their own get-togethers and post them on *Brewers Forum* website ([www.brewersforum.eu](http://www.brewersforum.eu)).

**BWI:** How many participants do you expect?

**De Raedemaeker:** The Brewers of Europe Forum will bring together more than 1000 professionals from Europe’s diverse family of brewers and their stakeholders. An exhibition floor with +50 companies will demonstrate the latest innovations in the industry and include tastings from beers around Europe. Networking on the exhibition floor or at one of the networking events will allow you to meet new and existing business partners.

**BWI:** The EBC Symposium will be held at the same time as the *Brewers Forum*. What is the difference between these two events, and what connects them?

**Bergeron:** EBC is since 2007 The Brewers of Europe’s scientific and technological arm with a focus on the technical aspects of beer brewing knowledge. For some time now we have been considering hosting a major event for the entire European beer and brewing sector. Having seen the success of the EBC over its remarkable 37 Congress editions and series of Symposia it could only make a lot of good sense to embed the EBC Symposium and Congress activities into the *Brewers Forum*.

**BWI:** Aren’t you competing with the EBC Congress and the EBC Symposiums by establishing this event?

**Bergeron:** EBC forms an inseparable part of The Brewers of Europe. By bringing together the brewing sector as a whole and discussing all aspects of the sector we are leveraging on the success of the EBC in disseminating technical knowledge and at the same time strengthening our scientific and technological arm by enlarging the scope of the programme to include topics of interest also for founders, owners and managers of breweries, not only brewmasters or technicians. The beer value chain is so rich in its diversity and Europe’s brewing landscape has changed so drastically that it has become indispensable to trigger more conversations on more topics amongst more stakeholders in the beer world.

**BWI:** Brewers’ diaries are filled to the top with appointments – what is the *Forum*’s unique selling proposition? Why is it worth to go to Brussels?

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