



The Cellar

The Official Newsletter of the
Colonial Ale Smiths &
Keggers

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CLUB NEWS: *Club Elections*

By Harrison Gibbs

CASK began the New Year with a taste of Scotland, enjoying several fine Scottish and Scotch ales. (See the January newsletter for the difference between the two styles) While the homebrewed version fell a little flat, due to somebody forgetting the priming sugar, Don Welsch helped by bringing several bottles of Belhaven Scottish Ale and Hugh Burns added a fine bottle of MCEwens Scotch Ale.

Both Williamsburg Brewing Company and CASK recently were mentioned in the "Mid Atlantic Brewing News" February/March edition. Greg Wiggins, the Virginia correspondent praised Hugh for his Berrets Steamer and recognized CASK's hosting of the 2003 Club-Only Competition.

This month, CASK hopes to elect the rest of the club officers. We are still short a Vice President and a Newsletter Editor/Secretary. Don Welsh has volunteered to take on the position of Treasurer. Thanks Don. If you are interested in giving a little more back to CASK, PLEASE give me call (757 259-2064) or respond by email to club@williamsburgbrewing.com. Even if you are unable to attend but are interested, your involvement is appreciated.

In addition, Steve Jack will be unveiling several new logos for CASK to choose from. This completes one more step towards the fabled Club pint glasses.

New Members

CASK continues to grow as we welcome two new members, Brian Hershey of Newport News and Mathew Lindsey of Virginia Beach.

Beer Watch: *A little Time to Play in Baltimore*

By Rick Morris

My wife Sandi and I had the opportunity to visit the Inner Harbor of Baltimore on the first weekend of February. During our time, there we were able to see a few sights including the National Aquarium. While there we had to eat and drink, so we took these opportunities to find some interesting places of which I'm sure the readers of this newsletter are interested in.

The first "attraction" I'll speak of, we discovered by accident while searching for another place. The Wharf Rat at Camden Yards. It's a small Restaurant, Pub and Brewery located on Pratt St a few blocks from Camden Yards (as the name implies). Sandi decided to have a Sam Smith Oatmeal Stout, which was delivered unopened and without an opener (the server obviously had not served many of them). I began with the "Little William's Winter Warmer" which was brewed to celebrate the birth of the owner's son. The Winter Warmer is a single full mash ale using only malted barley and wheat. According to the beer notes, the brewer wanted to match William's weight with the ABV. However, William weighed 9 lb. 14 oz. at birth. So they had to compromise and ended up with an ABV of 7.7%. Anyway, I enjoyed the brew very much. My next selection was "Oliver Export Ale", a cask conditioned, unfiltered IPA (ABV 6.2%) Very smooth and not too hoppy (I don't care for a big hop taste). We had dinner also.

The next day while the window was being replaced in Sandi's truck from a break in on Friday night we went to lunch at Fells Point on the Inner Harbor. We started at Kooper's Tavern, where I had Degroen's Marzen Octoberfest (ABV 5.4%) and food. We then walked around the corner to Max's on Broadway.

This place was almost too good to be true for a beer lover, with 96 rotating beers on tap and 100's of bottles and cans. As Sandi said, we would be in trouble if we lived close. I started with a Scotch Ale, White Marsh Highlander Heavy (ABV 8.0%), very tasty and Sandi with

an Imperial Stout, Weyerbacher Raspberry (ABV 9.0%). She liked it, but I had to finish it (poor me). She then had a Belgian Abbey from the Bluegrass Brewing Co. called Hell for Certain (ABV 6.6%), which she enjoyed. I moved on to the Dominion Winter Ale (ABV 6.8%), Flying Dog K-9 Cruiser (ABV 8.0%), both very tasty. My next was Victory Golden Monkey (ABV 8.5%) this one was too sweet for me. Next I had a Paulaner Hefeweizen (ABV 4.5%), with a lemon wedge, very good and refreshing.... as best as I can remember! We then headed out to see other, more public sites.



