



January 2009 Newsletter

Next Club Meeting Sunday 18th January @12:30pm

~~THE PRESIDENTS REPORT~~

Editors



Greetings Fellow Brewers,

I suspect our president Paul Rigby may be on holidays, so you will all have to make do with a hastily written Editors report instead. In past years we have had no club meetings in January but with members deciding to have meetings on every 3rd Sunday instead of every 1st Sunday, we have dropped Decembers and picked up a meeting in January. Unfortunately for me this means instead of having a month break from newsletter writing, everyone gets an extra bonus January newsletter.

So no complaining about the content.

Our Christmas party was a success this year with plenty of food, beer and members turning up. I don't think it stopped raining for the whole day which is a rare thing and just served to make the day more memorable. I think having the club high gravity comp at the same time worked well and I'm sure helped with the merriness. Thanks to Robin and Dawn for allowing us to hold the party at their place once again.

At the back of the newsletter are details and entry forms for the upcoming Melbourne Brewers Beerfest at Mirboo North. For those of you who don't read the fine print, its worth mentioning that this comp has the best prizes going around with \$500 for best of show, \$100 vouchers for the winner of each of 8 categories as well as engraved trophies for all place getters. If you are considering entering you need to do so before noon of the 7th of February.

I hope everyone is enjoying the warmer weather, perhaps taking a break from brewing if you have enough set aside, getting in some quality BBQ time with friends and family. ..or just veging out and watching sport on tv.

See you all next Sunday.

Gavin



IN THIS ISSUE

- Coming Events
- Christmas Photos
- Club Comp Recipe
- Giant 3D beer
- HBD Hop Discussion
- Melbourne Brewers Beer-fest



THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE AT THE NAVAL ASSOCIATION HALL, GRAHAM STREET, WEST FOOTSCRAY (OPPOSITE THE YMCA) MELWAYS 41 J3

Coming Events

February 2009

Melbourne Brewers Beerfest

April 2009

Yarra Valley Brewers
Belgian Ale Comp

May 2009

Kellybrook Cider Festival

July 2009

Westgate Stout Extravaganza

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Club Meeting Diary

January 2009

Club Meeting

February 2009

Wheat beer Competition

April 2009

Low gravity beer Competition

June 2009

Stout Competition

August 2009

Pale Ale Competition



Sponsors of Westgate Brewers

Westgate Brewers is committed to encouraging responsible drinking
REMEMBER– If you Drink and Drive-You're a Bloody Idiot

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Westgate Christmas Party 2008



Did you bring
some wine Barry?



December Club Comp Recipe

Robin Selwood's Saison ended up with exactly the same score as mine, but some how I was awarded first place. I would much rather have printed Robin's recipe as it was a really interesting beer in a style that isn't familiar to many. Hopefully I can get Robin to pass along the recipe for inclusion in February's newsletter.

High Gravity Recipe– Imperial Stout

1st Place – Gavin Germon

23 litre batch. OG 1.096, FG 1.036, 109 IBU?

9 kg Joe White Pale Ale Malt

500 g Joe White Roast Barley

400 g Bairds Brown Malt

300 g Joe White Chocolate Malt

300 g Weyermann Caraaroma Malt

200 g Brown Sugar

100 g Dark Brown Sugar

100 g CSR Black Treacle

Add 1 pinch Chalk to mash

Mash at 67-65°C for 2 hours 29l of water

Sparge 13l. Boil 90 minutes.

