



The Cellar

The Official Newsletter of the
Colonial Ale Smiths & Keggers

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Visit CASK on the web for the latest news, photos, recipes and updates: <http://www.williamsburgbrewing.com/CASK>

Inside *The Cellar*

In Case You Missed It

July meeting recap

pg.1

Confessions

Frank talk with the Cellarmaster

pg.2

Quick 'n Easy Inoculation

Yeast raching pt. II

pg.2

Mmm Mmm Good

This month's recipes

pg.4

Brewin' Wit Style

Witbier overview and history

pg.5

Special Request

Volunteers needed for competition

pg.5

On Tap

Upcoming competitions and events

pg.6

roles. Norm Schaffler volunteered for Entries Coordinator, Rob Brantley took the position of Site Coordinator, and Ramon Rodriguez stepped up as Judge Coordinator. CASK offers its thanks for filling these important positions.

This competition is a unique opportunity for CASK. In addition to AHA backing, Colonial Williamsburg and Williamsburg Brewing Company are also sponsors. Hugh has agreed to accept the entries as they trickle into town, while Colonial Williamsburg has agreed to provide the impressive site of Chowning's Tavern in the historic district for the event. Never before has an AHA club-only competition been so perfectly suited to the host club and locale. ■

for more info on the club-only comp, visit the website:

<http://www.williamsburgbrewing.com/CASK/clubcomp.htm>

Tech Tip: Avoiding Stovetop Burn

If you brew on your stovetop, you may have noticed a darkening or scorching of the porcelain or paint. This occurs when a pot is larger than the burner. The heat is reflected from the pot bottom back onto the stovetop. After a sixty-minute boil, there will be some scorching. An easy way to avoid this problem, however, is to use a sheet of aluminum foil with a hole for the burner cut into it. The foil will reflect the heat away from the stove and back to the boiling wort where it belongs. ■

CLUB NEWS

July Meeting

A large group gathered at the Williamsburg Brewery last month to taste American Pale Ales. In addition to the slew of commercial brews, a few club members brought their own efforts at this quintessential American beer – a perfect celebration of American Beer Month. Additionally, we enjoyed more than pale ale. CASK members provided a great selection of unique and tasty homebrews such as Frank Clark's India Pale Lager.

Discussion of next month's club-only competition, however, consumed most of the meeting. By now, all of you should know that the club is hosting the American Homebrewer Association's (AHA) club-only competition for Specialty/Experimental/Historic Beers. This was a great honor for such a young club. In addition to discussing some of the logistics and details, the meeting also featured a call for volunteers. While many there expressed an interest to volunteer, three members stepped up and took on key leadership

Quote of the Month

"This beer is good for you. This is draft beer. Stick with the beer. Let's go and beat this guy up and come back and drink some more beer."

— Ernest Hemingway
To Have and Have Not

THE CELLARMASTER

by Harrison Gibbs

Confessions of a Beer Hoarder

Clearing space in pantry, I continue to uncover bottles of commercial brands that I have collected over the years. I also know that if I looked beyond the expired salad dressing and half-used jars of cherry preserves in the refrigerator, I would find more beer squirreled away. Hello, my name is Harrison and I am a beer hoarder: a person who buys beers I ever drink.



Whenever I travel to a new area I explore the beer and wine stores looking for the rare and the desired bottles of ale and beer. For me this usually means Belgian Ales, a passion that I try to sate in my homebrewing.

On a recent trip to Roanoke, I visited Lee & Edwards, a small but plentiful wine and beer shop downtown and one block off the square. As soon as I asked what was new, the proprietor directed me to a shelf containing Ephemere (Unibroue's apple ale); George Gale and Co.'s Prize Old Ale, and several selections from Birrificio le Baladin, a new Italian Craft Brewery. I knew I had to have one of each. Back in Williamsburg, I placed my new discoveries in a box along side last year's discoveries.

I had every intention to enjoy last year's finds this past winter, but with everything going on (the usual generic excuse) they remained unopened. My prize collection of Abbey beers included a bottle from ALL six Trappist abbeys still brewing in Belgium. Westvleteren, Westmalle, Rochefort, Orval, and Chimay joined by a new discovery. I had found a new Trappist beer, the Trappist monastery of Achel, in the north of Belgium. Interestingly, Achel has been the only Belgian Trappist monastery without a brewery for most of the last century. It had one until the First World War, but the invading Germans confiscated its copper kettles were confiscated, probably for use in munitions. Only in the last couple of years, have the monks rebuilt their brewery and begun production.

