

Breweries
and
Beer Bottles
at
El Paso, Texas



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2012

Chapter 5b
Beer Bottles and Brands
Used at Juárez During Prohibition

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Beer Bottles and Brands Used at Juárez During Prohibition

Although beer bottles were used and sold in Juárez from at least 1881 (and probably *not* earlier),¹ our information on them is very limited. There were three distinct periods of beer bottling: 1) the early breweries from 1881 to 1884 – possibly extending to 1908); 2) the Prohibition period, when the Juárez Brewery served the American tourist population; and 3) the post-Prohibition era.

Early Breweries

Although Juárez hosted at least four breweries during its history, we know nothing of the brands and bottles used by the two (possibly three) early breweries (see Chapter 4a). Probably the original firm, the El Paso Brewery at El Paso (later called Juárez), Mexico, advertised “\$3.00 for a dozen bottles” – so there is no question that the plant used bottles (*El Paso Herald* 9/7/1881). However, this first brewery appears to have only been in business for a short time.

Assuming the brewery used typical export beer bottles, those would have been at least fairly plentiful across the river in El Paso, U.S.A. With the arrival of the railroad in 1881, bottles of all kinds – including numerous national brands of beer in export bottles – were available. These would have had paper labels. Since paper labels are very ephemeral, they do not preserve well in depositions – and finding one from a brewery open less than a year is *very* unlikely. It is also possible that the brewery used bottles with no labels.

Although the Depot Brewery was open from at least 1881 to 1884, I have never seen any bottles or labels for that firm, either (see Figure 4a-4). It is likely that all of the explanations and speculations above apply to the Depot Brewery as well. The final possible brewery in Juárez, the Chihuahua Brewery, was mentioned in 1908, when it was “entirely destroyed” – presumably by fire (Hennech 1990:53). It is also possible that this was a misidentification – of the Cruz Blanca

¹ Until the railroads arrived in 1881, El Paso and Juárez were both very isolated from the rest of their respective countries. Very few bottles of any kind found their way to either city prior to the arrival of the first trains. From that point on, however, both cities had a rich tradition of glass container use (Lockhart 1996; 2001).

brewery at Chihuahua. The brewery had been in operation since at least 1896 (see Chapter 5a). Again, the firm almost certainly used paper labels – if, indeed, it used labels or even bottles. Either of these breweries may have only served draught beer.

Prohibition – The Juárez Brewery

As noted in Chapter 5a, the Juárez Brewery was opened in 1922 and served the border clientele until some point after Repeal. Even though the brewery was open a little more than a decade, it apparently only offered three brands. All of these were apparently bottled in typical 12-ounce export beer bottles.

Juárez Beer

When the Brewery opened in January 1922, it began serving Juárez beer. The few extant photos of the containers appear to show typical amber, crown-capped, export beer bottles or champagne beer bottles. Our only sources for bottle information are a postcard (dated September 18, 1930), a label from an eBay auction, and a tray with drawings of both Juárez and Richelieu beer bottles. The postcard and tray are virtually certainly from Juárez, but the label was post-Prohibition.

Postcard

A Juárez postmark left no doubt as to the location where the postcard originated, and a date of September 18, 1930, solidified when it was sent. The front of the card showed a beer bottle with “A Drop Left For You (slight arch)” above it and “No 66. / C, Juarez, Mexico.” below it – all hand written, but part of the postcard (Figure 5b-1).

The neck label had a logo with “CCJ SA” in the oval center and illegible lettering on right and left wings, although the right wing may have “Ja . . .” (probably Juárez). The body label was shield-shaped with wings to left and right. A central oval contained a picture of Benito Juárez, standing with

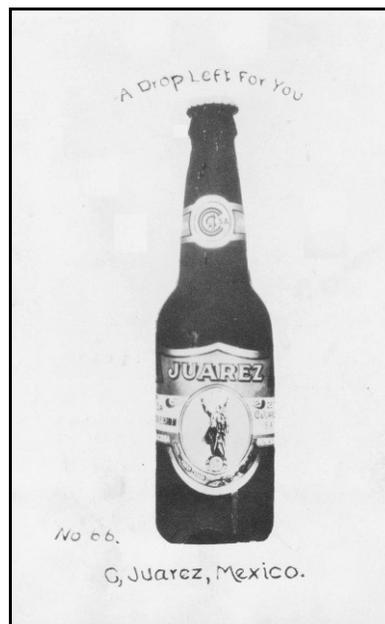


Figure 5b-1 – Postcard of Juárez beer

upraised right hand and a flag in his left – with “JUAREZ” just above. Writing on left wing was illegible, but the right had “C. Jua. . . / S.A.” It is likely that the “CCJ SA” logo indicated “Cia Cerveceria Juárez, S.A.”