Repitch of Safale S-04 . Gravity 1.040

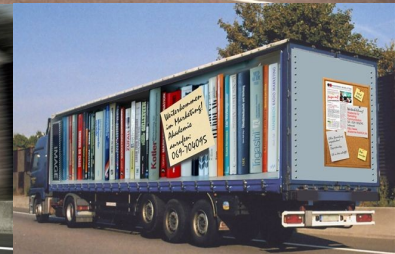
2 old packets of champagne yeast in secondary for 1.036

Age at competition: 1 year, 10 months



30 g Horizon (11% AA) for 60 minutes
20 g Green Bullet (13% AA) for 60 minutes
10 g Northdown (7.2% AA) for 60 minutes
30 g Horizon (11% AA) for 15 minutes
30 g Amarillo (8.4% AA) for 15 minutes
10 g Green Bullet (13% AA) for 15 minutes
30 g Amarillo (8.4% AA) for 5 minutes
20 g Horizon (11% AA) for 5 minutes
10 g Northdown (7.2% AA) for 5 minutes
? g Goldings dry
? g Amarillo dry

Here are some photos of cleverly designed truck trailers from Europe sent in by Colin MacEwan.
I love the giant 3D beer trailer. The truck that looks like its reversing down the road seems just plain dangerous!



Interesting recent posts to the HBD

Contributed by Colin MacEwan

Thanks for the positive feedback !) This month's postings pertain to growing hops, harvesting and storage:

Date: Wed, 30 Jul 2008 22:31:56 -0700
From: Robert Tower <roberttower at sbcglobal.net>
Subject: Hop Questions/Advice

I grow Mt. Hood hops on the southern exposure side of my house. I have three sets of twine for each plant running from the ground up to the eaves of the house, which is about 11-12 feet (335-366 cm) of total growing length. In my climate, it's usually about early July by the time the vines have reached the top at which point they grow into a snarled mess as they have nowhere to go. Every year I threaten to experiment on one plant by cutting the terminal buds once they reach the top. With other plants this would simply encourage more side growth, but with hops it's unclear to me what would happen. Every year I either chicken out or simply procrastinate until it's too late. Either way, I never have actually tried it. Any thoughts about this? Can anyone see a downside to this kind of trimming?

As far as hop harvesting goes, would there be any detriment (besides taking up more freezer space) to simply freezing fresh harvested hops without drying them first? Reduced shelf life? Freezer burn? Some kind of enzyme action that would not be arrested by the freezing storage temperature? In the past I've done this with small amounts and used them utilizing the premise that fresh, undried hops weigh 5-6 times more than dried hops. I've done this with the hops at the beginning and end of the harvest (when there isn't enough harvested all at once to justify going to the trouble of drying them) and I haven't noticed any difference.

However, I used them within a few months of freezing. Thoughts on this?

Bob Tower / Los Angeles, CA

Date: Wed, 6 Aug 2008 00:45:06 -0700
From: "atomdebris at gmail.com" <atomdebris@gmail.com>
Subject: Re: Freezing Hops

All this talk about freezing hops and the problems it presents made me remember something I've heard many times in the past... that hops are closely related to cannabis (aka marijuana). The two plants are very similar (similar enough that cannabis cuttings can be grafted onto a hops plant), and both marijuana enthusiasts and brewers use the female flowers of the plant in their, uh, hobby. This suggests to me that hops can be cured using the same process used to cure cannabis.

Once cured, the hops will contain very little water, and freezing should be no problem, since it is ice crystals that burst the cell walls and cause your hops to turn to goo in the freezer. I know that freezing properly cured marijuana is not a problem, it extends the shelf life remarkable while maintaining potency, and the buds don't turn into sticky goo in the process.

I'm not a huge pothead or anything (my occupation has federally-mandated drug testing), but it's much easier to find information on how to grow and handle fresh marijuana than it is finding info on growing and curing hops.

After a little judicious googling and reading, I offer the following step-by-step curing process, which I have adapted to account for the differences between the two plants:

Cut your mature hops plant down at the base. Trim the leaves away until you are left with nothing but stalk, branches, and flowers. String some fishing line up the way you might put up a clothesline, and hang the trimmed plants up on it (if the plant is too big to do this, cut it up a bit and hang the individual branches). Alternatively, you can remove the flowers from the stalk and branches altogether, and place them on a metal mesh screen (like a nice clean window screen, for example). With either method, try to avoid letting the flowers touch each other, as this may promote wet spots and mold.

