

THIS is the HOTV BREWSLETTER

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President's Corner

by Lee Smith

This early edition is meant to reach you before the festival on May 11, but don't forget to mark your calendar for the regular monthly meeting on May 15. My guess (hope) is that we will be discussing the HUGE success of the 14th annual competition!

As you read this, a lot of the preparatory work will have been done, and we will be moving into the final week. Considerable time and effort will be spent classifying and registering the entries and pulling a hundred details together. No event such as this can be glitch-free, but I am hoping that it goes well and everyone has a good time.

A dozen or more members have worked really hard, and I know they would be pleased if you showed your support by coming out on the eleventh. The public is invited, so bring along your friends and neighbors and make a day of it. It would also be a good time to pick up (and wear) your OREGON HOMEBREW FESTIVAL T-shirt.

-Lee

Another Software Review:

by taratoot

I have had a chance to check out more brewing software. This time it is SUDS 3.0. This package is available as shareware. It functions as a recipe formulator and a brewing log. There are options for how to calculate hop bitterness from % alpha acid content, length of boil, and boil volume. There is a list of styles, and after you formulate a recipe, the software tells you how your recipe will fit into the style guidelines. You can adjust mash extraction and some other variables, but some variables are fixed. It is fairly simple to use, but in order to get the full version (with an easier to use hop bitterness calculator) you

will need to register the software. As far as using it for a brewing log, I prefer my good ol' notebook. It is easier to consult, and I don't like the idea of getting wort stains all over my computer.

MEETINGS and other happenings:

HOTV's regularly scheduled monthly meeting is traditionally held on the third Wednesday of each month. Meetings begin at seven o'clock pm SHARP!

The April meeting was held at Michael Viliardos' home. Michael has been kind enough to have us come out and loiter in his basement twice in the past five months. Thanks, eh! It seems we had an unofficial Lamic tasting, as there were three examples available for tasing. And, we were encouraged to kill our beer tasters with fabulous garlic-stuffed olives marinated with habanero chilis. Additional offerings included homebrewed "Beer beer," although even without the rhexus under the crown cap it was far better than the commercial stuff! Buisness at the April meeting was not quite as heavy as the previous month, but we got a lot acomplished, believe it or not! It looks as though we really are going to pull off yet another festival.

Our next meeting will be May 15 and will be held at Jeff Tobin's home near the festival. The address is 539 SE Third Street, in Albany, Oregon, USA, Earth, Solar System, Milky Way, Universe, Third dimation of the Time-Space Continuum. There will be a festival de-breifing, and everyone will be able to pick up all the hardware they donated for festival use.

Also this month, a beer related competition will take place at the Benton County Fairgrounds. This is the Trinkerfestspiel that I wrote about last month. It will probably be on Friday, May 17th, 4pm. We are asked to "send a team of five persons to participate in the competitions." As the holders of the trophy from the September picnic, do we have an obligation to defend ourselves? We have also been asked for donations for prizes. I know everyone will be beat from the Homebrew Fest, but if you have any extra homebrew laying around, consider donating to this worthy cause.

AND don't forget to come help us get set up for the festival! The first work party will be on Saturday, May 4 (NATIONAL HOMEBREW DAY!!). Apologies if you do not receive this newsletter in time to help out. We will be pre-preparing the site for our excellent event. On Thursday and Friday evenings (May 9 and 10) we will be doing some final preparations and getting all the entries ready for judging. We could use all the help we can get. If you are interested, contact Lee!

In case anyone has forgotten, the festival is on Saturday, May 11 (the day before Mothers' Day). Encourage everyone to enter the raffle so they can give Mom some lovely brewing stuff! HOTV members should plan on showing up around 8:00 am to help put the finishing touches on the event. See you there!

The June and July meetings do not have homes yet. If you would like to volunteer your personal space for a bunch of beer-geeks to show up and critically analyze yeast samples, please, feel free to VOLUNTEER!