Unfortunately, we had spent over 2 hours in Max's so we missed most of them. Later that night we returned to Max's (at Sandi's disapproval) for another seating. This time I started with the Hell for Certain and Sandi a coke. I then had a Stoud's Winter Rye Ale (ABV 6.4%), very good. I then had the Weyerbacher Raspberry Imperial Stout (ABV 9.0%), which I thought would be my last for the night. However, Sandi was having an Ace Pear Cider (ABV 5.0%), so I had one more. I had over heard the bartender earlier discussing a rare beer that they were lucky to get hold of, so that's what I had. It's a Dark Bock called Samichlaus (ABV 14%), WOW this is great beer! The bartender just looked at me at first and asked first if I were driving? Then he explained that the beer is served in a 5-oz glass and costs \$7.00 (this is truly a time to say, "life is too short to drink cheap beer") and that it comes with a glass of water backer. We then walked back to our hotel.

Max's not only has the 96 taps and lots of bottles and cans of beer, but they also boast a list of Belgian & Vintage Beer available for carry out. The list includes Anchor Xmas Special Ale, USA @ \$20.00, Dulle Teve Mad Bitch, Belgium @ \$18.00 and the list continues, which by the way I have a copy of. I also kept a copy of the draught beer list. We will be returning to the area with in the next couple of months, so I can be bribed to bring some back.

Rick Morris

A chief burgomaster of Antwerp used for many years to drink no other drink than mead and though he was an old man, he was of extraordinary vigor, had a great appetite... *and had every year a child.*

- Sir Kenelm Digby -

Quote of the Month!

“NON”-BEER STYLE of the Month: “Mead and Cider

Homebrewers have rediscovered the two fermented beverages of mead and cider. Both drinks hark back to history and tradition. While mead has almost completely disappeared from the commercial market, luckily cider is making a comeback. In this article, I will only talk about mead. While Cider is just as interesting of a drink and the process has its own traditions and complexities, that article will have to wait until the fall when apple season is upon us. Produced anytime of the year, Mead's the warmer fermentation makes it the ideal summer project.

MEAD

Mead, made from honey has been long associated with fertility and intoxication. Ambrosia was the nectar/food of the Greek gods and was made of honey. As honey production spread across Europe so did mead making. The Romans and Greeks often infused herbs and spices into mead creating Metheglin, the root word for "medicine. The Vikings drank it on their long voyages across the Atlantic, while Beowulf consumed the drink in the Mead halls of Denmark. In addition, the tradition of drinking mead the first month of marriage to ensure a son gave us the Honeymoon.

Unlike beer, making mead has fewer ingredients and actually fewer steps. This limited time spent at the beginning of the process is made up for with the lengthy fermentation and settling period, that proceeds bottling. The primary ingredient for mead is honey. Honey provides the fermentable sugar for mead. However, other sugars can and have been added to the honey creating subspecies of mead. The most common subgroup is the Melomels, meads that contain fruit. Pymment is mead with grape juice similar to wine, and Cyser combines honey and apple juice. Other fruits make wonderful Melomels, including blackberries, raspberries and currants. On the other hand, Braggots are meads made with malt but unlike honey beers, these beverages retain strong honey characteristics.

In addition, many meads require some additives, either for yeast nutrition or to balance out the honey's sweetness. Honey unlike malted barley contains low levels of nitrogen, critical for yeast growth. Honey also lacks many of the other minerals and vitamins yeast find in both fruits and grains. To solve this deficiency, mead makers will add a variety of yeast nutrients. Your local homebrew store usually stocks them. The other group of additives includes acids and tannins that help to balance the mead and increase its drinkability. Just as hops and dark grains balance your ales, a blend of tartaric/malic/citric acid will make the mead more complex and less cloying. Tannins provide bitterness that also balances the honey. Either commercial grape

tannin or from aging in oak, both will make good mead better.

Finally, you need yeast to turn your sticky honey into a golden elixir. The choice of yeast makes a huge difference in both body and alcohol level. Honey is almost pure sugar so expect a high specific gravity and a low final gravity, closer to wines and ciders than beer. Champagne yeast produces dry meads and is great for sparkling meads. Premier Cuvee results in a medium to sweet beverage, while Tokay and Flor Sherry yeasts create very sweet meads.

