

★ High Plains Draughters ★ Oklahoma City ★

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# The Draught Card

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January 7, 2003

## ***HPD Robert Burns Night!***

Date: Saturday, January 25th

Time: 7:30-10:30 pm

Location: City Arts Museum (on the west side of the OKC Fair Grounds)

*The bard's birthday has arrived once again, and we will celebrate all things Scottish with the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual HPD Burns Night. Come and join the lads and lassies who will witness the haggis being piped in once again. Prove your mettle by eating some of the dreaded "King of the Pudding Race"! Quaff some of the finest Scottish ales around. Hear the Ballad of John Barley and other Burns classics.*

*If you can muster up some Scottish victuals, contribute to the fair; bring out your best Scottish ales (and/or other Scottish potables!); kilts are optional; poetry readings are always appreciated.*

Special Orders of the Day: In addition to the Scottish revels, the meeting will also include the annual election of HPD officers for the 2003 brewing year!

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The HPD glasses have been ordered! The final negotiations produced the above logo imprinted in iridescent gold on a 12 oz snifter with a gold "halo" around the rim. If all goes well, they will be available for Burns Night! The price will be \$5.00 per glass and, although we ordered 144 of the snifters, they are expected to go fast.

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## The December 2002 Meeting

### The Annual Yuletide Bash

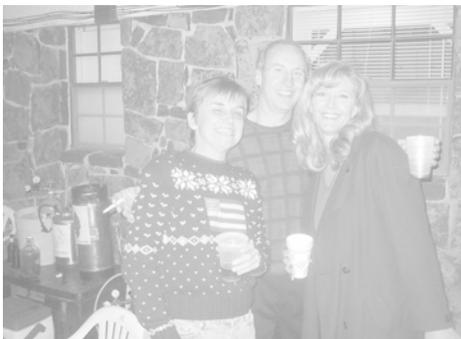
A report from Tim Nagode

Once again the HPD Christmas Party was *THE* place to be on Friday, Dec. 13<sup>th</sup>. By evening's end, at least 50 of the faithful had made the rounds, chatting up pals, savoring the bountiful buffet, partaking of various potent potables and doing a bit of dirty dancing. Personal food favorites were an outstanding goat cheese/pepper dip and a couple of excellent salmon dips. For the sweet-toothed, a rum-laced fudge hit the spot in a major way.



Paula, Telia, Nuri, and Jenna in a festive mode

The best low gravity homebrewed beer was Tammy Reid's keg of a *Double Diamond* knockoff (an English Bitter.) Yes, we floated it. Best homebrewed high gravity beverage was a tie between Steve Law's *Himalayan Red Strong Ale* (made with a generous proportion of Himalayan red rice) and Robert Hoggard's excellent *Blueberry Mead*. Robert was also exceedingly generous with his humidor, setting up just about everyone with a Cuban cigar of one type or another (thanks Rob!).

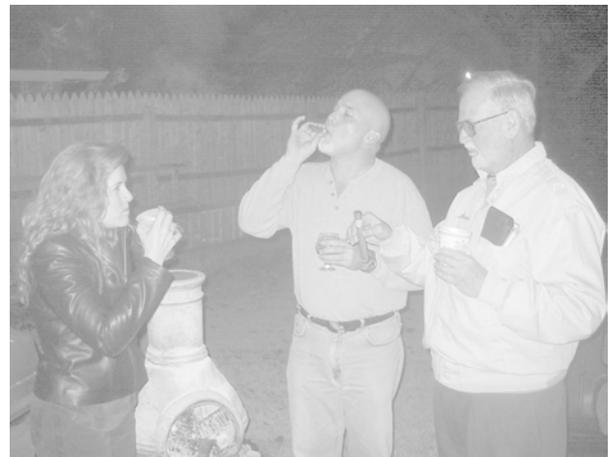


Adria, Jeff, and Tammy visit the kegs



Terry, Chuck, Adria, and Bob sample the potables

Best commercial low gravity beer was a Pilsner brewed by Boulevard. Mike Groshong (master brewer at Coach's) had a bottle of this not-yet-released brew, courtesy of Boulevard's head brewer. Mike also had a bottle of Boulevard's new *Belgian Dubbel*, also not yet released. It was quite nice, though lacking the character of the late, great *Celis Dubbel*. Best commercial high gravity beer was the magnum (yes, magnum!) of *Scaldis Noel* that was dispensed by Michal Carson. *Noel* is the Christmas beer of the Brasserie Dubisson of Belgium, a Belgian Barleywine if you will. It has a carmelly dryness that is rarely found elsewhere. You can't get it in state, but if you're doing a bit of beer hunting when on the road, find it, buy all you can carry and bring it to the next meeting!