Also in June: our quarterly highway cleanup. This will take place either on the 15th or 22nd (subject to change), whichever our voodoo guru can guarantee the best weather for. It seems we usually get the same few folks out there for this wonderful way to spend an afternoon. Please consider giving us a hand and help keep Oregon's highways litter free. Look out for poison oak!

A Beer Tasting Idea

by Taratoot

I have an interesting beer tasting idea for the July meeting. I will bring it up at Jeff's house. Here is the

deal: Many breweries contract their brewing to regional breweries. For instance, Sam Adams (tm) brews beer here in Portland and other places as well as in Boston (tm) Also, the big brewers have breweries all over the country (Coors is now being brewed in Tennessee?). Have you ever wondered if there are differences in the products produced at various locations? I will be traveling to the southeast US in June and will try to pick up beers that I know are available here, but are brewed at a different facility. Anyone else who will be traveling between now and July could do the same. At the July meeting we can try these beers side by side with the same brands as they are brewed in our neck o' the woods. Anyone interested?

By-Laws Change

At the April meeting, the membership approved two changes to the By-Laws. Both changes are to Article II (Membership). They are as follows:

Section 1 (Eligibility) is amended to read: "All persons are eligible for membership." Some of the original wording was deleted.

Section 3 (Non-discrimination) is amended to read: "Membership...will not be denied to any individual on the basis of...or age." Age was added to the wording.

Section 4 (Participation) had the following clause added to the end of the paragraph: "Members or guests not of the legal age to consume alcoholic beverages in the State of Oregon may not consume alcoholic beverages at Heart of the Valley Homebrew Club meetings or activities."

For a complete current copy of the by-laws, please contact Lee Smith.

Guest Column: British Cask-conditioned Ale

edited from Andy Anderson's European Beer Journal

In America, we tend to think of English ales as "bitter," meaning that is the style. However, real ale is more a process than a specific style, and bitter is just one of the styles. So, what is "Real Ale?" CAMRA defines it as, "A name for draught (or bottled) beer brewed from traditional ingredients, matured by secondary fermentation in the container from which it is dispensed, and served without the use of extraneous carbon dioxide."

Almost all English pubs will have a cask conditioned bitter and a best bitter. During the winter months you might find some old ales or barley wines, especially as "guest beers." Mild is almost nonexistent. Porters can sometimes be found; cask conditioned stouts are almost nonexistent, and if you do find them they are really closer to a porter in style. Strong bitters can be found with some regularity, but usually as the premium beer of a tied house. I did not mention India Pale Ale. In the U.S., an IPA is a distinct style while over here it's more a marketing name of bitter and best bitter. Nobody in England makes IPA's like those found in the Pacific Northwest. For better or worse, I believe the IPA to now be an American style and an English label.

The beer in a standard keg has been filtered, pasteurized, and force carbonated before being kegged. CO₂ is used to dispense the beer out of the keg. While the beer will slowly deteriorate from the day it is kegged, it should last for several months before going bad. If the keg is tapped and only partially used, the remainder will still stay acceptable since CO₂ is the only gas in contact with the beer. Cask- conditioned ale works under a completely different system because the ale continues to ferment and mature even after being kegged. An American keg stands upright and the CO₂ forces the beer out, but the keg for a cask-

conditioned beer lies on its side. The cask has two holes in it: a bung hole for serving the beer into which a keystone fits, and a larger shive hole which allows controlled ventilation. When the cask is on its side in dispensing position, the bung hole is near the bottom of the cask with the shive hole on the top side. When the beer is placed in the cask the yeast is not filtered out because the fermentation process has not yet completely finished. Isinglass is added to the cask to help clarify the beer. Sometimes a hop plug will also be added for dry hopping. The casks are delivered to the pubs and placed (hopefully) in a cool cellar where the cask can sit undisturbed at about 55F for about 48 hours. This allows the beer to settle with the highly flocculating yeast and the finings clearing the ale. Once the cask is in place in the cellar, the shive hole is knocked in and a soft spile, usually made out of bamboo, is inserted in its place. This allows the CO₂ to vent off from the cask. When the conditioning is complete, the soft spile is replaced with a hard spile, which traps the final emitted CO₂ into solution. When the beer is served, oxygen is allowed to enter the cask though the spile hole thus limiting the beer's shelf-life.

