

HEART OF THE VALLEY HOMEBREWERS

THIS is the HOTV BREWSLETTER
VOLUME XX, NUMBER 9
September 2001

PRESIDENT: Scott Caul
(541) 757-1190
prez@hotv.org

NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Kendall Staggs
(541) 753-6538

THIS MONTH'S MEETING

The Heart of the Valley Homebrew Club meets on the third Wednesday of each month, alternating between Corvallis and Albany. Our next meeting will be Wednesday, September 20, at 7:00 p.m. at the home of Scott and Holly Leonard, 34121 Highway 99E, in Tangent. Parking is limited in Scott's driveway and on the easement on the north side of his house, but there are spaces across the highway in the McFarland School parking lot. (Frogger for your life when crossing the road.)

>From Corvallis take Hwy 34 west. Exit on Tangent Road (Highway 99E) and go north 1.5 miles. Scott's house is on the right (east) side of the road, past the Goodyear store and the hay field next to it. From Albany, take Highway 99E south past the Target distribution center. Look for Scott's house between Earl's Oregon RV Appliance Repair and Merle's Well Drilling. Ahhh, Tangent. The rest of the information is the same as above. Scott's phone number is 791-3291.

HOTV HOMEBREWERS' PICNIC by Kendall Staggs

Our club held its annual Homebrewers' Picnic on Saturday, August 5, from noon to 6:00 p.m. at Grand Prairie Park in Albany. A pleasant time was had by all. There was lots of good beer and wonderful food, including Lee's famous deep-fried Cajun turkey, roasted sweet corn, lots of casseroles, veggies, chips, and dips, and several berry good desserts.

Activities for the kids included water balloon catapulting and pinata bashing. Many of the adults forfeited their dignity by participating in the dunk tank competition. More humiliating perhaps than going into the water was the poor marksmanship shown by the softball throwers (especially me). But it turned out to be good natured fun, and I found that although getting dunked was rather shocking, being wet afterwards was a nice way to stay cool on a hot summer afternoon.

It was great to see so many new faces and old

CLUB-ONLY COMPETITIONS by Kendall Staggs (from Zymurgy)

Here is the upcoming schedule of club-only homebrew competitions. I encourage you to brew one of these in time to enter it so our club can have some winners and tally some points.

Mid-October Category 9:
German Amber Lager ("Best of Fest")
[Märzens]

Early December Category 24:
Historical Beers
[example: pre-Prohibition lager]

READING ABOUT BEER by Kendall Staggs

I have a recommendation for those of you who like to read about beer (or just look at pictures of good beer). Stephen Beaumont's "Premium Beer Drinker's Guide: The World's Strongest, Boldest, and Most Unusual Beers" is a handsome, 224-page softbound book (\$25) that contains a wealth of information and is very attractively packaged. Beaumont, who is the author of several beer books, numerous articles in Malt Advocate and other magazines, and the on-line source, Stephen Beaumont's World of Beer (www.worldofbeer.com), profiles more than 60 brands representing over 30 styles including Doppelbocks, Abbey style beers, Barleywines, Scotch Ales, and exotic brews in his latest work. No matter what your beer expertise level is, this book will inform and intrigue you.

HAS THE GOOD BEER REVOLUTION COME TO AN END? adopted from an editorial by Tom Dalldorf, Celebrator Beer News, August / September, 2001

Recently the Associated Press ran an article entitled, "Specialty Beer Market Fizzles." A caption under the photo of David Geary, owner of the D.L. Geary Brewing Company of Maine, read "A few years ago connoisseurs thought small breweries and their tasty ales, pilsners, and stouts were going to turn the beer industry on its ear. But the demand for those specialty beers has never fulfilled expectations."

Tom Dalldorf, the editor of Celebrator Beer News, asked, "Whose expectations?" The most optimistic promoters of craft beers never expected the small breweries who turn out these products to make a serious dent in the market shares of the

faces, and to meet more of our club members' families. Thanks to Scott Caul, Lee Smith, Sarah Whiteside, and all the folks who worked to make the picnic a great success.