Serving Tray

Several eBay auctions have offered an oval serving tray centered around a slogan: “EXIJA [i.e., Demand!] / Juárez / y / RICHELIEU / SPLITS above a serving platter with a turkey dinner (Figure 5b-2). To the left of the turkey was a bottle of Juárez beer, with a bottle of Richelieu to the right. The inclusion of “CERVECERIA JUAREZ, S.A. (Juarez Brewery, Inc.)” on the top edge of the tray again left no question as to the location.



Figure 5b-2 – Serving tray with Juárez and Richelieu beer bottles (eBay)



Figure 5b-3 – Juárez bottle on serving tray (eBay)

The neck label on the Juárez bottle appears to be very similar to the one on the postcard, although the tray showed that the oval area was gold, with red on the wings (Figure 5b-3). The body label was rectangular in shape (instead of the shield shape of the one in the postcard) with red background enhanced by a white central oval and wings. Although the postcard showed what was clearly an amber export beer bottle, the container on the serving tray was a champagne-style beer bottle in aqua hue.

Label from eBay

A label offered on eBay was different but seemed to have similar antecedents. The label consisted of a gold-outlined, white oval with a white-outlined blue bar across center. The upper half of the oval stated “ELABORACION ESPECIAL (arch)” [special production] above a circle with the same drawing of a standing

Benito Juárez with his right hand upraised and a flag in his left hand. A smaller red circle had a large “C” with smaller “C’s” at top and bottom plus “S.A.” between the terminations of the large “C” (Figure 5b-4).

The blue bar was labeled “CERVECA FINISIMA [finest or best beer] / JUAREZ (horizontal)” in white letters, with a gold outline around the letters of “JUAREZ” The lower half of the oval noted “CIA CERVECERA / DE CHIHUAHUA, S.A. / CHIHUAHUA, CHIH. (all inverted arches).”



Figure 5b-4 – Juárez beer label (eBay)

Discussion

These three sources suggest several things. First, the Juárez brand of beer was bottled in both champagne and export containers. The paper labels also went through changes, although some characteristics remained.

Of greater interest, the brand outlived the brewery – into the post-Prohibition era. The similarity between the labels used at Juárez and those applied later at Chihuahua indicates a continuity of the brand. The drawing of the standing Benito Juárez was virtually identical on all three labels. The logo or monogram also showed more similarities. In both the Juárez and Chihuahua labels, the monograms were centered around a large central “C” with “S.A.” between the terminations. I have found no evidence, however, that the brand survived for very long after the end of the Juárez Brewery.

Richelieu Beer

The Magnolia Brewery of the Houston Ice and Brewing Co. introduced Richelieu Beer in January 1909. The firm brewed the drink using methods perfected at the town of Pilsen, Bohemia (now Czech Republic). The town lent its name to the Pilsener beers that were light and golden. The Houston plant only offered Richelieu in kegs (Aulbach 2012). Although I have been unable to find a specific reference, the Houston firm must have discontinued Richelieu fairly soon after the institution of Prohibition.

At some point, the Juárez Brewery began to bottle Richelieu (Figure 5b-5). The tray described in the Juárez Beer section above (see Figure 5b-2) also illustrated an export-style beer bottle with a Richelieu paper label. The neck label was identical with the neck label on the Juárez Beer bottle described above. The grey rectangular paper body label had a white diagonal banner across the center with “RICHELIEU” in red letters. A full-color drawing of Cardinal Richelieu graced the upper left corner, while the logo described on the Juárez beer bottle (above) occupied the lower right corner, just above “CIA. CERVECERA [DE] / C. JUAREZ, S.A.”