The cask-conditioned ale has been produced, kegged, fined, transported to the pub, settled, seen the soft and hard spile, and is finally ready to be served. For serving the beer there are two basic choices: a gravity tap or a beer engine. The beer engine may be what everyone thinks of when they ponder on British bitter, but gravity taps have been around a lot longer. The gravity tap is nothing more than a fancy way of saying "Open the spigot and let the beer pour out". A spigot is placed in the cask's bung hole and is simply turned on for beer to flow out. Since gravity is the only thing causing the beer to flow, the cask does not sit down in the pub's cellar but rather up on the bar itself (or on a shelf behind the bar) at a height high enough to allow the pint glass to be placed underneath the tap. Quite often shivs are placed under the rear of the cask when it becomes more empty to allow the last of the beer to flow out. When doing this, care must be exercised by the cellarman to prevent spent yeast and finings from finding their way into the pint glass. The beer served via a gravity tap will appear absolutely flat. This is because what little carbonation there is still remains in solution. The transportation of the beer from cask to glass has been remarkably gentle, so there has not been enough agitation to cause the CO₂ to come out of solution as bubbles and create a head on the beer. However, when you taste the beer the subtle carbonation will be evident.

By far the most common method of dispensing cask-conditioned ale is the beer engine. This is basically a simple pump where the energy supplied is from the barman's arm. The "engine" is a cylinder and piston in a self-contained unit. By pulling on the pump's handle a vacuum is produced within the pump cylinder and this pulls the beer out of the cask which is sitting somewhere down in the cellar. A plastic hose connects the beer engine down to the cask's bung hole. By using a beer engine, the beer can be kept at the correct temperature more easily. Let's face it, you might want your beer to be served at 55 F, but if it's a gravity tap and the cask is sitting on the bar, well, you really don't want the bar to also be 55 F. The beer engine also creates more head and apparent carbonation in the glass of beer. After all, the beer travels through a pump and that causes a fair amount of agitation. If the pub uses a swan-neck and a sparkler on the dispensing end of the beer engine, the beer will effectively be passing through an atomizer. This causes almost all the carbonation to come out of solution which then creates a thick and creamy head on the pint but leaves almost no carbonation to tickle the tongue. This is a controversial subject which will have to be covered in a future article. A tip to homebrewers attempting cask-conditioned ale out of a Cornelius keg: get the largest possible fittings for your Corny keg. A beer engine operates with about a 1" diameter hose and fittings while a standard Corny keg is 3/16" (?). Using a beer engine to force the beer through that small an orifice will create tremendous agitation in your glass - basically, a glass full of foam.

Administrative garbage:

The HOTV Brewsletter is published monthly. Articles for publication should be submitted by the first of the month. Printing and distribution are completed during the first week of each month. A paperless format is available for members and friends with access to e-mail. The Brewsletter is distributed as a paper newsletter to members without access to e-mail.

Annual dues to Heart of the Valley are twelve dollars US. Dues are used to support printing and

distribution of the newsletter as well as pay the general expenses of administering a top-notch homebrew club.

HOTV sponsors several events each year, including the Oregon Homebrew Competition and Festival. Other events include "Adopt-a-Highway" road cleanup each quarter, an annual picnic for homebrew clubs in the Willamette Valley, an annual solstice party, and occasional special events such as a pub crawl, a preparatory class for the BJCP exam, a "beer style of the month" series, and support of local brewing activities.

For membership information, contact Lee Smith. To contribute an article to the Brewsletter, contact the editor.

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