



August/September 2002

A Monthly Publication of the High Plains Draughters Homebrew Club

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C/O Joe Bocock
513 NW 38th St
Oklahoma City, OK 73118-7032

The Draught Card

9th Annual Mead Clinic

Ken Adamson

*“Bacchus, the father of drunken nowles, Full mazers, beakers, glasses, bowls.”
- F.W. Hackwood*

The Sentence of the Judge

For the mead-loving among us, there isn't a better way of demonstrating this than to attend the Annual Mead Clinics. Held at the legendary Bocock Pleasure Palace, these events have come to embody the appreciation and love many of us have for the Drink of the Gods!

Every New Song

As usual, education and enlightenment were not forgotten – in his never ending charge to educate the masses, Steve Law gave an all-to brief dissertation on the topic of Celtic mead. Oft citing the *Mabinogion*, he told of zythus and corma, of the responsibilities of mead-maker, the steward, and the butler. The role mead played in Celtic society during the Middle Ages was prominent, to say the least, being, by all accounts, the courtly drink of the Britons and the Welsh.

Every Cask of Mead

The Celts did not take their mead lightly, and neither did we... In attendance were no less than four kegs of mead and (by Joe's count) approximately 40 *different* bottles of mead, commercial and non. I sampled no less than 15 different meads in one afternoon – from Burt's utterly

mesmerizing Raspberry, to Brian Myer's heavenly 4-year old Rhodomel; and a commercial offering called "Mead the Lambic", to Tim's wonderful Huckleberry.

The food was also plentiful: Joe's own count certified 500 grilled chicken breasts, and more cheese than one could

imagine. Of course, there was that wonderful salsa – was it apricot, or peach?

Escaping the sun and miserable heat, several retreated to the cool waters of the pool, to work up a new thirst, and have a cigar or two.



Wact heil! Drinc heil!

Draughters Make Mead!

Steve Law

August 3, 2002 was the first official "AHA Mead Day" and a large cadre of HPD mead makers assembled to do their duty. Registered as "Site 12" with the AHA, the Draughters gathered at the Nagode compound to crank out an impressive 35 gallons of the divine ambrosia.

Bob Rescinito took top honors (and highest gravity) for a double effort with his new twin burner system; he made both a braggot and the base mead for an

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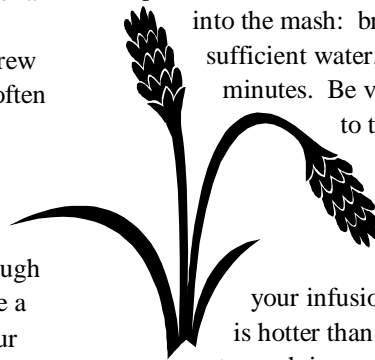
Brewing With the Boss

Brewing With Rice



Rice is one of the more interesting adjuncts to use in the fabrication of a homebrew. While a well known ingredient in some of the mega-brew American Lagers, rice is a grain often overlooked or avoided by home brewers because of its interesting logistical problems. First of all,

rice is a grain that has no husk. This can lead to serious “adventures in sparging” if it is used without enough barley in the mash. A classic solution (if you want to use a lot of rice) is to buy separate rice hulls to mix in with your mash. But this solution shouldn’t be necessary if you keep the rice below about 15% of your overall grain bill. Any kind of rice can be used: wild rice is used in a number of Great Lakes brewing operations and standard white rice is featured in many light lagers. My most recent brew included 4 lbs of Himalayan red rice (which imparted a very interesting red-orange tint to the wort!). Rice solids are also available at your local brew shop, but there is nothing quite as satisfying as preparing the rice yourself. Even rice flour can be used in discrete moderation.



Rice needs a little preparation to help it along in the mash. Ideally, it needs to be ground down a bit. A Corona grain mill (about \$40) works best. Actually, the rice benefits from a double pass through the mill to break it down into small pellets. These, then, need to be pre-cooked before going into the mash: bring the ground rice to a boil with sufficient water, and cook it on low for about 30 minutes. Be very attentive: this stuff likes to scorch to the bottom of the pan, and you don’t want a burned rice flavor added to your wort! The rice gruel will “gelatinize” into an interesting mush that can be added directly into your infusion with the barley. Since the rice gruel is hotter than your target mash temperature, it is best to mash in your barley at about 140 degrees, then add the cooked rice; stir well, and stabilize the temperature at about 152 degrees. The starches of the rice and barley convert in the normal manner.