There were even a few older bottles in the corner of the box. There were two bottles of 1996 Kulmbacher Eisbock, at 24% the strongest beer of its kind before it was discontinued that year. I also still had a 1999 bottle of AleSmith's Grand Cru signed by Skip Virgilio, their brewer in San Diego. Skip has since sold AleSmith to a Gold Medal winning homebrewer and former QUAFF President Peter Zien.

Despite the accumulation of beers, I still can't

pass up the opportunity to acquire that rare bottle of ale; and maybe this is the true definition of a hoarder. Each bottle is another capture. The big game hunter analogy, however, doesn't entirely fit. If that were the case, I would display the empty bottles on a mantel - trophies of my conquest.

The other reasoning I impose on my friends is my contention the bottles are for research. I do read a lot about beer and try to recreate recipes from all over the world. In addition, the Belgian styles are a real passion. Research, nevertheless, requires actual tasting. This is hard to accomplish with the samples hidden away.

In the end I continue to discover bottles of unique beers, which I squirrel away into my collection. Like King Miser I have acquired a hoard of golden treasure, which I fondly imagine enjoying on some later day. Let's hope I don't become too big an ass forgetting that I can't drink them after I'm gone. So, what bottle was cold in the back of the fridge? ■

Yeast Ranchin' Part. II

by Tim Jones

Part one of "Becoming a Yeast Rancher" talked equipment, not it's time for process, which can be broken into two basic steps: preparing blank slants, and inoculating slants. Usually, I do these steps on separate days, which I'll explain shortly.

You're going to want to gather all your necessary equipment and ingredients for preparing blank slants. This would include malt extract, gelatin or agar, slant vessels (tubes), vessel caps, a pressure cooker or big ole pot with a lid, and either a Pyrex dish or stainless steel vegetable steamer. I know I didn't mention some of these things last time, but they are really easy to find. Deal with it.

As I mentioned in part I, sterility is absolutely paramount when dealing with yeast. So, keeping that in mind, I take a few extra steps to compensate for the lack of proper microbiological equipment and technique. Anything you can do to make things more sterile and less likely to pick up any bacteria is great. Here's my process, for better or worse.

First, I steam the vials/test tubes and caps. A pressure cooker is ideal, as it accomplishes close to the same sterility as an autoclave (a scientist's toy). Alas, I do not have a pressure cooker. Regardless, the procedure is close to the same. What you need to is stand the vials/tubes up in the pressure cooker or big ole pot with a lid (your brew pot works great). If you got a stainless steel or heat resistant test tube rack with your vials, great, use that. A pyrex, dish that will hold the tubes upright is good too. I'm cheap, and I use a stainless steel vegetable steamer and stand my vials up in that. I usually sterilize about 8 vials at a time, 'cause that's all I can fit

see 'Yeast' on page 3

Yeast

continued from page 2

in there. Anyhow, put your rack/dish/steamer that is holding your vials in the bottom of the pot. You want to leave the caps off, but put them in the rack/dish/steamer too. Now fill the bottom of the pot with about an inch or so of water, and set that baby boiling for 15-20 min. with the lid on. You're steaming your tubes, which will do a pretty good job sterilizing. If you have a pressure cooker, do the same thing, but add 15 lbs. of pressure.

If you're not using a pressure cooker, you can decrease the chances of bacterial infection by steaming the tubes again after 24 hours. Steam them once, let them cool, cap them tight, and let them sit for at least 24 hours. Then, repeat the steaming process, cool, cap and wait another day. Do it again. Now, you've got some clean tubes. Steaming kills bacterial growth, but not spores (that's what 15 lbs. of pressure gets). But with repeated steaming, you are letting (essentially) spores turn to bacteria, then killing them. By the third time, you should have killed all once-spore-now-bacteria-growth.

Once the tubes finish their final steam bath, take them off the heat and let them cool for a while (lid still on). Drink a homebrew.

Now you can then prepare your growth media (yeast food). To do this, bring 1 cup of water to a boil, remove from the heat, and add 15 grams (1/2 oz.) of malt extract, dissolve, return to heat and boil for 15-20 minutes. Remove this from the heat.

Now add a package of flavorless gelatin or about a 1/2 teaspoon of agar to the mixture, stir it in to dissolve it and keep the boil up for a little while longer. If you need more growth media, adjust measurements accordingly. Different folks shoot for different blends, but this one works good for me if I just double, triple or quadruple it.

By now, your test tubes should be good and cool, and you're ready to pour blank slants. A small funnel is helpful here to get the growth media into the tubes. I use a sterilized syringe to transfer the stuff.

