



The Cellar

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Colonial Ale Smiths & Keggers
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CLUB NEWS: *Thanks Judges!*

By Harrison Gibbs

The March CASK meeting was an eventful affair, with the voting on the club-only competition for porters and a wide assortment of the March beer of the month, IPA's, to be critiqued.

For the IPA's we had several excellent commercial varieties. Imported from England we had Burton IPA and Fuller's IPA. The American entries brought us Hop Devil, Anderson Valley, Hop Otin, and many more. Dave Kersbergen also brought a homebrewed IPA that was excellent.

CASK also conducted its first club judging of Porters, where we sampled three good porters brewed by members. Dave Kersbergen's scored the highest and was sent to New York to represent CASK in the Club-Only competition sponsored by New York City Homebrewers Guild. All the entries were terrific, and we hope that future competitions will bring out equally superb homebrews.

Quote of the Month!

Pure water is the best gift a man can bring.
But who am I that I should have the best of
anything?
Let princes revel at the pump, let peers with ponds
make free,
...beer is good enough for me.

-Lord Neaves-

Beer Watch: *A Taste of Germany in Pennsylvania*

By Steve Jack

I found myself in Pittsburgh one weekend in March, and no trip to Pittsburgh would be complete without a stop at the Penn Brewery. So my girlfriend Sandy and I made our way to the base of Troy Hill on Pittsburgh's North Side, just across the street from the H.J. Heinz factory, where the Pennsylvania Brewing Company sits.

Penn Brewery was the first micro-brewing company in Pennsylvania and the first brewery with a restaurant in Pennsylvania since Prohibition. It is currently the largest micro-brewery in the state, and bottles several of its beer lines for sale in seven states (unfortunately, Virginia is not yet one of them).

Its founder, Tom Pastorius, is a direct descendant of Franz Daniel Pastorius, who established the first German settlement in America, Germantown, PA, in 1683. Tom worked for a brewing company in Germany for twelve years before returning to the US to start his own brewery.

The Penn Brewery Restaurant is styled after classic Bavarian beer halls, with long picnic tables forcing its patrons to meet their neighbors. There are flags and decorations all over the room, and traditional Bavarian music pervades the air. The authentic German food is excellent, and worth the visit itself (go ahead, have a pretzel, you know you want one!). During the summer, the brewery opens its outdoor biergarten, and is a great place to go on a clear, warm summer evening.

But let's not forget the beer! Penn Brewery's flagship beer is the Penn Pilsner (notice the tie-in with the beer of the month! Eh?). To anyone who grew up in the Pittsburgh area, the word pilsner is synonymous with Penn Brewery. This beer is a Vienna-style lager, not to be confused with Penn's German-style Kaiser Pils.

Penn Gold and Penn Dark are excellent Munich Style beers. Sandy stuck exclusively to the Penn Gold and thought it was fantastic. I tried the Penn Maerzen first, and were it not for the sole purpose of providing you all with critiques of different beers, I would have stayed with

it through the afternoon. But I also tried the Penn Weizen, and enjoyed it as well.

Penn Brewery's seasonal beers may be it's best. The St. Nikolaus Bock is a malty, dark Christmas beer the is one of the best micro-brewed beers you'll ever come across. The Ol' Man Winter is a wheat double bock, and the Pastorator is a chocolate ruby double bock. Both are exceptionally strong yet delicious.

Penn Brewery is involved with many annual festivals, including its Micro-Brewer's Fest in June (see calendar of events on page ???). If you are heading toward the Pittsburgh area and would like more information about the Penn Brewery, got to its website at www.pennbrew.com



BEER STYLE of the Month: Pilsner

The origins of Pilsener beer can be traced back to its namesake, the ancient city of Plzen, located in the western half of the Czech Republic in

what was formerly Czechoslovakia and, before that, part of the kingdom of Bohemia.

Plzen's contribution to beer history began in 1295, when the King of Bohemia, Wenceslas II, founded the town of New Plzen on the banks of the Radbuza River. Old Plzen was located nearby, about 9 kilometers southeast in the Uslava Valley, in an area that was not easily accessible for trade. King Wenceslas chose the new site carefully, placing New Plzen (now known simply as Plzen) near the confluence of four waterways, the Mze, Radbuza, Uhlava, and Uslava Rivers. The city was also near the junction of major trading routes leading to Nuremberg, Regensburg, and Saxony. It was a site that would put the city at center stage in an exciting chapter in brewing history.