Figure 5b-5 – Richelieu beer on serving tray (eBay)

The brand was certainly in place within the first two years of the plant’s operation. From November 17 to 24, 1924, the American Federation of Labor met with the Mexican Federation of Labor at Ciudad Juárez. On the last night of the convention, the members attended a feast. Langston (1974:87) described the event at a

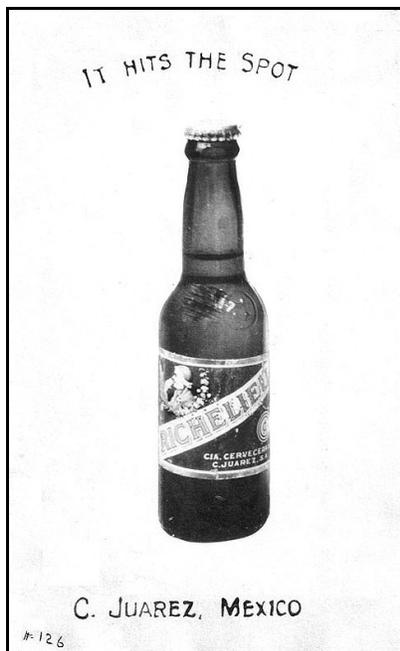


Figure 5b-6 – Richelieu postcard (eBay)

bar over one hundred feet long. Twenty bartenders pulled corks from endless numbers of light and dark bottles of Richelieu beer supplied from the nearby Juarez Brewery. Thirsty men returned time and time again, often carrying away a half-dozen bottles of “real” beer ostensibly for wives and other guests.

A postcard from ca. 1926 also illustrated the export-style bottle. Unlike the drawing on the tray, the bottle on the postcard did not have a neck label, although the body label was identical (Figure 5b-6). It is likely that the brewery continued to bottle Richelieu until the end of Prohibition. However, I have found no evidence that the Cruz Blanca Brewery carried the brand once it took control of the Juárez operation.

America Beer

I have only seen two references to the brand – on an envelope return address and on a postcard. The envelope had a complex woodcut that illustrated the later plant (virtually identical with Figure 5a-15) along with “Juarez, Richelieu y America.” The postcard also seems to show the later brewery and probably means that America Beer was only offered during the last few years prior to the Cruz Blanca acquisition, probably in the mid-1930s (Figure 5b-7).



Figure 5b-7 – Juárez Brewery postcard (eBay)

Post-Prohibition – Cervecaría Cruz Blanca

Although Cia. Cervecera de Chihuahua, S.A. (Chihuahua Brewing Co.), operated the Cervecaría Cruz Blanca (Cruz Blanca Brewery) for over a century in at least four locations, this study is primarily concerned with the Juárez branch, probably in operation from the mid-1930s to the late 1980s. The Juárez plant brewed and/or bottled at least four brands (as well as briefly continuing Juárez beer) – although one brand was only packaged in cans. Each is discussed below.

A few key dates are important for understanding the timing of the brand variations offered by Cerveceria Cruz Blanca. First, Cia. Cervecera de Chihuahua, S.A. purchased the Juárez plant sometime soon after the U.S. Repeal of Prohibition. Thus, all Chihuahua Brewing Co. brands marked with the Juárez location could not have been bottled or prior to ca. 1934. Second, some brands – along with canned beer – appear to have been initiated in the mid- to late 1960s, and these were probably produced very soon after VISA took over the Chihuahua Brewing Co. in 1965. VISA also apparently closed the Chihuahua brewery (along with the other two that had opened at some point). Finally, when VISA was reorganized as FEMSA in 1988, the firm apparently closed the Juárez branch, effectively terminating the former Chihuahua Brewing Co. brands.

Cruz Blanca

The namesake and flagship brand for Cervecería Cruz Blanca was Cerveca Cruz Blanca (White Cross Beer). Although this study is about Juárez, it is certain that the other brewery locations of the Chihuahua Brewing Co. also bottled this brew. The company offered Cruz Blanca in both bottles and cans.

Paper-Labeled Bottles

Bottles with paper labels were the mainstay of Cruz Blanca – as with virtually all beer brands. These apparently went through three major label variations – all apparently used on 12-ounce bottles (and some smaller containers). The following very rough chronology (Table 5b-1) is mostly based on serving trays featured by Mark Rogers (Rogers 2012).