The space you do your initial drying in should be dark, DRY, and warm. Ideally, it will be equipped with a dehumidifier and be temperature-controlled. 50 to 60 percent relative humidity is good, and a temperature of 60-70 degrees Fahrenheit (15-21 degrees Celsius) is about right, but err on the hot side rather than the cold.

Air should be circulating in the room, and a fan will work just fine for this, but don't let the circulating air blow directly on the flowers as this will cause them to dry unevenly and may promote mould as well.

After 7-10 days, your initial drying will be complete and you should be ready for the actual curing. You can check to make sure by examining a piece of the plant's stem... if it snaps easily, you're good to go.

You can speed the process up by doing the initial drying in a warmer room (say, 85 degrees Fahrenheit) but this is not recommended. Slow, even drying is what you want, so that the cured flowers are not just dried, but dried evenly inside and out.

At this point, the flowers will feel and appear thoroughly dry, but there will still be quite a bit of moisture inside, and we want to bring it out and get rid of it. For this, we need an airtight container. Don't use Tupperware, as the plastic may impart an odd flavour to the hops. Don't use Ziploc bags either, as they aren't truly airtight. Glass mason jars are ideal for this step, assuming the seal on the lid is good.

Put the flowers in the mason jar and fill it up without packing the flowers down... just place them in gently, don't shove to create more room. The jar will provide a microclimate that allows moisture inside the flowers to move to the dry outer portions. Once the jar(s) are sealed, put them in a cool, dry, dark place for about four hours. Open the jar and let it sit open for about fifteen minutes, then put the lid back on and let it sit overnight (but not longer). When you open the jar again, you'll find the flowers are once again moist, as water from inside has spread to the outside.

Remove the moist flowers from the jar and place them gently in a paper bag. Don't pile them up in the bag higher than about three inches (ten centimeters). Fold the top of the bag closed. Check the flowers approximately every eight hours to see if they have become dry again. When checking, gently turn the flowers so that surfaces that didn't have a chance to dry will be exposed to the air in the bag.

When the flowers are evenly dry again, put them back in the mason jar overnight, and if they are moist again, repeat the steps using the paper bag and the mason jar until you open the mason jar and find the flowers are no longer moist, and are evenly dry.

The flowers are now cured. Store them in an airtight glass container, and if possible, vacuum-seal it before placing it in the refrigerator or freezer for storage. They should survive refrigeration or freezing without any significant nastiness, provided the container you store them in is truly airtight and isn't wet from the dishwasher or something when you fill it.

Once again, I haven't tried this, but it should work great with hops. If any of you big burly hops growers would like to give it a try, I'd love to know the results (just post in the HBD, I read the digest every day).

Cheers, big ears, to you and your beers.

Date: Thu, 07 Aug 2008 06:42:33 -0400
From: "steve.alexander" <-s at roadrunner.com>
Subject: Hop processing ...

atomdebris writes about "curing" hops,

> Once cured, the hops will contain very little water, and freezing
> should be no problem, since it is ice crystals that burst the cell
> walls and cause your hops to turn to goo in the freezer.

While properly dried hops should not "turn to goo" they do contain enough moisture to rupture cells and promote rapid staling. The brewer at "Hopping Frog" suggested a technique I've adopted. Put the hops (bagged as needed) into a corny keg and charge with CO2 and "fridge" them.

> Cut your mature hops plant down at the base. Trim the leaves away
> until you are left with nothing but stalk, branches, and flowers.
Yes - that's a great technique IF you can afford to spend a week stripping leaves off one plant.

> don't let the circulating air blow directly on the flowers as this
> will cause them to dry unevenly and may promote mold as well.

No. Air flow discourages fungal growth but ...

> Put the flowers in the mason jar and fill it up without packing the
> flowers down...

WTH ?!!!? Without pulling out a record book - you should get ~1+ gallon of loose packed cones per plant and a 1qt container only holds a few ounces of dried hops - so piddling about with mason jars is the wrong scale. No you don't need to condense the water out - just air-dry thoroughly.

> Once again, I haven't tried this, but it should work great with hops.