At the city's founding, King Wenceslas gave its 260 citizens the right to make beer and sell it from their houses, a lucrative privilege that was passed down through each family. The first written records of a distinct brewery in Plzen date back to 1307. Evidence suggests that many of the early residents of Plzen formed joint breweries and even a community malthouse to make production more efficient, with individual brewers making their own wort and then dumping it into a large vat for fermentation.

The early 1800s brought many important developments to the understanding of yeast microbiology. Brewers of

the period knew that yeast was needed for fermentation, but they were uncertain of its precise role and had no way to propagate it intentionally. German scientist Theodor Schwann's experiments (1837-1838) demonstrated that yeast cells grew and reproduced during fermentation; he argued that fermentation was a living process. The renowned German scientist Justus von Liebig, on the other hand, maintained that fermentation was a chemical reaction triggered by the death and decomposition of yeast cells. Pasteur's later work showed that Schwann was right -- it is the living yeast cells that convert sugars into ethanol. These experiments provided a key backdrop for the events to come.

Beer quality had been deteriorating during this period, probably due to a lack of understanding about proper fermentation practices. Bohemian brewers, armed with their new-found knowledge of yeast, began to connect differences in style with variations in yeast properties. In 1838, several of the city's brewers deemed 36 barrels of local beer undrinkable and dumped it out in the town square, right in front of City Hall. The brewers decided that building a brewery would serve the dual purpose of making money and brewing better beer.

Legend has it that soon after this event (1840), a strain of much-envied bottom-fermenting yeast was smuggled out of Bavaria by a monk and passed on to a Bohemian brewer. The resulting beer met with instant success, and two years later, the brewery responsible for launching the Pilsener style began operations.

Pilsner Urquell's brewery began as a collective facility operated by several of Plzen's independent brewers, who designed it specifically to brew the new lager style. The brewery was built on the bank of the Radbuza River, near a well and directly above a sandstone foundation that was easily carved with tunnels for cold storage, or lagering, of this new breed of beer. A 29-year-old lager brewer from Bavaria, Josef Groll, was named master brewer of the new enterprise. Originally known as the Mestansky Pivovar (Citizens' Brewery), the brewery was later renamed Plzensky Prazdroj, meaning "original source of Pilsener" in Czech.

The Plzen brewery first sold Josef Groll's clear, light-colored lager in 1842. The beer acquired the name Pilsner Urquell (urquell is German for "original source"), in honor of the language of the ruling Austrian Empire. Though certainly distinctive, Pilsner Urquell was far from the first beer to be lagered. Bavarians had been brewing lagers at least as far back as the 1400s, when their method of storing beer in the cool caves of the Bavarian mountains inadvertently selected for lager yeast, which thrived at the low temperatures. These Bavarian lagers were mostly dark beers, however, and any light-colored ales that were available were probably cloudy.

The timing was right for Pilsner Urquell to sell the lager that was to become the model for so many others. The

lagering process so recently arrived to Plzen produced a smoother and mellower beer than any Bohemia's brewers had created before; clearly, the cooperative effort resulted in a dramatic turn-around for Plzen's beer quality. New and improved kilning methods also contributed to the success of Pilsner Urquell by enabling maltsters of the period to produce a pale malt that lent an unusually light wort. As if to cinch the beer's popularity, its clear, golden appearance looked especially handsome in the well-known Bohemian crystal that was just becoming popular in Europe and the United States.

Recipe of the Month:

Bohemian Pilsner

INGREDIENTS

- One 4-lb can of pale malt extract
- 3 lbs. Extra light DME
- 2 oz. Hallertauer hop plugs (boiling)
- 1 oz. Saaz plugs (finishing)
- 1 tsp. Irish moss
- Wyeats 2278 Czech Pils or 2007 Pilsen Lager liquid yeast
- ¾ cup corn sugar to prime

PROCESS

- Crack crystal malt, place in a muslin bag, and tie. Add cracked grains to 2 gallons cold water and bring to a boil. When water comes to a boil, remove from heat and let steep for 10 minutes. Remove and discard grains.
- Add can of liquid malt and dried malt. Be sure to save 1 ¼ cups of the dried malt for bottling. Add the Hallertauer hop plugs tied in a muslin bag. Boil for 45 minutes. Add Irish moss, boil for 10 more minutes. During the last 5 minutes, add the Saaz hop plugs tied in a muslin bag. Remove all the hops.
- Have a primary fermenter prepared with 3 ½ gallons of cold water. Add hot wort to cold water to make up a total of 5 ¼ gallons. When wort has cooled to 65-75°F, pitch prepared yeast.
- Ferment for 2 weeks in primary, 2 weeks in secondary at recommended fermentation temperature
- Bottle with corn sugar priming and condition for 2-3 weeks.