Denice, Tim Hibner, and "Saint" Andrews enjoy the chimenea

Thanks once again to Tim Hibner for hosting the HPD Yuletide Bash (for the second year in a row!).

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# Bluebonnet Brew-Off Looms!

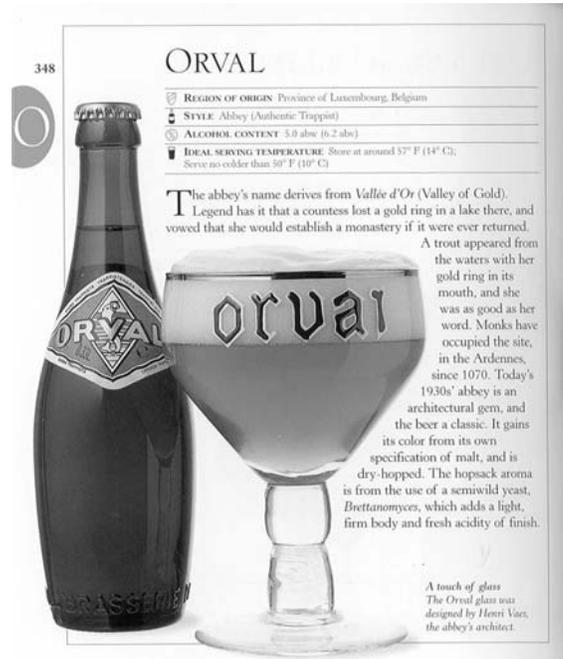


The biggest regional homebrew competition looms on the horizon. This year it is scheduled for Friday, March 21 and Saturday, March 22. As always, the Bluebonnet is one of the great HPD adventures of the year. Information is readily available at <http://www.bluebonnetbrewoff.com/>. This year's keynote will be delivered by Dr. Chris White, founder of White Labs (one of the premiere yeast providers!). The Draughters have always had a respectable presence down in Irving, so start making your plans for this pilgrimage. Contemplate sending an entry or two more than usual, so we can up the odds of our collective success. More info will be coming at you in the next newsletter and the February HPD Meeting.

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The Trail Boss and Nuri visit the spring at the "Matilda Well" in the medieval ruins of the Abbey of Orval.



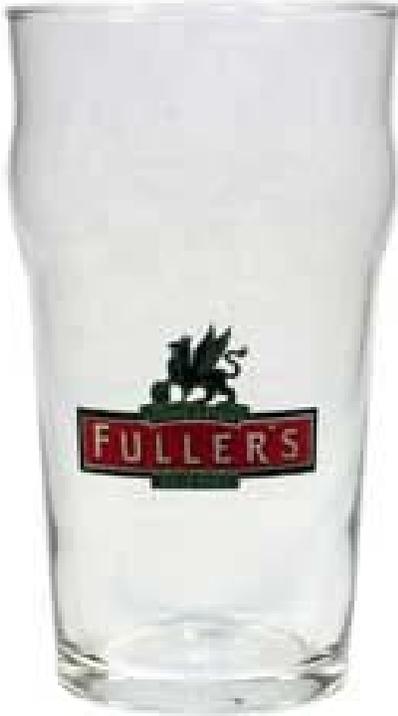
Michael Jackson, *The Great Beer Guide*. NY: Dorling Kindersly, 2000. ISBN 0 7894 5156 5

An Excellent addition to your brewing library – and destined to be a classic – is Michael Jackson's new guide to the 500 best beers of the world. Each page in this gorgeous full color volume features a single beer, its vital statistics, the appropriate glass to drink it from, and a short blurb on the history of the brew.