Yeah it should work great if you want to spend 40 hours processing a few ounces of dried hops. There are several points at which this academic exercise departs from reality. The scale is way off IMO. It takes no account of the amount of time necessary. Comments about cutting away all leaves is laughable - it would take many many hours to process one plant and many hop varieties have small leaves embedded in clusters of cones. Common "fish-line" won't support a normal set of 2-3 bines. These things are heavy. Several years ago one HBD poster suggested that I could make hop support from electrical conduit (the soft steel 1" diameter stuff). That was great until the plants began to mature and then the frame twisted under the weight and eventually in a modest wind the conduit ended bent-up like pretzels.

I only grow a couple varieties of hops. I cut the plants at their base and tie up to 6 of the (same variety) plants together into a bundle at their base with sisal twine. I hoist the tied ends up high in my garage (~12ft ceiling) and if necessary I tie-up again to keep the tips off the floor. In Autumn the garage temps vary from perhaps 60F-80F but it's dry enough do a nice job of drying the plants.

I've found through long experience that picking of the fresh cones is difficult. The stem is resilient and you can damage cones pulling them off. If you wait long enough for the leaves to get "crispy" then the cones come off nicely, but you need to avoid collecting the crispy leaves (not too bad, but takes time). The ideal is to pick the cones after around 3-5 days - when they are half-dried, but the leaves don't yet crumble. It's much faster to grow more plants than you need and just pick the easy-to-reach cones. You can spend half your time getting the last 15% of cones. This depends on variety - some produce big clusters of cones with several tiny "vestigial" leaves, others have little stems w/ only 3-5 cones all over. I start by collecting the outer cones while the plants are hanging and then I'll cut out one plant (or half) at a time and pick these fairly clean. When I collect a 5gal bucket of compressed (place another 5gal bucket on top and apply your body mass ~200lb/sf) cones I'm done. These cones are only half-dried so they need to spend another week on a screen (1/4" galvanized "hardware cloth" works well).

I've tried to stem dry, then strip all the stems (leaves and cones) from the bines onto a tarp ((start at the top and run a leather gloved hand down the bines to strip. Then you can select out cones and loose-crush the leaves till you collect all the cones. My feeling is that this is not time-effective.

It takes me a week of evening sessions to process hops and 90% of the time is picking cones. It really is time consuming so I'd be anxious to hear of any practical improvements (not pipe-dreams) about processing hops.

Date: Fri, 08 Aug 2008 10:35:52 -0400
From: "David Houseman" <david.houseman at verizon.net>
Subject: RE: Hop processing ...

While I'm not an expert in any way about processing hops I can speak from experience, not an academic exercise. I had 6 hills of hops, each different. Lessons learned: (1) don't plant multiple varieties close together, they get intermixed very easily and one has difficulty distinguishing some from others, (2) some hops are very prolific, others didn't fare as well. Could be my climate or soil, (3) Nylon tent stakes make good line terminations and a board with eye hooks for the other end. I used heavy bailing twin to support my hop bines.

In late August my hops were ready. I lowered the board supporting the upper end of the lines holding the bines and laid the entire 12'+ out on the lawn. So I had 6 x about 12' of bines. I started at one end and took the hop cones off and placed these in brown grocery bags. It only took me a Sunday afternoon to complete this task. I laid out a couple of the screens used on patio doors onto saw horses. This I did on my patio that's under another room. This allows for good air circulation but out of direct sun light. The hops were spread on the screens and in about a week they were dried. I bagged this into 1 gallon freezer storage bags and froze them. Not knowing the acid content I only used these for flavour and aroma. Another year I simply left these in the grocery bag after drying and set this in my [dry] basement. After a couple years I had good aged hops for lambics. You learn what cheesy really means! By this time I had plenty of my own hops. So the following year I brewed on hop harvest day and immediately used all the hops in making a harvest ale. This was a great experiment. A couple pounds of wet hops in a 6 gallon +/- batch of beer. Just threw all 6 varieties into the kettle. Most for flavour and aroma additions but some for bittering (just guessed).