Fill each tube about 1/3 of the way with the agar/malt extract mixture, and place the cap on top without screwing it on all the way. Once you've got each tube filled, it's time for round two of sterilization. Put the filled tubes back into your rack/dish/steamer, and repeat the process again, remembering to take the lids off before you start steaming. Again, 15-20 minutes will do, and you can have a few homebrews while the stuff cools. Make sure you wait a while before capping the vials, because they will implode if they aren't cool enough. I usually wait until I can handle the glass without causing myself pain.

Once the tubes have cooled, you can cap them. Then, you need to "slant" them, or lay them at an angle

so that the media spreads out in the tube and hardens. Room temp should be good. The easiest way to do this is to get a shoebox lid and lean the tubes on the inner lip of the lid so that they lay at a 30-45° angle. Agar hardens much quicker and at much higher temps than gelatin.

Waiting a few days before moving to the inoculation phase (where you put the yeast in the tubes) has one distinct advantage—you can check to see how you did with sterilization. Blank slants are perfect places for bacteria to grow, and if you didn't get the sterilization right, you'll know after a day or two because you'll see stuff growing in the tubes. If this happens, toss it. But, assuming you did things clean, you shouldn't have any problems. Better to catch it early than taste it later.

Now you're ready to put the yeast into the tubes. I've used new smack packs or pitchable vials and yeast from starters made from trub...but the purer your source, the better your results. The basic process is the same.

Get your equipment together...yeast, inoculating loop, some kind of flame (I use a butane cooking torch, but an alcohol lamp will work too) and your blank vials. Make sure you sanitize your work space very very very well. Bleach the hell out of your counters and kick the pets out. This is as good as you can do unless you want to set up a "sterile" room or compartment for your work.

It helps if you have an empty, sterile vial to put your yeast source in, so that you can access it and close it up pretty easily. If not, put the yeast somewhere you can accomplish the same goal such as one of those nifty Erlenmeyer flasks.

You may want to practice the motions with empty vials so you can get quick to minimize air contact and mistakes when you're doing this process. Your call.

Flame your loop until it turns a bright orange color, and then let it cool a bit. A good technique for cooling it is to stick the loop into some sterile growth media that you've designated as the "cooling tube." That cools it quickly, and keeps things clean. Now, hold your breath (not kidding) and open up your yeast container, dip the loop in, close the yeast container, open the blank tube you want to inoculate, and smear it around on the flat surface of the growth media. Try not to touch the walls of the tube. Take the loop out, cap the tube, and repeat for the next, flaming your loop before each one.

Don't cap your tubes entirely. If you've got screw caps, screw them most of the way shut, but not all the way so the CO2 will be able to get out. Leave the tubes at room temp for a few days, and watch the yeast start growing. It should be a nice white slick growth. Other colors, textures, etc. are not good things. Keep an eye on it. After about a week, tighten the caps, tape up the tops of the tubes with electrical tape, and toss them in the fridge. They should be good for a couple months. ■

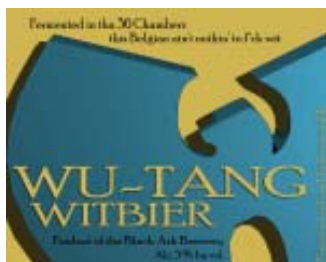


Next month: making starters from slants.

Recipes of the Month

Wu-Tang Witbier

Making a wit that fits style is a very very difficult challenge for extract brewers, since the color is almost impossible to get from extracts. This partial mash recipe comes very close to the correct color, but it is still technically too dark. But boy, does this one hit the spot on a warm afternoon.



Vital Stats

OG= 1.049
FG= 1.011
SRM= 5.0
IBU= 18
ABV= 5.2%

Grain Bill

1 lbs. Belgian Pale
1 lbs. German Wheat Malt Light
2 lbs. Wheat Flaked
1/2 lbs. Oats Flaked
3 lbs. Muntons light DME

Hops

1 oz. Hallertau @ 60 minutes.
1/2 oz. Saaz @ 15 min.
1/2 oz. Bitter orange peel @ 15 min
1/2 oz. Crushed Corriander seed

Yeast

White Labs WLP400 Belgian Wit Ale

Step By Step:

Mash grains at 158° F for 60 min. Use rice hulls if needed to prevent a stuck or slow sparge as the mash is 75% wheat. Sparge grains, add additional water to bring volume up to 5 gallons, bring to a boil, remove from heat and add DME. Return to heat and bring to a boil. Add Hallertau at beginning of boil. Add Saaz and bitter orange with 15 minutes remaining, and add crushed corriander seed with 5 minutes remaining. Cool and pitch yeast as normal. Ferment at 68° F for 7 days, transfer to secondary for one week. Bottle and condition as normal, remembering that witbier is highly carbonated.