OKTOBERFEST BRAISED BEEF (OR LAMB)

by Helen Smith
Chuck, thin-sliced steaks, browned, then oven cooked (WINTER DISH)
Serves 6 to 8

bacon fat or olive oil
3 pounds beef chuck, cut into 1/2-inch slices (s&p)
2 large onions (about 1 1/2 pounds), thinly sliced
3-4 garlic cloves, coarsely sliced
2 TBS flour after browning onions
3 cups of a good Oktoberfest beer
4 sprigs thyme or SAVORY (1/2 tsp dry)
3 sprigs flat-leaf parsley
3 bay leaves

Adjust rack to bottom third of oven, and heat to 325 degrees. In a medium-large Dutch oven, add bacon fat

Season beef with salt and pepper and raise heat to medium high. Working in batches, brown meat, 1 to 2 minutes per side. As each batch is browned, transfer to a medium bowl; set aside. DO NOT CROWD OR IT WILL STEW.

Add onion and cook about 8 minutes till brown, add flour, stir, add the rest, put meat back in with herbs and beer.

Bring to boil on stove, cover. Transfer to 325 degrees oven and cook 2 hours. Adjust seasonings and thickness of sauce.

I thicken mine with a beurre maniere--2 TBS butter and 1 TBS or so flour mixed into a paste with a fork and whisked into the sauce.

OREGON BREWERS' FESTIVAL by Kendall Staggs

The 13th annual Oregon Brewers' Festival was held at Portland's Tom McCall Waterfront Park from Friday, July 28, through Sunday, July 30. Bravely, or foolishly, whichever way you look at it, I attended all three sessions, and I had a super time. The total attendance for all three days exceeded 80,000.

There were 72 featured craft brews available for sampling. As you might expect, Oregon was well represented, along with breweries from Washington, Idaho, Montana, California, Arizona, Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, and Illinois. Among the highlights of this year's festival were nine beers from Hawaii. My overall impression was there were some really fun and tasty beers; some overhyped, not-so-great beers; some very mediocre beers; and some surprisingly awful beers that would fail to receive praise if offered as a beginner's homebrew at one of our meetings.

I personally did not sample any of the beers

megabrewers: Anheuser-Busch, Miller, and Coors. It would also have been very naïve to have believed that none of the craft breweries and brewpubs that were started in the last 20 years would fail. In Oregon we have recently seen the closings of Nor'Wester, Saxer, and the once mighty megabrewer, Blitz-Weinhard.

Amid all the stories of the demise of the craft brewers, some hard numbers emerge from the May / June, 2001 issue of The New Brewer. Eight of the top 20 craft brewers experienced double digit sales growth in 1999, including New Belgium (+41%), Mendicino (+31%), and Gordon Biersch (+30%). Among the other top 20 craft brewers which experienced significant sales growth in 1999 were Sierra Nevada, Widmer, Pyramid, Deschutes, Alaskan, Portland Brewing, and Goose Island of Chicago. D.L. Geary, incidentally, increased its sales in 1999 by 5%.

"The specialty beer industry is here to stay," Dalldorf says. "The tremendous growth in the late 1980s and early 1990s plateaued in the late 1990s." He went on to predict "continued prosperity for companies with great products, consistent and focused marketing, and solid distribution." "Our job," Dalldorf says, "should we chose to accept it, is to support these fine producers with our purchases and by evangelizing the good beer movement to everyone we know. Friends don't let friends drink boring beer."

BEER IN A PILL? by Adam Marcus, HealthSCOUT on-line magazine [from Scott Leonard]

It's news that would make Homer Simpson say "Doe!" One of the chief ingredients in beer apparently helps guard against heart problems, cancer, and even Alzheimer's disease. But there's a catch (of course). The molecule is so rare that a person would have to drink about 120 gallons of beer-or roughly 1300 12-ounce bottles-every day to reap the benefits.