Rice is very fermentable. It produces a clean tasting ethanol without increasing the body of your beer. So next time you’re looking for something a little different, include some rice in your grain bill: it’s cheap, it’s readily available, and it’s fun to work with.

Spotlight on Style

Altbier

The “new” top-fermented lager styles didn’t take hold everywhere as they spread West from their birthplace in Central Europe – the Germans resisted, sprouting local styles such as the “alt.” Referring to an “old” way of making beer – top-fermented, rather than lager-style bottom fermentation, this beer is very much a local tradition in Düsseldorf and the surrounding towns and villages. It is essentially Germany’s answer to Belgian and English ale. The style has spread abroad, brewed in the United States (what isn’t?) and in Japan.

Visually, this beer should be stunning – demonstrating a coppery brown to bronze color (11-19 SRM), with brilliant clarity and a thick, persistent head. Düsseldorf Altbier (style 8B) manifests itself with a clear, rounded, firm, dark-malt character, but not overpowering or roasty, with a hoppy bitterness (40-60 IBU). Alt combines the fruity esters of warm top-fermentation (64-72F, low for most ales) with the smooth palette characteristic of cold conditioning (32-46F).

Munich malts are an absolute must to gain the depth of character in this style. Spalt hops are typical, but other German varieties are also used. Total conditioning time can be anywhere from 3 to 8 weeks, making this one feel more like a lager than a typical ale. Gravity starts anywhere from 1.040-1.055, and finishes up around 1.012 to 1.019. Alcohol yield is moderate at 5-5.5% by volume.

A less intense variety, Northern German Altbier (style 8C) is made with a predominantly Pils base, with a touch of roasted barley or black. Otherwise, the Northern German variety is the same as Düsseldorf Alt, only more restrained.

Commercial examples of Düsseldorf Alt include: Zum Uerige, and Schumacher; examples of Northern German Alt include: Diebels Alt, Grolsch Autumn Amber, and Sapporo Alt.



Next meeting is our Annual Oktoberfest celebration - September 28th - Crown Heights Park 513 NW 38th



What a motley crew...



Kenny and Ellen and their tricked out coffee pot / brewpot.



Double the boil, double the fun! Bob with his new rig.



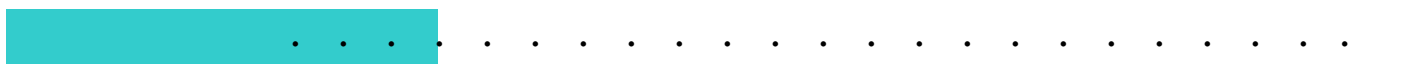
Tim and Paula show us how to keep flies out of the cooling must.



Steve attracts all the ladie; it must be that huge cranium!



Michal demonstrates perfect stirring form.



The French (Beer) Connection

Steve Law

As reported in the last edition of *The Draught Card*, the Trail Boss has returned from his potable adventures in Belgium and France. In addition to the Belgian highlights I mentioned in the last newsletter; I provide the following report on the brewing scene in France:

Where's all the Great Beer?

Outside of the *Biere de Gardes* and *Saisons* in the northeast -- and the refreshing light lagers of Alsace -- the French brewing scene was rather disappointing. Daily quests were undertaken to find new and unusual beers in the grocery stores. Occasional gems were found, but most of the beers were not particularly memorable. Sad to say, only one "*Micro Brasserie*" was encountered on the whole trip (in the hip resort town of Chamonix in the French Alps).

Is there a Beer Doctor in the House?