Table 5b-1 – Chronology of Cruz Blanca Paper Label Changes

Date Range	Description
ca. 1935-1950s	Complex oval body label with “CRUZ BLANCA” in blue bar across center, white cross above bar. “CERVECERIA de CHIHUAHUA, S.A.” in arch at top. White cross in center of circle on neck ring (Figure 5b-8)
1950s-ca. 1965	Rectangular body label with red circle in center, white cross inside circle. “CRUZ BLANCA” inside crossbar. No neck label (Figure 5b-9)
ca. 1965-1988	Rectangular body label with red shield in center (<i>no</i> white cross). “CRUZ / BLANCA” in shield. No neck label (Figure 5b-10)

Cruz Blanca in Cans

At some point, probably ca. 1965, the Chihuahua Brewing Co. offered Cruz Blanca in cans. These had the same shield that was used in the third style of paper label discussed above. The cans were gold in color with a white central area and red shields on both front and back (Figures 5b-11, 5b-12, & 5b-13). The only examples I have seen had ring-pull tabs as openers (Figure 5b-14). The ring-pull was initiated in the United States in 1965 and remained in use until ca. 1974, when it was replaced by the stay-tab (see tab opener discussion in Chapter 7g).



Figure 5b-8 – Cruz Blanca tray – 1930s (Rogers 2010)



Figure 5b-9 – Cruz Blanca tray – 1950s (Rogers 2010)



Figure 5b-10 – Cruz Blanca tray – 1980s (Rogers 2010)



Figure 5b-11 – Cruz Blanca can – front (eBay)



Figure 5b-12 – Cruz Blanca can – side (eBay)



Figure 5b-13 – Cruz Blanca can – manufacturer's mark (eBay)



Figure 5b-14 – Cruz Blanca can – pull-tab (eBay)

Assuming that the sequence was similar in Mexico, the cans may only have been in use during the 1970s. It is possible, of course, that the cans were also made in stay-tab format or that the ring-pulls were used longer in Mexico. It is also possible that the cans were introduced in the late 1960s and continued in production until ca. 1985.

Chihuahua Mexican Beer

I have only been able to find one label style for Chihuahua Mexican Beer – although it had at least three slight variations. Each variation featured a gold-bordered rectangle with a horizontal oval in the center. The gold oval was bisected by a white bar containing

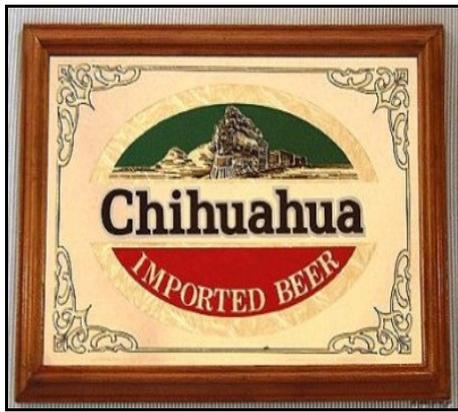


Figure 5b-16 – Advertising mirror for Chihuahua Imported Beer (eBay)

the word “Chihuahua” in black letters.

The top half of the oval showed a steam locomotive on a green background with number 310 on the front below “BREWED AND BOTTLED IN MEXICO (arch)” in yellow letters. The lower half was red with “MEXICAN BEER (inverted arch)” in gold letters and “CERVECERIA CRUZ BLANCA, S.A., CD. JUAREZ, CHIH. MEXICO” in gold on the outer edge (Figure 5b-15).

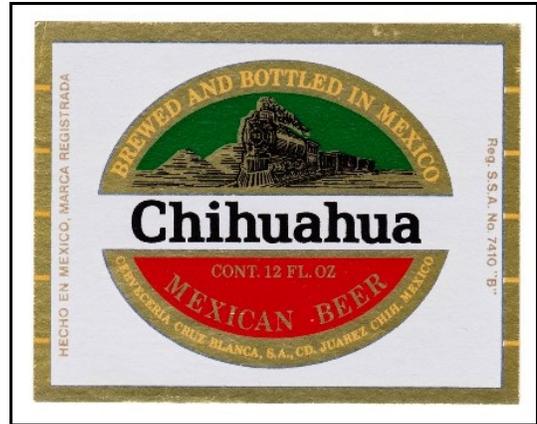


Figure 5b-15 – Chihuahua Mexican Beer body label

At least four variations of this paper label exist (listed below in probable chronological order):

1. “IMPORTED BEER” (horizontal) – CERVECERIA CRUZ BLANCA
2. “IMPORTED BEER” (inverted arch) – CERVECERIA CRUZ BLANCA (Figure 5b-16)²
3. “MEXICAN BEER” (inverted arch) – CERVECERIA CRUZ BLANCA (see Figure 5b-15)
4. “MEXICAN BEER” (inverted arch) – CERVECERIA CUAUHTEMOC, S.A. DE C.V., MONTERREY, MEXICO