World of Beer News

A federal judge has ruled that Virginia's ban on purchasing wine and beer from out of state is unconstitutional. On March 29th, U.S. district Judge Richard L. Williams of the Eastern District of Virginia found that this Virginia law violates the Constitution's commerce clause by discriminating against breweries and wineries in other states that want to sell directly to Virginia residents.

These restrictions make it a misdemeanor to ship beer or wine to the state residents and for the residents to receive the shipment. It has long been part of Virginia's multi tier distribution system. For beer lovers, this has made it difficult to get hard-to-find domestic craft beers as well as imports. If a Virginia based distributor didn't import it, then residents were out of luck.

A couple of consumers and three small out-of-state wineries filed a lawsuit for an injunction to prevent Virginia from enforcing the restriction on mail-order sales. Local Williamsburg attorney Matthew Hale represents the plaintiffs. The Williamsburg lawyer said the decision could also call into question the state's system of restricting liquor sales to ABC stores.

Supporters of the Virginia ban claim that this decision undermines all of the state's alcohol laws, including drinking age limits and tax issues.

While the action was brought by wine consumers and wineries, the judge's ruling will impact beer sales as well. But don't go out and order you rare Belgian ale yet, the order is on hold to give the Virginia legislature a chance to look at the issue and make adjustments.



THE CELLARMASTER: WHY I LOVE BREWING: SHARING WITH THE PARTY FAITHFUL

The last weeks of March saw me lugging shiny corney kegs all over town. While I was fortunate to have actually been invited to several parties, the invitations came with the usual request for beer, always music to my ears. Since becoming a homebrewer, I have thought about the things I love about the hobby (a brewer must do something during the boil time and a good homebrew helps to get these gears turning). I assume I enjoy the process; otherwise, I would not have

paid to move so much equipment from California to Virginia. Moreover, the history and culture of the craft fulfills my interest in history, travel and cooking. However, they all boil down to my love for sharing this hobby with others.

School and work conspire to limit my time to enjoy my efforts, providing a surplus of beer. A free weekend may see me wasting the day with an all grain batch, only to knock out an extract quickie on a weeknight after all my reading is done. However, I am nowhere near the federal limit on homebrewing (100 gallons per year for a single person and 200 gallons for a household with two or more adults). Luckily, supply and demand equal out as friends throw parties and request me to bring some beer.

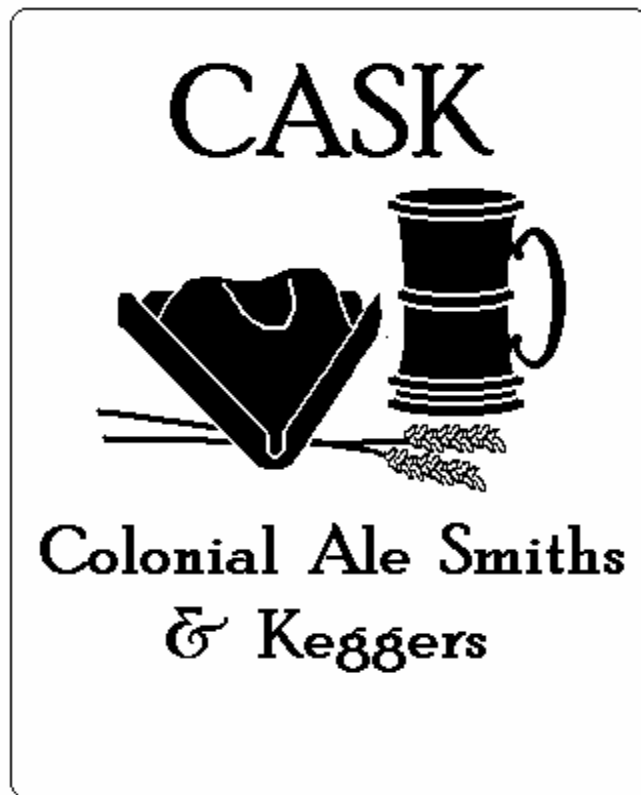
I have relocated to the eastern backyard of Anheuser Busch, and I like to consider my beers a direct challenge to the watery commercial stuff, that cost more to sell than to make. When my younger friends ignore the commercial beers at a party, for seconds and thirds of my stouts, porters, and pale ales, I realize my proselytizing has paid off. Some of you began brewing after trying my or another's homebrew. I dragged two of the kegs to a Saint Patrick's Day celebration filled with stout made by two new brewers, CASK members Jeremy Eglon and Tim Peltier. All the beer was obviously well received, because only empty corney kegs were left.