A more likely option (and, obviously, a more survivable one) would be to distill the compound-a high-test anti-oxidant-into a pill that people could take as a supplement, the researchers say. A report on their findings appears in the latest issue of the Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry, a publication of the American Chemical Society.

Scientists recently learned that beer, particularly lagers, have anti-oxidant molecules. Hops, the herb that gives beer

that we can get locally all the time, so don't expect any Oregon beers on my Top Ten list. Here are my picks for the best beers of the festival:

1 Millennium Madness, Belgian Tripel, Snoqualmie Falls Brewery, Washington This beer hit all the right notes for a Belgian Tripel, a tricky style for an American microbrewery to get right. It was golden in color and deceptively light in body. The spicy notes of an authentic Belgian monastic ale were there, along with the alcohol punch. I talked to a lot of people at the festival, and this beer was acclaimed by experts and novices alike.

2 Wixa Weiss, German Weizenbier, Wynkoop Brewing, Denver Light gold in color, big white head, cloudy to style. Tons of banana notes and plenty of clove on the nose-the sign of real German Weizenbier yeast. Smooth, wheat beer flavors; fruity; substantial body. This was right on the mark for style, a good beer to accompany lunch, and one of the best beers in the entire festival.

3 Honolulu Helles, Münchener Helles, Fish & Game Brewery, Honolulu This was one of the pleasant surprises of the festival: an authentic German lager from Hawaii. Bright gold color; very clear; thick white head. German malt dominates the aroma, along with noble hops. A slightly sulfury but not offensive aroma is present, characteristic of a real German lager yeast strain. A smooth, biscuity malt flavor is evident, and there was plenty of hops for balance. It finished clean and crisp, and was very drinkable on a hot summer day. Very well crafted.

4 El Hefe, Weizenbock, Pinnacle Peak Brewing, Scottsdale, Arizona A good Weizenbock, that hybrid of a style between a Hefeweizen and a Bock. There were tons of fruity esters plus lots of clove in the nose, and a solid, malty body. This was an extremely well-made beer. Its only flaw was that it was a little too fruity.

5 Macadamia Nut Brown Ale, Brown Ale, Ali'i Brewing, Honolulu Dark brown color with a cream-colored head. Surprisingly fruity (peach) aroma, with some slightly roasty, chocolate malt notes. Chocolate malt dominated the palate. There was also a hint of nutty flavors and slight note of diacetyl. This was a good, solid Brown Ale. It was very drinkable and refreshing, and one of my favorite beers at the festival. It could have been featured more macadamia nuts and been even more exotic.

6 Gandy Dancer Honey Ale, Specialty Ale, Flossmoor Station, Flossmoor, Illinois This was a delicious, substantial beer made with orange blossom honey from the award-winning

its main flavor, has a number of these chemicals. One of them, xanthohumol (pronounced zan-tho-HUGH-mol), had been shown in previous studies to possess cancer-fighting properties, at least in the lab.

That work suggested that the molecule was a strong anti-oxidant, too, says Donald Buhler, an Oregon State University biochemist who helped discover xanthohumol's anti-cancer effects. So, in the latest study, Buhler and his colleagues isolated a number of anti-oxidants in hops and tested how well they prevented the oxidation of human low-density lipoprotein, or LDL cholesterol.

The researchers found that xanthohumol is six times more powerful an anti-oxidant than those found in citrus fruits, and four times stronger than those in soy foods. And when paired with vitamin E, another anti-oxidant, xanthohumol becomes even more potent, they say, preventing the oxidation of LDL, which is known as "bad" cholesterol.

Xanthohumol, which belongs to a family of compounds called flavonoids, proved to be even better at protecting LDL against oxygen damage than the anti-oxidants in green tea and red wine, each of which has been touted for its protective powers.

"It's certainly one of the most active" anti-oxidants, at least for LDL cholesterol, Buhler says. Other molecules might fare better in different tests, he says. Anti-oxidants have a knack for doing great work in the lab and in animals, but failing in studies of people.