# NEXT JUDGING: Friday, January 17<sup>th</sup>!

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## Bitter and English Pale Ale



If you have entries from Category 4, Bitter and English Pale Ale, drop them off at The Brew Shop before closing on the 17<sup>th</sup>. A single unmarked bottle (per entry) is required. Please attach some sort of identifying information (name, style category, & phone number). You are permitted up to two entries per category. The three categories that will be judged will be:

- 4A Ordinary Bitter
- 4B Special or Best Bitter
- 4C Extra Special Bitter

Specifics on the style guidelines are available at the BJCP page at:

<http://www.mv.com/ipusers/slack/bjcp/styleguide04.html>

The winner will be notified *immediately*, as the club entry should be in the mail the very next day (Saturday) in order to arrive in Minnesota on time. Shipping is to Leo Vitt and the Timberworts is:

AHA COC  
James White  
Lakeview Technologies  
3535 40th Ave NW #200  
Rochester, MN 55901

If you are interested in helping with the judging, contact either Chuck at The Brew Shop or the Competition Coordinator Michal Carson at [Michal.D.Carson@seagate.com](mailto:Michal.D.Carson@seagate.com)

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### Here's a list of the upcoming competitions for 2003:

March/April: Category 10, *Brown Ale*

May: Category 11, *English & Scottish Strong Ale*

August: Category 2, *European Pale Lager*

September/October Category 24, *Specialty/Experimental/Historical Beer*

November/December: Category 8, *Kölsch & Altbier*

# *The American Homebrewers Association*

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The American Homebrewers Association, a division of the Association of Brewers, is working hard for you and for homebrewers everywhere. Support the AHA's efforts by becoming a member! Membership fees are \$33 for one year, \$58 for two years, \$87 for three years and lifetime memberships are available for \$460. Contact Bob Rescinito (405.820-BREW or [bohr5@prodigy.net](mailto:bohr5@prodigy.net)) for membership information. Be sure to ask him if you qualify for a discount on the above rates.

## ***AHA BENEFITS***

**Zymurgy® magazine**: delivered six times a year, the best keeps getting better! Look for more great articles, recipes and ways to improve your brew in each big issue!

**TechTalk**: e-mail brewing forum dedicated to technical talk on beer and nothing else.

Special industry guests star on this moderated "all beer, all the time" forum!

**Book Discounts**: save on the latest offerings from Brewers Publications when you order pre-publication books or books purchased in quantity!

**AHA Members Website** just for you! Includes the TalkBack members issues forum and lots of AHA information online.

**AHA Member Discounts for the Connoisseur Tasting** at the Great American Beer Festival. Thousands attend this exclusive tasting. Make this your year to be there!

**AHA Sponsor Donations** Brewing goodies, prizes, educational scholarships supplied by AHA sponsors and Institute for Brewing Studies members!

**AND MORE!**



The HPD Executive Committee needs your support. As noted in the last TWO newsletters, if you are interested in submitting materials for The Draught Card, please forward them to the Trail Boss at [SLaw@ucok.edu](mailto:SLaw@ucok.edu). Not much has been coming in, and we know you are out there...

Have you done an exotic brew lately; had a fantastic garage brew; an unusual experience at one of our nation's brewpubs? If so, jot down a few ideas and share them with the club! We would also like to establish some "columns" for the newsletter, with regular writers to take charge of a particular area. We need your support!

## HPD Culinary Adventures

# New Year's Eve with Oysters & Stout

By Steve Law

If ever there were two tastes made for each other, they are oysters and stout. On a recent sojourn to Florida, Nuri and I decided to spend New Year's Eve at a beach not too far away from the Apalachicola Bay ... a bay renowned for some of the most famous oysters in the world! Needless to say, bivalves and stout became the order of the evening.

After setting up camp in St. Joseph's Peninsula State Park, we inquired with the locals where we could pick up some of the freshest oysters around. The unanimous recommendation was a small outlet in Port St. Joe called "St. Patrick's Sea Food." Tucked away in a back street, St. Patrick's turned out to be one of those classic small vendors where freshness is everything. After drooling over the red snapper fillets and shrimp that looked like they were netted that very morning, we renewed our vow to eat oysters – *lots* of oysters!