Like a lot of you, I began homebrewing after sampling the ales of some friends back in Los Angeles. I was amazed it could be so good, and once they showed me how to do it I was stuck. This love of sharing is one of the things that makes CASK so successful, growing to almost 40 members in the past seven months. No meeting has ever been short of beer and it is evident that the homebrews supplied are more popular than the commercial beers that represent the featured style.

This love of sharing brings us together for meetings and brewing with the seasonal brewing sessions at the brewery. The sixth annual National Big Brew Day arrives May 4, and is sponsored by the American Homebrewers Association (AHA), Wyeast and homebrew clubs nationwide. Last year over 2000 participants brewed at over 182 sites. Even more are expected to join the fun this year. A Maibock and Strong Ale are the chosen recipes provided by the AHA, but there is no rule that says they are the only ones to try. Both will emerge later in the year as club-only competitions, so if anyone attempts them please save a few for them. Copies of these recipes are available with Hugh at the Brewery Story and online at <http://beertown.org/AHA/BIGBREW/#recipes>.

A kick-off homebrew toast starts the day at 11:00 a.m. We will also enjoy the talents of our many club members with a potluck lunch that gets going at 1:00 p.m. The club will provide soda and the entries. Because we are

so close to Cinco d'Mayo (May 5th), El Presidente will be grilling up some carne asada and chicken. There will also be hotdogs and buns provided. However, we need help with the rest of the food and homebrew, of course. To give us an idea of who might be able to attend please contact me at rharrisong@lycos.com or the April Meeting, and let us know if you are planning to attend, plan to brew, and whether you can bring a dish. Whether you are brewing or not, the Big Brew Day is one of the few non-meeting events where CASK gets to together so come on out and celebrate and share homebrew.



Here's a first look at the new CASK logo which will go on those pint glasses you've all been anxiously awaiting!

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.

- April - Pilsners
- May - Bocks & Dark Lagers
- June - Cream Ales
- July - Wheat Beers
- August - ???
- September - Belgian Strong Ales*
- October - Oktoberfest
- November - Steambeers
- December - No special tastings
- January - English Pales & Bitters*
- February - Fruit and Spice beers
- March - Brown Ales*
- April - Strong/Old Ales*

* Denotes beer type coincides with club-only competition

CALENDAR OF CLUB EVENTS & COMPETITIONS

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.

April 27, 9th Annual Southeastern Microbrewer Invitational, Chapel Hill, NC. - www.beerhunter.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!

May, 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 18 - 19, Spirit of Free Beer Home Brew Competition, Ashland VA. - Sponsored by BURPS, the tenth annual will be held at Old Dominion Brewery. Entries will be accepted from April 27 thru May 11th and will include all BJCP categories. Anticipated grand prizes this year include brewing winning entries at local brewpubs, brewer-of-the-day at breweries, and more loot.

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

June 1, 2002 Microbrewers Fest, Pittsburgh, PA. - Sponsored by Penn Brewery, this festival already includes 19 Pennsylvania micro breweries as well as micro breweries from several other states, Canada and Germany. The fest will have three 3-hour sampling sessions, live music, and authentic German food. See more info at www.pennbrew.com

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.

June 8, Dominion Cup, Richmond, VA. - Sponsored by the James River Homebrewers, this AHA sanctioned event will be held at Legend Brewing Company. Entries are due by June 7. <http://jrhomebrewers.org/dominioncup/>

June 14 - Club Meeting featuring Cream Ales

August 15 - Club Meeting.

August, 2002, AHA Club-Only American Lager Competition, (Category 1), Club judging at the August meeting, with entry deadline at the end of the month.

September 14, 5th Annual West Hundred Open, Richmond VA. - Sponsored by the Southside Brewers, the entries are due between Sept 4-13th. Because of the low number of entries last year, there may be limited categories.

September 19 - Club Meeting featuring Belgian strong ales.

October, 2002, AHA Club-Only Belgian Strong Ale Competition, (Category 18), Club judging at the September club meeting, with entries the first of October.

October 17 - Club Meeting featuring Oktoberfest beers.

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.

November 21 - Club Meeting featuring steam-style beers.

Dec, 2002, AHA Club-Only Fruit Beer and Spice/Herb/Vegetable Beer Competition, (Category 21 & 22), Mini-judging at the November 21st meeting, with entries due early December.

CASK

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