The orangey notes in this tart brew become increasingly prominent with aging. You can adjust the orange and corriander levels according to your personal taste.

Grilled Hawaiian-Style Banana Wrapped Tuna Loin

This is a really simple recipe that is absolutely tremendous. The marinade is delightful, and works well with any kind of dense, thick fish, like salmon filets, shark steak, or swordfish filets. You can find banana leaves at an Asian market, either fresh or frozen will work. Try a Hitachino Nest White Ale with this dish — it's a perfect match.

1 TBS	soy sauce
1 clove	garlic
1 TBS	fresh minced ginger
2 TBS	sugar
2	scallions, minced
1/4	pineapple juice
1-2 lbs.	tuna loin, cut into equal portions
2	banana leaves, cut in 12-inch pieces

Prepare the grill.

Combine marinade ingredients in a large bowl, add the fish and marinate for 45 min.

Cut two squares of banana leaf, place fish in middle, and wrap marinated fish in banana leaves to seal. Place on outside of grill to use indirect heat, and cook 7-10 minutes or longer for your liking. Tuna steak is best served medium rare.

Sesame Green Beans

These make a fantastic side dish to most Asian cuisine, and/or seafood. Careful with the red pepper, it gets hot, and the smoke can really burn your throat if you aren't careful!

1 1/2 lbs	fresh green beans
1TBS	wok of vegetable oil
1tsp	dark sesame oil
1/2 tsp	crushed red pepper flakes
2 TBS	toasted sesame seeds
coarse salt	

Steam green beans covered in 1/2-inch boiling water for 2 minutes. Transfer beans to colander and run under cold water. Drain well.

Heat a wok shaped skillet or large non-stick frying pan over high heat. Go once around the pan with wok or vegetable oil, add several drops sesame oil and crushed pepper flakes. The pan will smoke. Add beans and stir-fry for 2 minutes. Add sesame seeds and coarse salt, toss to coat beans evenly.

BEER STYLE:

Witbier

Though the simmering days of summer wane, the season's residual heat may encourage even the stoutest dark beer fanatics to thirst for the crisp refreshment of a well crafted Belgian witbier. The cloudy pale straw colored liquid topped with a moussy head might deceive the uninformed drinker expecting an insipid macroswill. But once the aroma wafts through the air, even the most uneducated drinker will sniff something quite unique. A bright citrusy—mostly orange—nose shares the air with a myriad herbal, spice and phenolic scents. Taste fulfills the aroma's promise, providing an elegant, complex palate.

Witbier is an old style—several hundred years old in fact. The style showcases local ingredients found in the area in and around Louvain, east of Brussels, where wits made their home. Full of unmalted wheat, beautiful pale barley and a small bit of oats, this delicious brew relied on mixture of herbs and/or spices (known as gruit) to provide its flavor, but also to balance the malt sweetness.

The small Belgian town of Hoegaarden took the lead in defining witbiers. By the 19th Century, more than two dozen breweries were operating in the small village thanks to its witty pursuits.

But the end of the 19th century, thanks to the rise of the bottom fermented beverage throughout Europe, saw many of those Hoegaarden breweries cease to brew. The move toward lager loving eventually chased all the breweries out of the small town by 1960. It should be noted, that although it were not producing much witbier, Belgium as a whole refused to abandon their ales. God bless you Belgium, god bless.

Fortunate for fans of the fantastic fruity drink came Pierre Celis—witbier's savior. Celis had worked in Hoegaarden as a milkman, but obviously found that witbier 'did a body better.' In 1966, he assembled De Kluis brewery with used equipment and starting brewing. Single-handedly, Celis revived the style, inspiring other Belgian breweries to pursue witbier production. In 1992, Celis brought the USA the white delight, opening a brewery in Austin, TX, bearing his name. Using a combination of Belgian, North American and exotic ingredients, he created 'Celis White.'

Celis's presence in the states encouraged several American breweries to jump on the wit-wagon, including Victory, Allagash, Coors and Rouge.

Witbiers follow a pretty standard grain bill, made up of about half unmalted wheat and half very pale



Belgian or German pilsner malt. Many wits include a small amount of oats, but not more than 5% overall.

Hop levels are minimal, usually staying below 20 IBU's. Hops are used to provide the herbal character, so Saaz or East Kent Goldings are the most common.

Witbiers also include liberal additions Curaçao (bitter) orange peel and coriander to provide the citrusy, herbal and spicy notes found in the finished beer. Other spices are accepted too, so brewers are free to experiment to their wits' end (pun intended).