But then there was a decision to be made: pre-shucked or in-the-shell? Now as one who had lived in Florida for many years, I have eaten more than my share of oysters, but – sad to say – I had never shucked a single one. But the prospect of getting a "half bag" of live oysters (roughly 30 pounds or 100 oysters) for a mere \$12 was too irresistible. I asked the guy behind the counter for a demonstration of how it was done. He made it look easy. A quick turn of the knife and it was open; he cut the two muscles from the edge of the shell and slurped that puppy down! Sure, I could do that.

I had been advised to buy a good shucking knife (\$10 at the local hardware store). I bought a "Dexter," regarded as the best knife of the bunch. The implement is dull and about as broad as your finger, hardly something that looks like it could pry oysters open. Other than the proper tool, you need a good thick glove, because oyster shells are a bit

rough on the hands. We drove back to camp in high spirits, eager to begin the evening's festivities.

Nuri washed the first two dozen, and there under the stars we cracked open a Young's Oatmeal Stout. Let the games begin! Man ... This was a lot tougher than it looked! For reasons entirely understandable, oysters don't want to come out of their little shells. In the first half hour I had opened only four oysters, and we had visions of carrying the sack back to the bay and setting them free. But after another stout was poured, an epiphany occurred: I found the "sweet spot" that unlocks the hinge between the two halves of the shell (it's a *very* small depression on the outside where the interior hinge is). Eureka! With a few additional successes my confidence soared and I began to shuck them as fast as we could eat them. Some went down plain, others with hot sauce and an occasional Saltine.

More beers were opened. Another Young's product, the Double Chocolate Stout, washed down the next two dozen. There's something very complementary about oysters and stout; the slick saltiness of the bivalve and cleansing dryness of the stout make for great companions. As the evening progressed, we switched to homebrew. We both agreed that Grand Cru and oysters could give stout and oysters a run for its money; the bitter Curaçao orange peel and coriander make for a great complement as well.

As midnight approached, the pile of oyster shells next to our campfire had begun to grow. All told, we went through about 70 oysters that evening. Total heaven! When 2003 arrived – like good homebrewers – we rung in the New Year with a bottle of homemade Champagne. It was a memorable evening and a great culinary adventure!

# *Previews of Coming Attractions & Competitions*

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January 25<sup>th</sup> – HPD's 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Robert Burns Night (kilts optional; poetry and Scotch Ales requisite)  
Got a Scottish Ale? Let's see the kegs come out to greet the haggis!

February 21-22 – The Kansas City Bier Meisters 20th Annual Regional Homebrew Competition will be held February 21-22, 2003, at the Holy-Field Vineyard and Winery in Basehor, Kansas. Guest speakers will be Fred Eckhardt and Charlie Papazian. Beer can be entered in all BJCP categories. Entry fee is \$6.00 per entry (three 10-16oz brown or green bottles). If you submit seven or more entries under the same brewer name the fee is reduced to \$5.00 per entry. Entry deadline is February 8, 2003. Deliver entries to: Bacchus & Barleycorn, Ltd., 6633 Nieman Rd., Shawnee, KS 66203. Check out [www.kcbiermeisters.org](http://www.kcbiermeisters.org) for more information.

Early March -- Foam on the Range homebrew club of Denver will host the inaugural AHA TechTalk "Ale to America" homebrew competition. The competition is open to all AHA members. Entries in the following BJCP categories will be accepted:

- category 6A: American Pale Ale
- category 6B: American Amber Ale
- category 6C: California Common Beer
- category 10D: American Brown Ale

These styles were specifically selected to encourage newer homebrewers to enter the competition. Entries will consist of two (2) bottles 10oz or larger. Entry fee is \$5.00 for the first entry and \$4.00 for each additional entry. Each brewer may enter only one beer per subcategory or a maximum of four (4) in this competition. Make all checks payable to Foam on the Range. Entries are due by March 12, 2003. Judging will occur on March 15th. Mail entries to : AHA TechTalk Competition, c/o Ruddell's Custom Print, 4853 South Quintero Circle, Aurora, CO 80015  
more info at: [www.foamontherange.org](http://www.foamontherange.org)