So the bottom line is that I didn't find harvesting and drying the hops to be as labor intensive, but it was interesting. Lessons learned: (1) It was easier to buy hops and I got bored with messing with hops. (2) Hops sent out runners and they were growing up everything...if the dog laid still for too long it would have hops growing up its tail. Eventually I gave up on growing hops and plowed these under. But they did look great so I may start more hops in an alternate location in the yard sometime to enjoy the looks. And once stripped, the dried bines make excellent wreaths for Christmas.

David Houseman

The next postings will pertain to the mystery of the beer that lacked crispness !

Cheers ... Colin



Beerfest 2009



20, 21 February

Beerfest, organised and run by **The Melbourne Brewers** (www.melbournebrewers.org), is Australia's oldest and one of the richest Home Brewing competition for amateur brewers.

Beerfest will be held at the **Grand Ridge Brewery & Restaurant, Mirboo North (Mel 356 D4 or 97 D8)** from Friday 20th February to Saturday 21st February 2008. Visitors welcome – come and sample the range of Grand Ridge micro-brewed beers on tap at the bar in the brewery-restaurant complex. The bar also features a gallery from where operations in the brewery can be viewed.

Over \$1500 in Prizes!

Champion Beer of Show - \$500 cash sponsored by **Grand Ridge Brewery**.

Champion Brewer - will have the opportunity to brew a batch of beer at a commercial brewery and the beer will be served on tap at the **Transport Bar**, Federation Square, Melbourne on a date to be arranged. (see www.beerfest.org.au for further information and conditions).

8 Category Winners & Placegetters

1st – engraved trophy plus prizes to the value of approx. \$100

2nd - engraved trophy

3rd - engraved trophy

Best Novice Brewer - \$60 cash sponsored by **Vicbrew**

The sponsors of Beerfest 2009 are shown on the next page.

Closing Date: Entries to be received by **12pm Saturday 7 February 2009. NO LATE ENTRIES ACCEPTED.**

Categories: & Styles Entries will be accepted in the 8 Categories listed over the page. The style nominated **MUST** be a designated style for the Category, as listed over the page. The organisers reserve the right to reclassify a beer to a listed style.

Entry Limits: Pale Ale: Brewers may enter 1 entry only in this Category.
All Other Categories: Brewers may enter a maximum of 2 entries.
Within this limit, one entry per style is permitted.

The Entry Form (over the page) and fees are to be wrapped around the bottle and attached with an elastic band. One bottle per entry (750ml preferred) with a minimum of 500ml.

Delivery Points: Entries may be delivered to the following participating Victorian Home Brew Shops:

- Grain & Grape, 5/280 Whitehall St., Yarraville 3013
- Greensborough Home Brewing Supplies, 22 Louis Street. Greensborough 3088
- The Brewer's Den, 253 Dorset Road Boronia 3155

Postal entries are to be sent to The Brewers Den

Entry Fee: **\$10 for 1st entry; \$7 for subsequent entries**

Fees must be paid at time of entry either in cash or cheque payable to 'THE MELBOURNE BREWERS'.

Judging: Beers will be judged against the Beerfest 2009 Style guidelines which are available at: www.beerfest.org.au. Judging will be by blind tasting by a panel of 3 judges. Judges decision will be final. Completed judging sheets will be returned to brewers.

Note: **Judges will receive a coupon for one free entry for Beerfest 2010. Lunch is also supplied on the Saturday.**

Awards: **Champion Brewer** and **Best Club** will be determined by the sum of points awarded to the Brewer/Club in the Competition: 1st: 3 points, 2nd: 2 points and 3rd: 1 point. **Champion Beer** and **Best Novice** will be based on the highest number of judging points received for any beer, with overall impression being the decisive score in the event of a tie. Best Novice Trophy is open to brewers who have not placed 1st, 2nd or 3rd in previous VicBrew accredited competitions.

Presentations for **Beerfest** 2009 to be made around 9 pm on Saturday 21st February 2008.