Yeast is the final, defining characteristic of witbier. Usually slightly phenolic and tart, wit yeast is low to medium flocculating, helping preserve the pleasant cloudiness of the final product. ■

Volunteers Needed

September 27 may seem a month away but for the members organizing the club's first competition the date quickly advances. In order for the competition to run smoothly, CASK needs volunteers. Already, Norm Schaffler, Rob Brantley, and Ramon Rodriguez are organizing their teams (Entries, Site, and Judging).

Norm as Entries Coordinator requires volunteers to check in the entries September 24, the Wednesday evening before judging. He also needs help transporting the beer to the site that Friday evening September 26, allowing the bottles time to cool and settle in the Tavern's refrigerator.

Rob needs help as he runs interference between the club and Colonial Williamsburg. While a couple of people may assist Norm's team with the transporting the entries, most of Rob's volunteers will need to help setup the site for the judging early Saturday, September 27. This is a great role because it allows you to be there before and during the judging. For anyone interested in a future study group for the Beer Judge Certification Program, this is the best opportunity to see what being a beer judge is all about.

Finally, Ramon has already been trying to contact possible judges and stewards. While Colonial Williamsburg will be providing costumed servers who will bring the beer to the judges, a couple of stewards will be needed for each table to keep track of the beers and score sheets. Some of our friends among the Hampton Roads Homebrewers and Tasters have offered to help us in this area. But, we may move people between Rob and Ramon's teams as needed.

If you are interested in volunteering then please sign up either at the August meeting or by email. You can contact, Harrison Gibbs the Competition Director at rharrison@lycos.com. Please state which group you want to work with and remember the days your will be needed. For anyone who volunteers, lunch will be provided Saturday 27 after the judging. ■

CALENDAR

Of Club Events and Competitions

August 21, 2003

CASK Meeting

Join the Colonial Ale Smiths and Keggers for their monthly meeting, August 21 at the Williamsburg Brewing Company in Williamsburg. Meeting starts at 7:30 p.m. August's style is Belgian Whites. Bring your homebrews or commercial examples. All beer is welcome!

September 22-27, 2003

Mid South Fair, Cordova TN

This AHA sanctioned event accepts entries in all subcategories and charges no entry fee! Deadline is 9/15. Contact Jim Cosey at jsgosney@midsouth.rr.com or www.memphisbrews.com.

September 25-27, 2003

Great American Beer Festival

Colorado Convention Center in Downtown Denver
For more information:
<http://www.beertown.org/events/gabf/index.htm>.

September 27, 2003

CASK Hosts Historic Beer Competition

Judging in Colonial Williamsburg, in Virginia
For more information:
ukalimbe@cox.net or
www.williamsburgbrewing.com/CASK/clubcomp.htm.

October 18-19, 2003

16th Annual SunCom Virginia Wine Festival

Town Point Park, Norfolk, Va.
For more information:
<http://www.festeventsva.org/festevents/Wine.htm>.

November 1, 2003

Teach a Friend to Brew Day

Recruit new homebrewers by sharing the joys of this glorious hobby to your non-brewing friends. Invite them to your house for an introductory lesson in homebrewing.

September 27, 2003

7th Annual Pacific BrewersCup, Los Angeles.

AHA sanctioned and hosted by the Strand Brewers, Pacific Gravity, and Long Beach Homebrewers. Deadline 9/2-9/19, fee \$6 per entry. Information at www.strandbrewers.org/pbc.

October 4, 2003

World Beer Festival, Durham, NC.

Info at www.allaboutbeer.com/wbf2003.

October 11, 2003

Name that Beer Championship, Richmond VA

Information at www.namethatbeer.com.

October 25, 2003

Queen of Beer Women's Homebrew Competition

Placerville, PA. BJCP sanctioned, contact Beth Zangari at zangari1@yahoo.com

AHA Club-Only Competitions

September 27, 2003

Specialty/Experimental/Historic Beer, Category #24
Hosted By CASK

November 14-22

Koelsch & Altbier Category #8 Los Angeles, CA
Hosted by Pacific Gravity of Los Angeles

December 2003

Barleywine Club Only Competition

Hosted by Ken "KK" Koenig and the Dunedin Brewers of Dunedin, FL.

Beers of the Month

Please Contact Harrison Gibbs if you would like to provide a homebrew style or make a suggestion for style of the month

Aug — Belgian White

Sept — Vienna (Austrian Octoberfest)

Oct — Alt*

Nov — Scotch Ale

Dec — Brewer's Choice

*denotes style coincides with club only competition.

CASK

is sponsored by

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