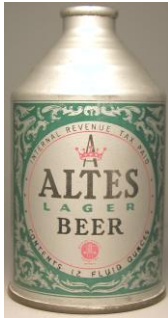


MICHIGAN “DID YOU KNOW” – ALTES CROWNTAINERS

By Randy Karasek



Ok, admit it. Your first thought when you hear mention of Altes crowntainers is maybe one or two rather bland looking crowns, either the one green and silver (pictured on the left) or the other with green, silver, and yellow in the inner oval (pictured on the right). However, did you know there are actually 10 variations of these crowns?



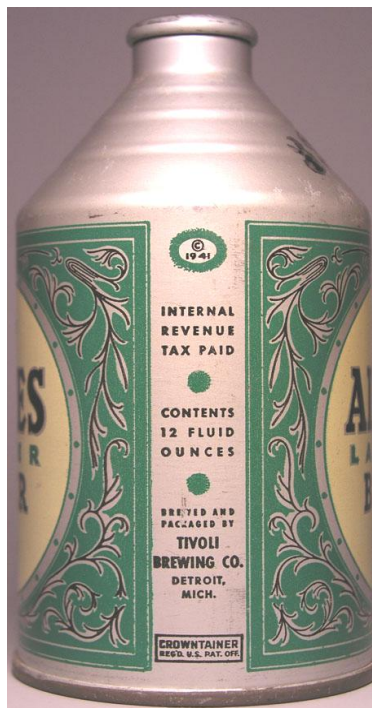
First some background information. The Tivoli brewery of Detroit, Michigan produced beer from 1897-1948, with its flagship brand being “Altes Lager Beer”. That brand was so popular the brewery renamed itself Altes in 1948, keeping that name until purchased by the National Brewing Company of Baltimore in 1954.

Yellow Altes crown – Three variations

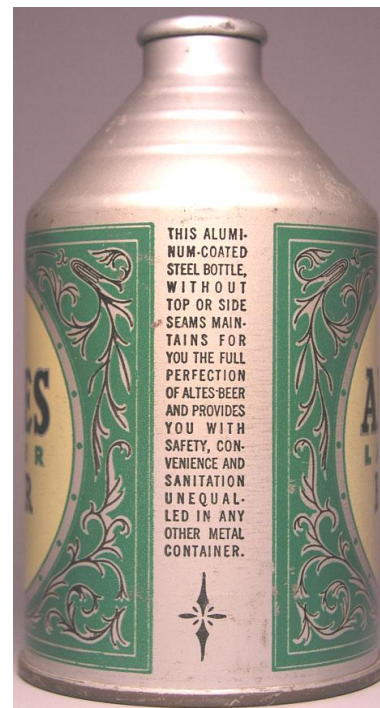
There are three variations of the yellow Altes crowntainer, all with the same yellow oval face, with differences on the side panels. The first is USBC 192-01, and while the most “common” of the three yellow oval cans, by no means easy to obtain, especially in on-grade condition



USBC 192-01

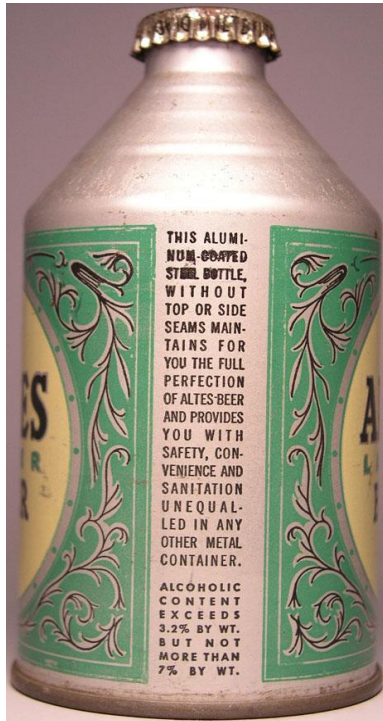


Left Side Panel



Right Side Panel

The other yellow variations are even tougher. The second is USBC 192-02, which has the same brewery mandatory but on the opposite side has the “star” replaced with the text “ALCOHOLIC CONTENT EXCEEDS 3.2% BY WT. BUT NOT MORE THAN 7% BY WT.”. Since Michigan didn’t require alcohol statements this variation must have been targeted for out of state distribution, likely Ohio or Minnesota.



USBC 192-02



Unlisted WF variation

The third yellow variation is super tough, with currently only one known example. Same left side panel as USBC 192-01, but notice the change on the brewery mandatory panel. Instead of the usual IRTP statement, notice the text “WITHDRAWN FREE OF INTERNAL TAX FOR EXPORTATION”. While no definitive brewery records, the most logical theory is Tivoli was also marketing their beer to outside the US to Canada, just a short drive or boat trip from Detroit. This pictured single known example resides in the advanced collection of a Michigan specialist.

Silver Altes crown – Five variations

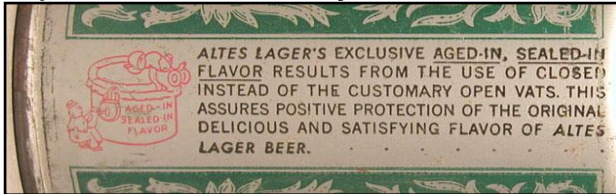
There are five variations of the green and silver crowntainer, four from Tivoli (USBC 192-03) and the fifth with same design (USBC 192-04) continued after the Tivoli to Altes brewery rename. All have the same front and back faces, again with the minor variations on either the left or right side panel, with two variations differing by only a single letter!