Part of the problem seems to stem from the France's current preoccupation with "doctored beers." These tend to fall into two categories: beer/liquor hybrids and fortified lagers. Beer/Liquor hybrids are represented by such things as "Jack Daniels Beer," where whiskey and beer are blended together and bottled. There are tequila, vodka, and rum versions of this phenomenon, as well as juice-flavored concoctions. More frightening still is the French fascination with fortified lagers: these brews -- often packaged with exciting labels and colorful names -- are simply light lagers that are ethanol enhanced. Probably the worst was *La Biere du Demon* (11.5%). Imagine an American lager with a large shot of *Everclear*. The alcoholic burn of these beers, unbalanced by any malt or body, is decidedly unpleasant. Nevertheless,

they are omnipresent and many regions are quite proud of their own local "super strong" beers. Many of these brews are found in .5 liter aluminum cans. To be perfectly honest, most of these beers were poured out after the first sip.

Notable Potables

There were, however, some notable exceptions to the rule. By far the tastiest beer encountered in France was *Tolosa* - a big amber ale (5%) with a full body, malty backbone, and a really satisfying caramel presence. Made by the Toulouse Brewing Company, this "Cathar Beer" resonated with the orthodoxy of a well made homebrew.



Another so-called Cathar brew was *Trencavel*, a memorable amber ale (5.8%) made in the walled medieval city of Carcassonne. Also notable were three beers (light, amber, and brown) from Brasserie Coreff in Brittany (6.5%); in Brittany -- the "Celtic" part of France -- the beers are full bodied and quite satisfying. Another pleasant surprise was a beer from the Limousin district called *La Campagnarde*; this "farm style" ale was a more modest 4.8% and a pleasant reflection on what French ales were in the past: simple, unadorned, and eminently drinkable.

Variations on a Theme

In France, of course, there are things to drink besides beer. In addition to French wines (of which many were sampled!), there is cider. Especially in Normandy and Brittany, where apples are easy to grow, cider is the drink of preference. It generally comes in two forms: *doux*, or "sweet" cider tends to be low alcohol (about 2%) with a gigantic apple profile; *brut*, or "dry" cider is crisp and refreshing and weighs in from 4-6%.

The designation *bouché* means that a cider is bottle conditioned; such bottles need to be opened with the same care you would use with champagne. Cider is everywhere in the restaurants of Normandy and Brittany, and is readily available in grocery stores throughout France. Exceptional in both strength (8%) and vivacity was a bottle of *Vicomte de Bayeux*, coming from the Cidrerie Viard Gueron in Bayeux.

In central Normandy there is also a tradition of distilling cider into a wonderful *digestif* called Calvados (named for the district); this "apple brandy" goes down much too easily, and the liter bottle was sorely missed when its contents were finally finished.

The French (Beer) Revolution

All in all, it was a great adventure of the palette and it was good to see that brewing traditions, in some areas of France, are definitely on the comeback trail!

Share the Beer!

Have you had a recent beer adventure? Do you have a favorite watering hole in some distant city or country? Please send a short write-up to the editor at krylar@swbell.net



BJCP News

Draughters Judges Earn Promotions

Congratulations are in order for our club's two current BJCP judges: Tim Nagode has earned a respectable promotion to the rank of "National Judge" and Steve Law has moved up to become a "Certified Judge." The Beer Judge Certification Program is a national organization dedicated to providing brewers with well trained and experienced judges. If you are thinking about getting some serious "brewing credentials," check out the new improved BJCP website at www.bjcp.org. Once again, congrats to

"Mead Day" Continued from Page 1

as yet undetermined melomel. The Trail Boss, Steve Law, made varietal mead from 15 lbs of mesquite honey. Michael Carson did another varietal from a one gallon block of solidified honey. Kenny Parrot had the most unusual set-up: his varietal was made in a dedicated coffee maker with an internal thermostat! The host, Tim Nagode, also did two meads: a base mead for his legendary huckleberry melomel and the beginnings of a poblano and cayenne metheglin (watch out for this one!).

After the heat of the garage, the tired and thirsty Draughters and their families retired to the pool for a serious cool down and sumptuous repast. Nuri's pasta salad was a culinary highlight, as was Paula's life sustaining black bean salsa. All in all, it was a "must" event for the HPD mead makers. Don't miss this one next year!

Tim and Steve for their hard work and dedication!

