



# The Cellar

The Official Newsletter of the Colonial Ale Smiths and Keggers

## August Meeting Round-up

*By Norman W. Schaeffler*

It was a beautiful night that we had for the August meeting, so nice in fact that we held the meeting out in the parking lot instead of inside the brewery. We started the meeting with a presentation on Baltic Porters brought to us by Craig Mayotte. Craig presented the history of Porters and the different types of Porters from Brown Porters, to Robust Porters to Baltic Porters. More importantly he brought samples of each sub-style! The presentation also featured a couple bottles of Flying Dog Gonzo Imperial Porter that had the whole club talking. Then we had a discussion and a few examples of the style of the month, European Amber Lagers, Vienna Lagers and Oktoberfest/Marzens. We rounded out the evening with a demonstration on the art of meadmaking by Harrison Gibbs. Harrison created two meads right before our eyes and fill us in on the little details of creating this alternative fermented beverage. Harrison brought a few commercially produced meads for the club to sample. Harrison and Ray Rodriquez brought some home-crafted bottles to sample. A quite pleasant way to spend an August night.



### Ch-Ch-Ch-Ch-Changes!

For the foreseeable future, CASK will NO longer be meeting at the Williamsburg Brewing Company (WBC). The CASK Officers are looking into alternative places to meet. If you know of a community clubhouse, fraternal organization, or any other group that can provided us will a place to meet, please let Norm, Steven, Don or Brian know. One alternative plan is to meet at a different member's house each month.

Having a different place to meet each month puts even more importance on communication within the club. The best way to "spread the word" is by e-mail and by the web site. Unfortunately our main web site is currently off-line. WBC is in the process of switching web servers and our web site is down because of that. We have a temporary web site set up at:

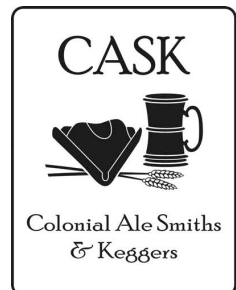
<http://members.cox.net/cask2005/>

Please look there for developing news. Also if you are not a member of the CASK mailing list, please send an e-mail to [cask2005@cox.net](mailto:cask2005@cox.net) to be automatically subscribed.

And above all, relax, don't worry, have a homebrew!

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# The Cellarmaster

By Norman W. Schaeffler

## The Beer of Pilsen

Pilsner is probably the one term of the beer vocabulary that the average person on the street is familiar with. Unfortunately, the examples most are familiar with are a far cry from the definitive examples of this style that hails from the Pilsen. Most (non-beer) people probably think that pilsner is another world for lager, but they had been brewing lagers in Bavaria for over 400 years before Pilsner arrived on the scene. It is this late arrival date that gives Pilsner a special characteristic that we do not have for other beer styles: a birth date.

When we talk about other styles, we talk about how they evolved. Take porter, for example, we can find out that porter gets its start by blending different beers at the pubs and from there sometime around 1720, the first porter appeared. There is some debate as to that date. For pilsner, the first keg was tapped on November 11, 1842. How's that for exact. It was a keg of Pilsner Urquell, the first and original pilsner. The Pilsner Urquell Brewery is located in the town of Pilsen, in the modern day Czech Republic. The brewery, and the beer, is named after the town with the addition of urquell, which means "original spring" in German. In Pilsen, the very soft water, combined with high quality barley, the spicy noble hop, Sazzy, and a special lager yeast smuggled out of Bavaria by a traveling monk in a bucket, or so the legend goes. The style was so successful that it spread throughout the region.

The BJCP Style Guide lists two sub-styles of Pilsner. The Bohemian Pilsner, of which Pilsner Urquell is an example, and the German Pilsner or Pils. The German Pils is an adaptation of the Bohemian Pilsner to the brewing conditions in Germany, Bitburger and the Victory Prima Pils are two commercial examples. The Pils tends to be drier and crisper than a Bohemian, with a lingering bitterness in the finish. Both are straw to deep gold in color and brilliantly clear. The perfect beer for sitting outside on a beautiful summer day. Till next time, Cheers!