#1) Tivoli – Customery / Assures



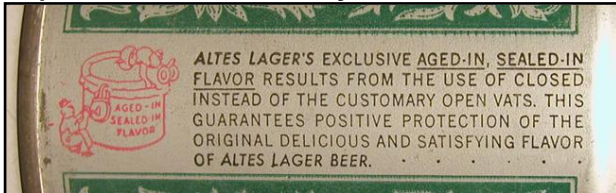
USBC 192-03.1 : Tivoli brewery
Has the text “Customery Open Vats”, spelled with an “e” instead of an “a”.
Printing mistake or creative marketing?
Also has “Assures Positive Protection”

#2) Tivoli – Customary / Assures



USBC 192-03.2 : Tivoli brewery
Has the text “Customary Open Vats” now spelled with the more correct “a”.
Small change to modify a can design!
Still has “Assures Positive Protection”

#3) Tivoli – Customary / Guarantees



USBC 192-03.3 : Tivoli brewery
Still has “Customary” spelled with an “a” but now the word “Assures” has been changed to “Guarantees”. Why yet another minor can design change?

#4) Altes – Customary / Assures



USBC 192-04 : Altes brewery
Same side panel as above 192-03.2 but brewery mandatory has changed from Tivoli to Altes, and has “Assures” instead of “Guarantees”

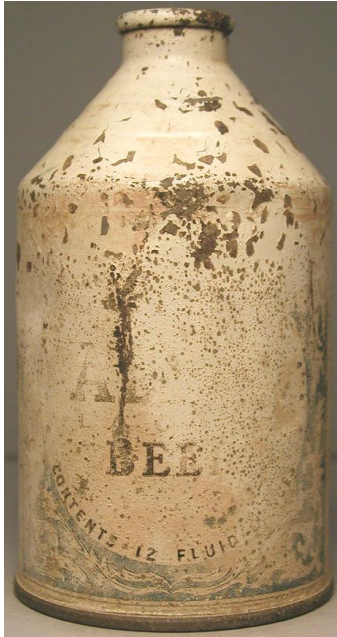
And finally, the fifth green and silver is an unlisted 3.2-7% alcohol statement variation from the Tivoli brewery. Notice the text “EXCEEDS 3.2% BUT NOT MORE THAN 7% ALCOHOL BY WEIGHT”. No matching 3.2-7% from the Altes brewery is known.



#5) Unlisted 3.2-7% Variation

Two more “oddball” variations

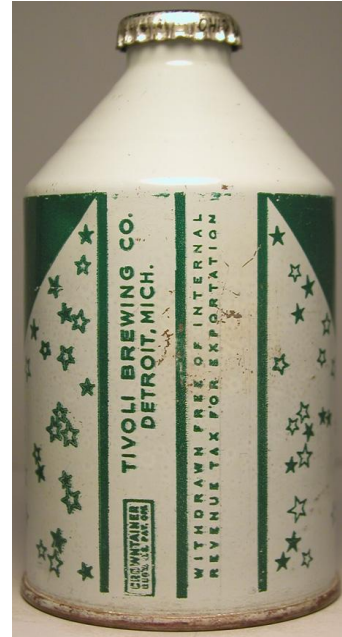
Eight variations discussed so far, but still need two more for a total of 10, and that brings us to USBC 192-05 and USBC 192-06.



USBC 192-05



USBC 192-06 (Front)



USBC 192-06 (Back)

Not sure what to make of USBC 192-05, found by Dick Adamowicz in one of those \$1 boxes years ago. This can appears to have the same green Altes design but over white ceramic, not silver as all the rest. Is this can a limited design run, no aluminum powder due to WWII, a test can experimenting with white, or just a simple production mistake? Perhaps the same top-level Altes design painted over supply of white ceramic can bodies originally planned for USBC 192-06? While likely real reason will never be known, this white background example appears unique. Note: This can was brewed by Tivoli, not Altes as listed in the USBC. Even when holding this can in person or looking at the high resolution TIFF images it is difficult, but possible, to read that Tivoli brewery, not Altes.

And finally we have USBC 192-06, a “generic” propeller withdrawn free beer, with a green “V” for “Victory”. This doesn’t fit with either green and silver design, but it does closely match a number of other propeller HP cones from breweries such as Largay, American, and Schlitz, or other propeller flat tops from breweries such as Jacob Ruppert, Seattle Brewing and Schlitz. What would lead multiple breweries to produce essentially the same design with “generic” beer, with no brewery info prominently displayed on the can face? Consensus among collectors is this design was produced for military use during WWII, and my theory there must have been a coordinated effort among the brewers (perhaps by government request?) to end up with almost identical designs. Super tough variation with only one 100% verified and a second believed to exist.

If you want to see more pictures of any of the above, or of other Michigan variations, please see my website for the “Michigan Beer Cans” project at <http://www.mbcinfo.com>