All of the paper labels I have seen included “CONT. 12 FL. OZ.” in the red lower section. At least one advertising mirror noted that the beer was “IMPORTED BY WISDOM IMPORT SALES COMPANY, IRVINE, CALIFORNIA, 92714 [and] CIBCO IMPORTING COMPANY, WOODLANDS, TEXAS 77380. Assuming that Variations 1 and 2 were actually used on bottles

² I have only found Variations 1 and 2 on mirrors. These may not have been used on actual bottles.



Figure 5b-17 – Chihuahua Mexican Beer neck label

(see footnote), the “IMPORTED BEER” designation was almost certainly used first. Since some mirrors used zip codes, they could not have been made earlier than the early 1960s.

The only example of a bottle I have examined had the No. 3 label and a neck label with “PRODUCT OF MEXICO” above the typical green-and-red oval with “IMPORTED” in the center. Below that was “IMPORTED BY: WISDOM IMPORT SALES CO., INC., IRVINE, CA.”



Figure 5b-19 – Base of Chihuahua Mexican Beer bottle

(Figure 5b-17). The bottle was colorless, export style, with a crown finish (Figure 5b-18). The base had crescent stippling around the resting point and was embossed “•5 {check mark with dot underneath} 35” (Figure 5b-19). The central logo was used by Vidriera Querétaro, S.A., at some point after 1982 but was in place by 1992 (Emhart 1982:50; 1996:35). Thus, the “•5” *could* be a date code for 1985.



Figure 5b-18 – Bottle with Chihuahua Mexican Beer label

The brand likely came into use during the late 1960s, probably soon after the purchase of the firm by VISA in 1965 (see Chapter 5a). Since Cervecería Cruz Blanca closed ca. 1988 or a bit later, Variation 3 was almost certainly terminated about that time. The brand was probably only continued by Cervecería Cuauhtemoc for a fairly short time.

The firm also offered the beer in a seven-ounce bottle. The only example I have seen had an Applied Color Lettering (ACL) body label. Aside from “CONT. 7 FL. OZ.” in place of the 12-ounce designation, the label was virtually identical to the one described at the beginning of this section. The left side of the label, however, included “IMP. BY: WISDOM IMPORT SALES CO. INC. IRVINE, CA. / PRODUCT OF MEXICO.” The right side stated “HECHO EN MEXICO MARCA REGISTRADA / Reg. S.S.A. No. 7410 ‘B’” (Figure 5b-20). The bottle



Figure 5b-20 – Chihuahua Beer ACL bottle

was embossed “•6 {check mark} (with a dot above it) 22 (Figure 5b-21).

Although we have not yet broken the Mexican code sequence, the logo was used by Vidriera Monterrey at either the Monterrey or Nueva Leon plant.

As with the logo above, the manufacturer’s mark was first used sometime after 1982. It is possible that the “•6” was a date code for 1986 (Emhart 1982:50; 1996:35).



Figure 5b-21 – Heel of ACL bottle

Liston Azul

Unlike the other beer brands offered by the former Chihuahua Brewing Co., this one was only offered in cans – in two different styles plus one sub-variation. The first of these, probably available ca. 1965 or a bit later, had a white background with horizontal silver stripes. The label depicted a blue-outlined red medallion suspended from a light blue ribbon. Inside the medallion was a white cross with “CRUZ BLANCA” in light blue letters, with “CERVECA” in the upper bar and “FINA” in the lower one (white cross, fine beer).



Figure 5b-22 – Early Liston Azul can (eBay)

In a light blue bar at the heel was “LISTON AZUL” (blue ribbon) in white letters (Figure 5b-22). The name was chosen to denote quality, and the brand sold for a bit more than Cruz Blanca. The cans were filled at the Juárez plant (Jiménez 2012).