MAKING MEAD

Mead making is easy and does not require the same level of boiling as brewing. However, honey usually contains various microbes that could prove detrimental to your mead requiring some form of pasteurization. The easiest method requires bringing 4 gallons of water to a boil. Include any yeast nutrients or energizers. Then turn off the heat and stir in the honey allowing it to sit covered for 10 minutes. Boiling the honey would result in the loss of much of the aroma and flavor characteristics. The honey addition cools down the must (the mead makers term for "wort") but it stays hot enough to kill any of the microbes. This will add stability to the final product. Cool quickly and transfer to a sanitized fermenter. Using a wort chiller can speed this process. When the temperature is around 70 F pitch the yeast.

Ferment in the primary at 70F, until activity has slowed considerably, usually about 4 to 6 weeks. Rack to a secondary and let stand until clear. This is a long period of storage, so it is recommended that you use a glass carboy for your secondary fermenter. Natural clearing may take 6 to 12 months.

When fermentation is complete and there is no more activity in the airlock, it is time to bottle. Still mead can be bottled as is, or a wine stabilizer can ensure the yeast does not wake up and finish off any residual sugar. To create sparkling mead, prime with $\frac{3}{4}$ cup priming sugar or $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of honey. A fresh dose of yeast will be needed to get it started again.

DRY SPARKLING MEAD

10 lbs of Orange Blossom Honey
2 tsp of yeast nutrient
Yeast Starter

At Bottling:

$\frac{3}{4}$ Cup Priming Sugar or $\frac{1}{2}$ Cup Honey
3 tsp Acid Blend dissolved in boiling water
Fresh Yeast Culture

MEDIUM- SWEET STILL MEAD

13 to 15 lbs of Honey
2 tsp of Yeast Nutrient
Yeast Starter Culture
4 tsp of acid blend

MAKING MELOMELS

Melomels combine fruits and honey, and the amount of fruit character depends on the amount of fruit and the type used. Most fruit can be mashed up, while the larger pit fruits such as peaches and apricots should be chopped. However, the difficulty is adding the fruit while maintaining sanitation.

Adding the fruit before fermentation is one method, but pasteurize the fruit along with the honey. If you are following the instructions above, then put the fruit into the boiling hot water along with the honey and let rest, long enough to kill the baddies. Another approach is to add the fruit after primary fermentation, during the secondary phase. This will preserve the greatest amount of fruit character but requires treating the chopped/mashed fruit with either blanching or bisulfate before adding it to the fermenting mead. I recommend using a bucket for the fruit addition stage, making it easier to get the stuff out later. The final method is adding the fruit after secondary, untreated. While this is the riskiest manner, the mead is at its most stable and it captures the fruit character at its freshest.

SIMPLE PYMENT

8 lbs of Honey
2 quarts of Chardonnay Grape Concentrate
(Alexander's)
2 tsp of yeast nutrient
Yeast Starter

When using wine kit concentrates there is no need for additional sanitation, so add directly to primary. When using the fruit purees, add directly into the secondary. Remember to always siphon the mead onto the fruit to limit oxidation.



THE CELLARMASTER:

Cask continues to grow and members have contributed great articles and beer to the club. However, with a year of Activities to be planned, more involvement is necessary. This

February, CASK hopes to have all of his official seats filled. This allows us to have a functioning board, one of the requirements for tax-free status. While the Club does not rake in enough from dues to for the government to tax, a non-profit corporation provides some insulation for Club Officers from liability.

Let me thank Rick Morris and Ramon Rodriguez for their contributions to the Newsletter. Any articles about beer or brewing events, places or stories are more than welcome.

BEERS OF THE MONTH

Please contact Harrison Gibbs if you would like to provide a homebrew style or make a suggestion for the beer style for any month.

- January - Scottish & Strong Ales
- February - Meads & Ciders
- March - India Pale Ales
- April - Pilsners
- May - Bocks & Dark Lagers
- June - Cream Ales
- July - Wheat Beers

CALENDAR OF CLUB EVENTS & COMPETITIONS

February 21 - Club Meeting featuring Meads and Ciders. This will be a chance to try beverages long forgotten by the commercial beer and wine industry.

February 27 – March 2, Real Ale Festival 2002, Chicago, IL. Come out and have a “firkin” good time. The largest collection of cask conditioned ales outside of Britain. While most entries are brewed here in the states, there will be some from the British Isles. For more info, see www.realalefestival.com or call (800) 229-1832.