BJCP Study Group

Knowing what constitutes a good beer is essential to the advancement of the art and science of homebrewing. Often, we get by on saying, "I brew what I like – I don't care if anybody else likes it." That's all well and good, but homebrewing can be likened to breeding champion dogs. The finest traits are proliferated through careful selection and evaluation, and the undesirable traits are eliminated. With beer, it requires a dialed-in palette, and enough knowledge about what a beer is *suggested* to taste like.

To that end, we should all keep a copy of the BJCP style guide in our brewing library, and have someone help you conduct a blind test on your finished product against some commercial varieties. You may find that your brew is quite competitive with the big boys.

We should also endeavor to become certified beer judges. The material isn't anything that we shouldn't already know, as responsible brewers. A discussion item will be brought up at the next meeting regarding this, and the formation of a study group.

Part of the exam prep entails a detailed study of brewing methods, mashing, hop schedules, style knowledge, troubleshooting, and ingredients. The exam is definitely non-trivial, but a proven method for approaching the preparation tasks is to form a group. The commercial tasting and familiarization can be accomplished in a more economical manner, spreading the cost among several group members.

Any interested persons should contact Ken Adamson via email at krylar@swbell.net

Coming Events

September 6
7:00pm, 609 NW 17th
Strong Belgian Ale Club-Only
Judging, Club Level

Judging is at Michael Carson's house – entries must be turned in by 5pm on the 6th. Turn in your brew at The Brew Shop or contact Tim Nagode (387-4525) or Michael Carson (524-6207)

September 15-28
Lubbock, TX
5th Annual Cactus Challenge

Sponsored by the Ale-ian society – "The Best Homebrew Competition in West Texas". Entries Due between 9/2 and 9/14. Contact Brian Yeargin, 806-792-4231, yeargain@nts-online.net.

September 19-22
Addison, TX
15th Annual Addison Oktoberfest
<http://www.addisontexas.net>

September 28
2:00p, Crown Heights Park
HPD Oktoberfest
 513 NW 38th St. OKC, OK – Bring your remaining beer and make room for the upcoming Fall brewing!

October 3-5
Denver, CO
Great American Beer Festival
 3 Days, 300 Breweries, 1200 Beers. Charlie Papazian will be in attendance. <http://www.gabf.org>

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**October 12
Cooperstown, NY
5th Annual Ommegang Birthday
Bash**

Cave Aged Rare Vos and Cave Aged Ommegang first become available for sale on this day!

**October 17-19
Houston, TX
19th Annual Dixie Cup**

Events include BJCP exam, potluck dinner, "Fred Tasting", seminars, and pub crawl. Sponsored by the Foam Rangers, Deadline for entries 10/4 – 10/11, Fee \$5. Awards Ceremony, Oct 19th. Contact Kuyler Doyle, 713-523-8379, <http://www.foamrangers.com>

2002 Queen of Beer Competition

After a couple years' hiatus, SHE's BAAACK! The Hangtown Association of Zymurgy Enthusiasts (H.A.Z.E.) proudly announces the return of this popular competition! Your CLUB is receiving this bulletin now so you will have time to announce this notice in one of your upcoming club meetings.

Get your female members to brew that award winning entry AND to encourage other women to brew (maybe plan an all women's team brew). Please pass this information on to any/all women brewers' that you know - make an announcement at your next club

meeting, help make this the best Queen of Beer to date!

The date for judging has been set for October 26th, 2002. Entries will be accepted October 1st-19th. The competition is BJCP sanctioned. All categories open.

For complete competition information and Rules and Regulations see the H.A.Z.E website, located at:

<http://www.hazeclub.org>

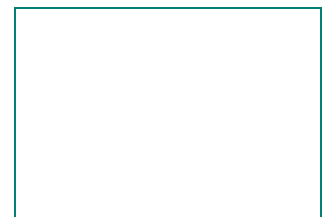
or email at:

QOB_2002@hotmail.com

Or snailmail at:

QOB 2002 Committee
2739 Ponderosa Road
Shingle Springs, CA 95682

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Oklahoma City, OK 73118-7032



ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED



Our next meeting is our Annual Oktoberfest – September 28th. Bring all your remaining beer to Crown Heights Park, 513 NW 38th Break out the lederhosen!