March 21-22 – Bluebonnet Brew-off in Irving Texas

Think of journeying down for First Round Judging this time. Last year was a blast! It would appear that this year's Bluebonnet will NOT be having a BJCP Exam (it was held on January 4<sup>th</sup> in Dallas this year). Nevertheless, we need more certified judges (you know who you are!). Keep an eye on the BJCP Exam Schedule at <http://www.mv.com/ipusers/slack/bjcp/exams.html>

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## ☆ Techniques for Brewing to Style ☆

# Brewing a Belgian Tripel

By Steve Law

One of few Belgian styles that is actually recognized as a “style” in Belgium is the Tripel. Originating only after WWII, the triple-strength beer was first produced by the Trappist abbey of Westmalle. The Tripel’s immense popularity in Belgium is reflected in the nearly 30 breweries that make a version of this potent brew. [Grammatical Note: the spelling of the word “Tripel” varies considerably, given the linguistic diversity of Belgium]. Trippels are *always* bottle conditioned, and – given their strength – make an excellent “keeping beer” that should be savored over the years.

The official AHA/BJCP guidelines for the style are as follows:

**Aroma:** Complex aroma of malt and fruity esters, which may have a "citrus-like" essence, and often a mild to moderate clove-spice character. Hop aroma may be moderate to none. No diacetyl.

**Appearance:** Pale gold to deep gold in color. Clarity should be fair to good. Head retention may be quite good, or may be adversely affected by alcohol content in some versions.

**Flavor:** Crisp and moderately fruity. Malty sweetness is balanced by restrained hop bitterness and high carbonation to provide a dry finish to the palate and a sweet aftertaste. Clove-like spiciness is apparent in many examples. The best examples have subtle alcohol undertones, while others may have very noticeable alcohol presence. Hop flavor may be moderate to none. No diacetyl.

**Mouthfeel:** Medium body, although a light impression (thanks to the candi sugar) given the often substantial original gravity. High alcohol content adds a warming sensation. Carbonation is very high and effervescent in character, yet ideally does not disturb the beer's smoothness.

**Overall Impression:** A pale, moderately fruity, spicy, very strong ale.

**Comments:** Alcoholic, but the best examples do not taste strongly of alcohol. By Belgian law, to be called a Trappist ale it must be brewed at a Trappist monastery. Home-brewed and secular equivalents should be called abbey ales.

**Ingredients:** Yeast strains prone to higher alcohol and clove aroma production are usually used. Small amounts of spices are sometimes added. Pale Pilsner malts are used and up to 25% white candi sugar (sucrose) is often added.

**Vital Statistics:** OG: 1.065-1.095 IBUs: 20-35 FG: 1.013-1.020 SRM: 3.5-6 ABV: 6.3-10%

**Commercial Examples:** Westmalle Tripel, Affligem Tripel, Grimbergen Tripel, Corsendonk Monk's Pale Ale, Bruggse Tripel, New Belgium Tripel.

When making a Tripel there are several things to keep in mind. First of all, because the color is supposed to be just a tad darker than a Pilsner, most Belgian brewers use Pils malt (not pale malt) for the basic grist. You also need to be attentive to not darkening the wort too much through an extended boil (90 minutes max). White candi sugar is a traditional adjunct; this also helps keep the color light. Note the generous proportion of candi (up to 25% of the fermentable sugars!). Softer waters work best and mash temps should be kept in the mid-range. Hopping is normally very light. Saaz is most commonly used, but temperate use of Styrian or Hallertauer are also found. The yeast choice is critical (both for the overall ferment and the flavor profile); a good Abbey Yeast – or better yet, a Trappist Ale Yeast – is essential for the complexity you're after. Brave souls have also been known to successfully culture specific yeasts directly from the bottom of commercial examples. Aeration of wort is essential. And when it comes time to bottle, high carbonation (2-2.5 vol) is required; use only your thicker bottles for a tripel.