## Update on Beer Podcasts

Back in March, I had an article here in *The Cellar* about podcasts that were centered around beer. Since then there have been a few new podcasts hitting the "airwaves," so it seemed like a good time for an update.

**Good Beer Show** ([www.goodbeershow.com](http://www.goodbeershow.com)): The first beer podcast that I became aware of is still going strong. This show always features local music, in fact it is self-described as "Honest reviews of fine beers and the best local music from a large beer hall called the Heorot in Muncie, Indiana." The music is usually quite good, the beer reviews very informal, but the language is sometimes not family-friendly. Granted, they always sound like they are having a very, good time. Plus, the opening of the show always makes me laugh.

**PodBeer** ([www.podbeer.com](http://www.podbeer.com)): Our own Hugh Burns has a podcast that he describes as a "fun and informative talk about beer, food, travel, brewing, cooking, and anything else we come across that we think is cool to share". Only two podcasts are available but one features a great interview with another CASK'er, Frank Clark. Also, Frank's music is featured. Check it out.

**Craft Beer Radio** ([www.craftbeerradio.com](http://www.craftbeerradio.com)): A couple of homebrewers talk beer. A lot more "beer geeky" than the GoodBeerShow, this show features reviews of craft beers grouped by style. Informative and fun to listen to, the show is self-described as "Craft Beer Radio is an endeavor to promote good beer. Craft beer is really good stuff and a lot of people don't even know what is out there. We feel that it is our duty as beer enthusiasts to bring the world of great beer to you." Cheers to that!

**Basic Brewing Radio** (<http://www.basicbrewing.com/radio>): A podcast that is just about homebrewing. They have had shows taking about the basic brewing process, hops and trends in the hop industry, and one featured Bob Hansen of Briess Malt discussing malting. They even had a show about Mead Day.



# Kegging Tricks and Tips

*Note: Here is a list of kegging tips provided by Tom Hargrave of Huntsville, AL on [www.kegkits.com](http://www.kegkits.com), his on-line store for all things kegging*

1. Test your keg for leaks by pressurizing it with at least 15 PSI of CO2 and verify that it holds pressure by pressing in the center of the gas side poppet valve an hour later. You should hear and feel the CO2 escaping from the keg.

2. Don't forget to rinse, inspect and sanitize your keg before each and every use.

You should fill the keg ½ way up with sanitizer and then shake the keg to coat all surfaces. (The Cellar suggest using SanStar or Iodophor. Chlorine may pit the stainless steel interior of the keg.)

3. To sanitize the dip tube, pressurize the keg and press the liquid side poppet. The CO2 pressure will force sanitizer up into the dip tube and out the poppet valve. Don't forget to shield your eyes!

4. Rinse your keg, flushing the dip tubes and valves at least twice with hot water after sanitizing, but this is usually not necessary if you use SanStar.

5. Put the lid and gasket in boiling water before kegging. Not only will the water sterilize the lid and gasket, the hot water will also soften the gasket & will help it seal.

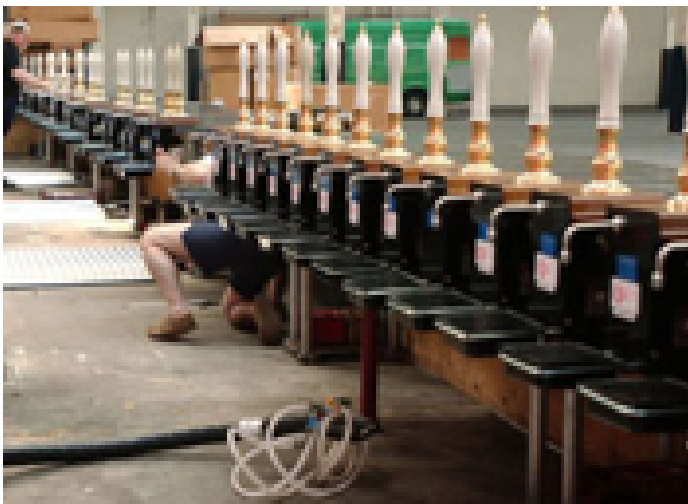
6. Sit your keg upside down until you are ready to fill. This will let the remaining water drain out and will greatly reduce the amount of airborne contaminants inside the keg.