Figure 5b-23 – Middle Liston Azul can

At some point, possibly as early as 1970, the emphasis shifted, and the can was redesigned. The blue color became much darker, and the cross disappeared from the medallion, which now read “CERVECA / LISON / AZUL / FINA” in white letters on a dark blue background. “CRUZ BLANCA” had replaced a white “LISON AZUL” in the blue bar at the heel (Figure 5b-23). These cans were opened with ring-pull tops that has “smile”

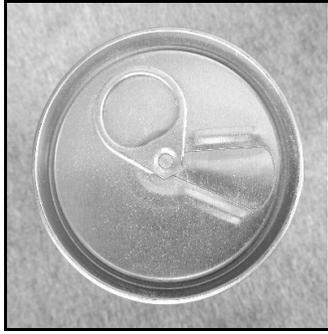


Figure 5b-24 – Top of middle Liston Azul can

bumps (Figure 5b-24).³ At some point, the top was improved by a platform that created an indented circle around the edge, allowing easier access to the ring (Figure 5b-25).

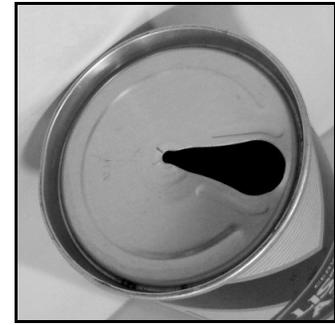


Figure 5b-25 – Improved top of middle Liston Azul Can

The final sub-variation was identical to the blue can with three exceptions. First the words “CRUZ BLANCA” had been removed from the heel bar (Figure 5b-26). Second, two raised platforms had now appeared on the top of the can – although it was still opened with a ring-pull device (Figure 5b-27). Finally, “BEBIDA DE MODERACIO” (drink in moderation) had been added to the brewery information along the seam (Figure 5b-28). According to Jiménez (2012), the firm actively reduced its inventory of brands – probably including *all* remaining brands from the former Chihuahua Brewing Co. – ca. 1985. However, it is virtually impossible to determine when the final sub-variation was first used.



Figure 5b-26 – Final Liston Azul can

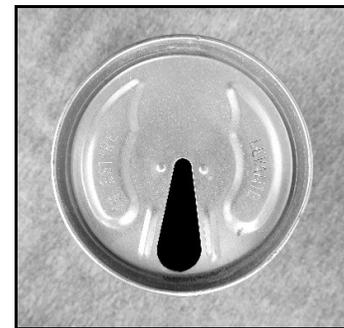


Figure 5b-27 – Top of final Liston Azul can

Nude Beer

The idea of nudity (notably the female body) to sell beer and other bottled products is certainly not new. Early Coca-Cola trays were a bit racy, showing semi-nude women, and Psych – the bare-breasted fairy on White Rock sparkling water labels – made her debut in

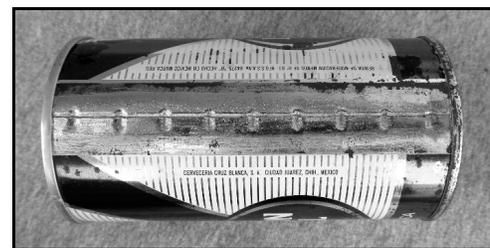


Figure 5b-28 – Side seam of final Liston Azul can

³ See discussion about the development of pop-tops and accompanying characteristics on U.S. cans in Chapter 7g.



Figure 5b-29 – Nude Beer – Hammonton, NJ (eBay)

1893 (White Rock 2008). Although pre-Prohibition ads targeted families of the working class, the Cape Brewery & Ice Co., Cape Girardeau, Missouri, issued a 1904 nude calendar. Swimsuit calendars followed the return of legalized drinking (Gee 2003:27).

A completely new idea appeared in 1983, when W.H. Boam coupled the use of naked women with the “scratch” coating used on lottery tickets to temporarily cover the bare breasts of models, whose photos appeared on the labels (Figure 5b-29). The purchaser

could then scratch with a fingernail or coin to remove the “bra” and receive a vicarious titillation along with his (or her) beer. Although the California Alcoholic Beverage Control Board failed to approve Boam’s idea, the Eastern Brewing Co. of Hammonton, New Jersey, bought the idea and introduced Nude Beer (Gee 2003:28).