March 21 - Club Meeting featuring IPA. If enough people bring samples, there might be a tasting for April's Club-Only Competition.

March 22-23, 16th Annual Bluebonnet Brew-Off Homebrew Competition, Ft. Worth, TX, Sponsored by four Texas clubs, they feature unique steins for first place in each category. This year's keynote speaker is Ralph Olson, owner of Hop Union. Entries due by Feb 21. See www.welcome.to/bluebonnet.

March 30, 2002, AHA Club-Only Porter Competition, (Category 15), New York City, NY. Club judging at the March meeting. Hosted by Phil Clarke and the New York City Homebrewers Guild.

April 18 - Club Meeting featuring Pilsners. “Czech it out.”

April 19-28, First Round AHA National Homebrew Competition, at 8 Regional sites. Do you have what it takes to be crowned AHA Homebrewer of the Year? The 1st round entry deadline is April 3-12, 2002. Judging takes place April 19 - 28. First, Second, and Third place winners in each category advance to the Second Round in June at the National Homebrewers Conference in Irving, TX. See more info at www.beertown.org.

May 4, National Homebrew Day & Big Brew, Celebrate National Homebrew Day with the American Homebrewers Association's 5th Annual Big Brew, a day of simultaneous brewing across the globe!

April, 2002, AHA Club-Only India Pale Ale Competition, (Category 7), Club judging at the May 16th meeting, with entries due late May.

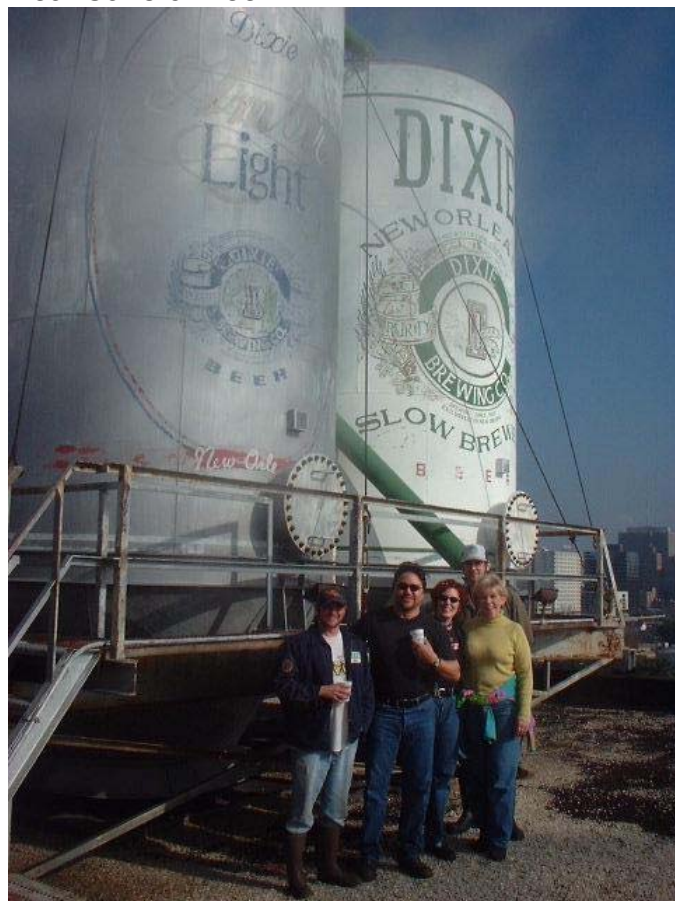
May, Dominion Cup, Richmond, VA. This homebrew competition is sponsored by the James River Brewers, a local club out of Richmond.

May 16 - Club Meeting featuring Maibocks, Bocks, and other strong and/or dark lagers.

June 20-22, 2002 AHA National Homebrewers Conference, Dallas/Ft. Worth, TX. The largest gathering of homebrewers in the country. Seminars, tastings, and an awards banquet are all on the menu.

November 2, Teach a Friend to Homebrew Day, Williamsburg Brewery, CASK repeats its big brewing event. Remind your friends to come out see how it is all done.

Real Cans of Beer -



Ramon and Jennifer Rodriguez along with some friends toured the Dixie Brewing Company last month in New Orleans. See next month's article to hear about their adventure.

CASK

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