For more information visit www.beerfest.org.au

BEERFEST 2009 CATEGORIES & STYLES

Full style guidelines are available at: www.beerfest.org.au

CATEGORY	STYLES
1. PALE ALE	Kolsch, Cream Ale, Blonde Ale, Belgian Pale Ale, Australian Pale Ale, English Pale Ale, American Pale Ale
2. PALE LAGER	Australian Lager, Premium Australian Lager, Pale Continental Lager, Munich Helles, Dortmunder Export, Classic American Pilsner, German Pilsner, Bohemian Pilsner
3. DARK ALE & LAGER	Vienna Lager, Oktoberfest/Marzen, North German Altbier, California Common Beer, Dark Lager, Munich Dunkel, Schwarzbier, Northern English Brown Ale, Southern English Brown Ale, Australian Dark Ale, Dusseldorf Altbier, American Brown Ale
4. STRONG ALE & LAGER	Maibock/Hellesbock, Strong Pale Lager, Traditional Bock, Doppelbock, Eisbock, Old Ale (English Strong Ale), Strong Scotch Ale, English IPA, American IPA, Imperial IPA, English Barleywine, American Barleywine
5. BRITISH ALE	Irish Red Ale, Scottish Heavy (70/-), Scottish Export (80/-), English Special/Best Bitter, English Extra Special Bitter
6. PORTER & STOUT	Brown Porter, Robust Porter, Baltic Porter, Sweet Stout, Oatmeal Stout, Dry Stout, Australian/Foreign Extra Stout, Russian Imperial Stout
7. BELGIAN ALE	Belgian Blond Ale, Belgian Strong Golden Ale, Tripel, Saison, Biere de Garde, Dubbel, Belgian Strong Dark Ale, Flanders Red Ale, Flanders Brown Ale, Straight (unblended) Lambic, Gueuze, Fruit Lambic
8. WHEAT & RYE BEER	Witbier, Australian Wheat, Weizen/Weissbier, Dunkelweizen, Weizenbock, Roggenbier, Berliner Weisse
SPONSORS	Brewers Den, Brew Your Own, Craft Brewer, Cryer Malt, Grain & Grape, Grand Ridge Brewery, Greensborough Home Brewing, Holgate Brewhouse, Nillumbik Cellars, Powells Malt, Purvis Cellars, 3 Ravens, Transport Bar, Vicbrew

ENTRY FORM — BEERFEST 2009 *Closing Date: 7th February 2009 (12pm)*

Please cut off entry form and **attach with rubber band** to bottle with entry details visible. Include entry fee in envelope attached to bottle.

BREWER DETAILS				
(NB. Information supplied will only be used by 'The Melbourne Brewers' and will not be released to third parties.)				
Name			Email	
Street Address & Suburb			Postcode	
Club			Phone	
ENTRY CONDITIONS				
<p><u>Pale Ale Category</u> : 1 entry only allowed.</p> <p><u>All Other Categories</u>: maximum of 2 entries and within this limit, <u>one entry per style</u> is permitted.</p> <p>The completed Entry Form is to be wrapped around the bottle and attached with an elastic band.</p> <p>One bottle per entry (750ml preferred) with a minimum of 500ml.</p>				
BEER DETAILS				
Category		Style (specify)		Bottle Cap ID
<input type="checkbox"/> Full Mash	<input type="checkbox"/> Mini Mash/Extract	<input type="checkbox"/> Extract	<input type="checkbox"/> Kit - Please specify kit:	
Are you prepared to supply recipe details/brewing method if requested:			Original Gravity	Final Gravity
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO				
Cost: 1st Entry: \$10 Subsequent Entries: \$7 per entry <input type="checkbox"/> Cash <input type="checkbox"/> Cheque to 'THE MELBOURNE BREWERS'		Payment: <input type="checkbox"/> with this entry <input type="checkbox"/> as part of a bulk payment. Payment for bulk entries can be combined in a single envelope, but please include with payment a list of Brewers and Beer Entries paid for.		