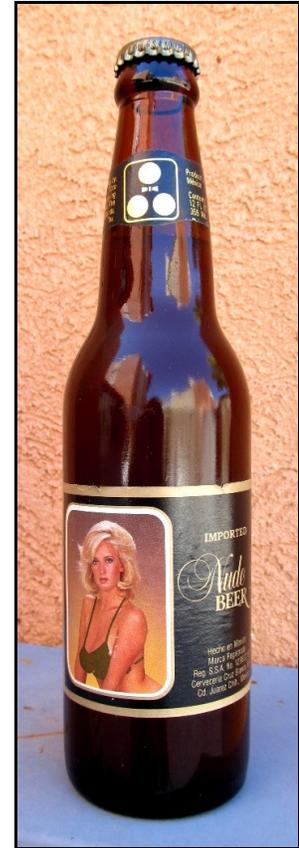


Figure 5b-30 – Nude Beer bottle – Juárez

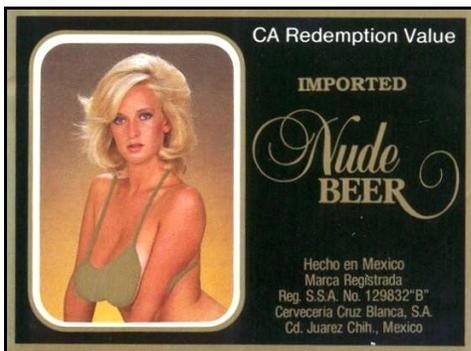


Figure 5b-31 – Nude Beer label – Juárez (eBay)

Meanwhile, Imported Nude Beer (with a different font and label style) was brewed by Cerveceria Cruz Blanca in Juárez, Mexico (Figure 5b-30 & 5b-31). Gee (2003:28) noted that “this run was contract brewed for the Golden Beverage Co. of Irvine, California, a company that also produced ‘Nude Bar Snacks.’” Neck labels on the bottles, however, stated that the beer was “Imp by: Cibco Importing Co. Inc. The

Woodlands, Tex.” (Figure 5b-32).

In 1986, the brand moved to the Lion Brewery at Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania, still under contract for the Golden Beverage Co. (Gee 2003:28; Yahoo Answers 2012). Labels on the Wilkes Barre bottles



Figure 5b-32 – Neck Label from Juárez Nude Beer



Figure 5b-33 – Nude Beer bottle – Wilkes Barre (eBay)

noted Golden as operating from that city and used a logo identical to that of the Imported Nude Beer from Juárez (Figures 5b-33 & 5b-34). Gee (2003:28) also noted that photos of models from Golden's Wilkes Barre Nude Beer labels are numbered from 4 to 59, and Yahoo Answers (2012) added that the Juárez plant used the first three numbers in the series.

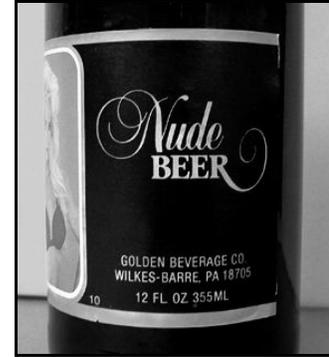


Figure 5b-34 – Closeup of Wilkes Barre label (eBay)

The idea then spread to Europe, and several “scratch” beers have been offered for export including such names as Pin Up Beer, Rubber Sexy Pils, and Tatra Export Lager (Gee 2003:28). Yahoo Answers (2012) added that “Nude Beer is back. Don Harvard of CA based Naked Brew, Inc. has devised an updated version of Nude Beer with peel off labels. His tag line, ‘Peel to Reveal.’” Like the later Wilkes Barre bottles, these are no longer brewed at Juárez.

It appears highly likely that Nude Beer was brewed and/or bottled at the Juárez Cruz Blanca plant from ca. 1984 to ca. 1986. This was during the period when VISA had acquired the Chihuahua Brewing Co. and was offering a variety of brands. Nude beer was almost certainly one of the brands discontinued about the time of the FEMSA reorganization.

The Juárez brew was bottled in returnable, 12-ounce export bottles. Golden Beverage Co., however, used 12-ounce “tavern” style non-returnable or select-style non-returnable bottles with labels that were similar to the ones from Mexico. The Eastern Brewing Corp. used a shorter non-returnable bottle.

Cerveca Hombre

The very little information I have on this brand comes from a label originally offered at eBay auction. The label centered around a vaquero on a white horse that is shying from a rattlesnake. Above the desert scene is CERVECA / HOMBRE. The side of the label gave details: HECHO EN MEXICO. IMP. BY RUBINOFF IMPORTING CO., INC., THE

WOODLANDS, TX / MARCA REGISTRADA Reg. S.S.A. No. 129950 “B” CERVECERIA CRUZ BLANCA, S.A., CD. JUAREZ, CHIH. MEXICO. A horse and rider adorned the center of the neck label with “IMPORTED MEXICAN BEER” around it. The label was for a 12-ounce bottle (Figure 5b-35).