But Cristobal Miranda, who's also an Oregon State biochemist and co-author of the study, says additional work by his group has shown that xanthohumol appears to be absorbed well by the body-suggesting, he says, that it will have clinical benefit. It also breaks down into two more anti-oxidants, multiplying its protective potential, Miranda says.

The problem, Buhler says, is that xanthohumol is such a small component of hops that it doesn't make sense to rely on beer to get it. It would be better, he says, to increase the xanthohumol content of hops, presumably through selective breeding or genetic engineering, or to make a non-alcoholic brew that's rich in the compound. But the best method in Buhler's mind would be to synthesize the molecule into a pill. "And if you want to drink a little beer with it, that's fine," he

brewery in the train station in the Chicago suburb where I went to high school. (There were certainly no brewpubs, good or bad, there in the 1970s.) This sparkling, golden brew had obvious honey notes, a pleasant hoppy nose, and a higher than average alcohol level, but was still very drinkable on a hot day.

7 Lüvin, Belgian Dubbel, Bert Grant's Brewery, Yakima, Washington This was another real surprise, especially given the sagging reputation of the Bert Grant beers. This was an authentic Belgian Dubbel, from its murky brown color to its extremely fruity nose and palate.

8 Longboard Lager, Bohemian Pilsner, Kona Brewing, Kailua-Kona, Hawaii A very drinkable Pilsner on a day that demanded a Pils. It had no serious flaws, a good malt character, and crisp hop notes.

9 Fourth Anniversary IPA, India Pale Ale, Stone Brewing, San Marcos, California This beer was HUGE! A remarkably well balanced IPA considering how much malt and hops were present. The aroma was very fruity, with telltale hops. The flavor was dominated by sweet malt and hops, with a definite alcohol punch in the mouthfeel. It would qualify as a Barleywine in many circles, and I would have enjoyed it better by a fireplace on a rainy winter night. From the folks who make Arrogant Bastard, another big, hoppy beer.

10 Windigo Wild Rice Ale, Specialty Ale, Elysian, Seattle Don't let the rice in the name turn you off. This was an extremely well crafted, well balanced beer. Its relatively light body and soft malt character were welcome on a hot day, especially given that many of the beers seemed to me to be too big, too dark, or too hoppy for the season.

The overrated, but not terrible, beers included Widmer's Cherry Bomb, a sweet and sour cherry-flavored Eisbock with a high level of fusel alcohols; and Incinerator, a smoked Doppelbock from Rogue Ales that was too much smoke and not enough Doppelbock for my tastes.

Some beers that were good but would have been better on a cooler day included Procrastinator, a Doppelbock from the Bell Tower Brewhouse in Vancouver; Moose Drool, a Brown Ale from Missoula, Montana; Decade IPA from Seattle's Big Time Brewing Company; and Bully! Porter from the Boulevard Brewery in Kansas City.

The beers I judged "undrinkable at any speed," were Buk Nakkid, an alleged Weizenbock from Casey's Restaurant, Post Falls, Idaho; Celtic Copper, an a so-called Scottish Ale from the

says.

DOWNING A BEER IN A PUBLIC TOILET by Jess Smee (Reuters) July 24, 2001, Halifax, England [from Dianna Fisher]

Downing a pint of beer in a public toilet is not everyone's idea of a night out, but in Halifax, Britain's pub capital, an ex-lavatory is pulling in the drinkers. The northern town overflows with more pubs per house than anywhere else in the country. Among its drinking houses is a converted bank, a cinema, and an underground public lavatory.

"It's a great haunt," one Halifax drinker said standing by the dark steps people used to descend for relief rather than refreshment. "It gets a bit packed, but apart from the entrance you'd never think of it as a public toilet." The bar, called W.C.s when it opened, became Number 15 after a management change. Around the corner, Coiners, a former bank, is another local favorite.