Ingredients for 12 gallons of *Abbey d' Loup Tripel*

(brewed 1/8/03 ... hopefully to be brought to the 2003 Yuletide Fest!)

28 lbs Briess Pilsener malt (infusion mashed for 2 ½ hours at 151 degrees)

3 lbs light dry malt extract

2 lbs white candi sugar

4 oz whole leaf Saaz 5.0% AAU (2 oz for 75 min and 2 oz for 60 min)

1 tbsp yeast nutrient

4 gal sparge at 168 degrees with 1 tbsp 88% lactic acid

Yeast cultures: WLP 500 Trappist Ale in one carboy, WLP 530 Belgian Abbey Ale in another

Fermentation begun at 70 degrees F

OG: 1.082

## *Like Taking Candi From a Baby!*

As everyone knows by now, the HPD “Trail Boss” has a sweet tooth when it comes to homebrewing. I just can’t seem to wean myself from those big malty beverages. Give me a barleywine, an old ale, a Doppelbock, or a Scottish Ale and I’ll be a happy camper. But there is nothing that satisfies the palate quite like a good Belgian Dubbel or Tripel. I’ve brewed many in my nearly 10 years of homebrewing, and no two have been alike. There are many reasons for this, of course; the wild variations of yeast that can be used (something mentioned in the last issue of *The Draught Card*), the relative hardness of the water, the amount and type of malts used, the mash regime, and the types of adjunct sugars that can be used.

This latter consideration is often under appreciated. Belgian styles (in general) are famous for the generous parameters of what goes into the beer, but one of the traditional ingredients of a Dubbel or a Tripel is *candi* – a crystallized rock sugar that comes in various colors from white, to amber, to brown.

Candi is made by suspending strings into a highly concentrated vat of boiling sucrose. As the liquid cools, crystals form on the string. A faster cooling liquid makes for smaller crystals, a slower cooling leads to larger crystals (up to about an inch in diameter). The degree to which the initial liquid was caramelized is a contributing factor that determines the candi’s taste and color. A lighter candi (white) should be used with Trippels and the darker versions for Dubbels.

But why use candi? Isn’t sucrose the same table sugar sitting in the kitchen cabinet? Yes – and no. The “sucrose” that you add to your coffee or sprinkle on your cereal in the morning has a lot of impurities in it. Candi sugar is 99% pure sucrose, and – on the

microcosmic scale – your yeast seem to appreciate the difference, even if you don’t. Pierre Rajotte, in his *Classic Beer Styles* book, *Belgian Ale* (Brewers Publications, 1992), reports that candi seems to aid in head retention, and it has its own characteristic sweet aroma. Sure, you can make an abbey beer without candi, but many Belgian brewers are adamant that it makes an important difference.

That having been said, where do you get candi? Your local brew shop will certainly have some (both white and amber), but the stuff can be pricey. You might check ethnic food stores. The Mediterranean Deli, here in Oklahoma City, occasionally stocks Belgian Candi (white) in 22 oz bags. A virtual substitute for Belgian candi is the Chinese version from the Kwangtung province. This can be found in many Asian supermarkets and has the advantage of being *very* inexpensive. The Chinese “rock candy” comes in 14-16 oz packages and is available in either white or light-yellow forms. Bob Grossman, in his recent *Zymurgy* article (Vol 25 no.4), “Brewing’s Sweetest Secret,” notes that the Chinese sugar is a bit harder to dissolve, and I agree. It is a bit larger crystal than the Belgian candi, and when the stuff hits the bottom of your brew kettle you know it: Chinese candy merits a bit of stirring and has the sound of a handful of ball bearings rolling around in your kettle!

So next time your sweet tooth kicks in, reach for the candi of your choice and brew up a Dubbel or Tripel. This unique form of pure sucrose is 100% fermentable, and will lend your beer a pleasant ethanol sweetness that allows for higher gravity with lighter body.

Got questions? Ask the “Boss!”

[slaw@ucok.edu](mailto:slaw@ucok.edu)

High Plains Draughters  
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Oklahoma City, OK 73118

Place label here