Unfortunately, this provides virtually no information about the actual product or the time period. The Virginia Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (Commonwealth of Virginia 1985) tested Hombre on January 25, 1985, noting that it contained 4.38% alcohol by volume and approved the brand the same day. It is likely that Cerveca Hombre was only sold very briefly during the mid-1980s.

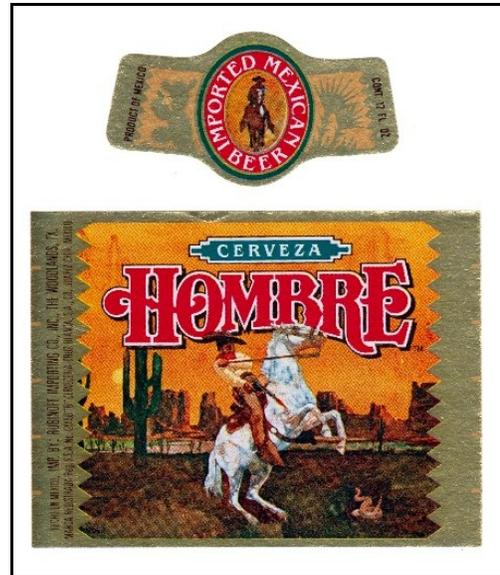


Figure 5b-35 – Cerveca Hombre label

Cruz Blanca Soda Bottles

Although I have discovered very little about the brand, a Cruz Blanca soft drink was sold in Ciudad Juárez during the 1940s. A Juárez soda bottler, Embotelladora de la Frontera S.A., carried Cruz-Blanca in colorless bottles with white and red ACL labels. The six-ounce bottle was cylindrical with eight flat panels in sets of two around the neck/shoulder and heel (Figure 5b-36).

The front body label consisted of a red-outlined, round-cornered, red vertical rectangle that formed a background for a broad, white cross with “SODA / CRUZ-BLANCA / FINA” [White Cross Fine Soda] stenciled into it. “EMOTELLADORA DE LA FRONTERA S.A.” (white ACL) extended in an arch over the cross, with C. JUAREZ, CHIH. (white ACL) under the cross [Bottler of the Border, Inc. - Juarez [City], Chihuahua].



Figure 5b-36 – Cruz Blanca soda bottle

The back of the bottle was labeled “ESTA BOTELLA ESTA / ESTERILIZADA [This Bottle is Sterilized] / EMBOTELLADA POR / EMBOTELLADORA / DE LA FRONTERA S.A. / AV FERROCARRIL 519 SUR / CIUDAD JUAREZ, CHIH.” The heel of the bottle was embossed “612-2 L-G” with “48” on the base. The bottle was made by the Liberty Glass Co. in 1948, clearly showing that both the bottler and the brand were in existence during that year.

Although tracing the history of this soda bottler is beyond the scope of this work, a firm with the same name still bottles Coca-Cola and other soft drinks at Juárez in 2012.

Discussion and Conclusions

It is clear from the above information and the history section (Chapter 5a) that Ciudad Juárez had a long and rich brewing history. It is interesting, however, that there was so little continuity of brands as the brewery changed owners and/or names. For example, when the El Paso Brewery ceased operation in 1920, its brands (Southern Bud and Premium) were never revived at the Juárez plant.

It may be that the infusion of Mexican directors caused the firm to aim for beer with a more Mexican “flavor” – i.e., the Juarez brand. Why Richelieu was chosen, however, is a complete mystery. American Beer was apparently aimed at the U.S. audience, although it never seems to have become popular.

Neither American nor Richelieu survived the transition from the Juárez Brewery to the Chihuahua Brewing Assn., although the new firm continued Juarez Beer briefly. Again, when VISA eliminated the former Cerveceria Cruz Blanca plant at Juárez, it also discontinued all of the brands except Chihuahua Beer. But, that brand, too, only survived for a short period.

The relationship between the Cruz Blanca brand of beer and Cruz Blanca soda is also unclear. It is highly likely, of course, that the soda bottler merely used the name. It is equally possible that the soda brand only survived for a short time. The Chihuahua Brewing Assn. may have threatened the bottler. In any event, we are richer for the survival of the bottles.

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