PubSpeak and The Real Ale Paper, are two pub newspapers, designed to keep drinkers up to date. The local paper, The Evening Courier, even boasts its own pub correspondent. "It's a classic pub town," said Steven Fletcher, who covers news from the bars. With one pub for every 331 houses, twice the national average, Halifax tops the national list. At the dry end of the spectrum, Sutton in southern England has one pub for 17,000 dwellings.

Over in a more traditional public house, The Brass Cat, amid lingering smoke, the landlord said business is booming despite stiff competition. "It's not just locals," the stocky patron said, pulling a pint of Tetley's, a bitter brewed in nearby Leeds. "People come in from all around. The bars are in a tiny area and people like to stagger from one to another."

But the city, formerly awash with breweries, has seen taste for real ale decline with the industry. Now Halifax's party-seeking drinkers prefer to sip lager, according to Nick Laub, manager of the colorful Bar Centro. "Real ales are my worst seller," he said, adding that Friday-night revelers wash down an average 3500 pints of lager in his spacious venue.

Even during a mid-week lunchtime, drinkers of all ages chatted in the well-lit building which formerly sold electrical appliances. "I aim for a nice airy feel that doesn't offend anyone," Laub said,

Raccoon Lodge Brewpub in Portland; Riverwest Stein Beer, an "Amber Lager" from the Lakefront Brewery in Milwaukee, WI; Fairbanks Lager, an so-called Vienna from the Silver Gulch Brewery in Fairbanks, Alaska; and Oud Bruin, an alleged Belgian Red Ale from Rivermarket Brewing in Kansas City that simply tasted like a spoiled homebrew.

There were many good beers, and despite what my top ten list seems to indicate, most of the patrons were raving about the Oregon beers. I have concluded that Oregon beers may not always be the very best, but as a group, they are generally consistent and well-made. "Hipahipa" ("cheers" in Hawaiian) to all the HOTVers who were able to attend the festival. Mark your calendars; next year's festival is only ten months away.

Finally, special thanks to Scott Leonard for accompanying me to the festival and offering his input on many of the beer reviews.

MOTHERS AGAINST DRUNK ROLLERS?

(Reuters) August 19, 2001, Munich [from Dianna Fisher]

A Bavarian court has imposed a three-month driving ban on a man who was arrested drunk while using his motorized wheelchair. The court in Munich said that the ban applied to both his wheelchair and any other vehicle. It also gave the defendant a two-month suspended jail sentence.

The man was caught using his electric wheelchair while three times over the legal blood-alcohol limit. The court rejected the defense's plea that the motorized wheelchair did not qualify as a vehicle in a legal sense.

speaking over the gentle pop music.

Along with a dozen bars Bar Centro skirts Bull Green roundabout, otherwise known as the Booze Ring. One reveler, bedecked in a shirt with the Red Stripe lager logo, said Halifax was the epicenter of drinking. "I'd never go any where else," he said.

But letters to the local paper call for town councilors to put an end to the alcoholic haze. The move to turn the ornate old co-operative store into another bar was the last straw for Sarah Bates. "We don't want any more pubs," she said in a letter to the Evening Courier. "It's embarrassing to say this is your home town." But pub correspondent Steven Fletcher said the trend was here to stay. "Pubs and bars get jam packed. There's too much demand to dampen the party."

MASSACHUSETTS BOWLING BAN from Zymurgy, July / August 2001

While most of us consider beer drinking as compatible with bowling as it is with golf, darts, or horseshoes, Massachusetts bowlers have long been denied this seemingly God-given right-in 1962, a ban went into effect making it illegal to drink beer in bowling alleys. The idea was to keep the institution of the bowling alley family oriented (so that kids couldn't quaff your brew while you pondered that seven-ten split). You could still enjoy a cold one in the lounge area, but apparently any alcohol leaving those designation drinking locations was forbidden. Soon, however, beer may find its way back to the lanes. Both houses of the Massachusetts State Legislature have passed a bill legalizing the consumption of alcohol in bowling alleys. The governor is expected to sign the bill. [Editor's note: I cannot imagine bowling without drinking beer. I did not think it was possible.]



© 1995-2009 HOTV