7. Make sure that your siphon hose will reach to the bottom of the keg and disturb your beer as little as possible while siphoning your beer into the keg. And please, please don't pour your beer into the keg! Oxygen was good at the start of your fermentation process but now you want to introduce as little oxygen as possible into your brew.

8. Don't fill the keg past the short gas line inlet.

9. Pressurize your keg with about 10 pounds of CO2 after closing the lid. Blow out the pressure by either pulling the pressure relief pin or depressing the gas poppet valve if your keg is the style with a hooded pressure relief pop off valve. Do this several times to replace the air with CO2. When done, pressurize the keg one final time to about 30 PSI and check later for leaks. A leaky poppet valve can usually be sealed by flicking it with your fingernail.

10. The easiest way to clean & sanitize your homebrew tap equipment is to fill a keg up with 2.5 gallons of sanitizer and then to use CO2 pressure to push the sanitizer through the tap.



## Ah, What A Sight!

Workers set up a magnificent line of Hand pumps to serve real, cask conditioned, ale to the thirsty people at the 2004 Great British Beer Festival in London.



# Tasting and Judging Cider

by Harrison Gibbs

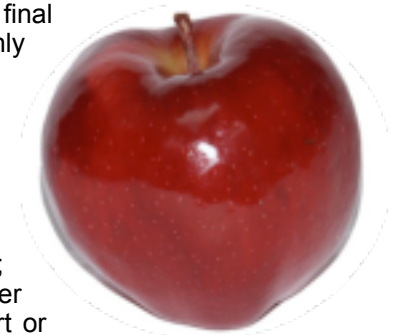
At its core, Cider is just fermented apple juice. What goes on with this basic ingredient, and the yeast, techniques applied during fermentation, and any added “extras” determines how the cider tastes.

## Aroma and Flavor

In exploring the aroma of ciders, do not always expect ciders to present overtly fruity aromas or flavors in the same sense that a wine does not taste overtly of grapes. Drier styles of cider in particular develop more complex but less fruity characters. In fact, a simple “apple soda” or “wine cooler” character is not desirable in a standard authentic cider. However, it may be popular with the uninitiated. Some styles of cider exhibit distinctly “un-fruity” tastes or aromas, such as the “smoky bacon” undertones of a dry English cider. This ester usually comes from the yeast.

In flavor, the sweetness of a cider may vary from absolutely dry, no residual sugars, to as sweet as sweet dessert wine, with up to 10% or more residual sugar. Remember the need for balance, in particular in sweeter ciders, where acidity or bitterness must balance the sweetness. In competitions, it is important to state the level of sweetness, since judging flights are usually arranged this way. Dry cider has less than 0.9% residual sugar, corresponding to a final specific gravity of under 1.002. Medium cider, sometimes characterized as either “off-dry” or “semi-sweet,” has 0.9% to 4% residual sugar and final gravity 1.002 to 1.012. Sweet cider, at above 4% residual sugar, corresponds roughly to a final gravity of over 1.012.

Acidity is an essential element of cider, and must be sufficient to give a clean, refreshing impression without being puckering. Acidity (from malic and in some cases lactic acids) must not be confused with acetification (from acetic acid (vinegar)): the acrid aroma and tingling taste of acetification is a fault. Ciders vary considerably in tannin content. This affects both bitterness and astringency as in “Mouthfeel.” If made from culinary or table fruit, tannins are typically low; nevertheless some tannin is desirable to balance the character. The character contributed by tannin should be mainly astringency rather than bitterness. An overt or forward bitterness is a fault (and is often due to processing techniques rather than fruit). Acid and tannin may be added to taste prior to bottling.



In general, cider has a mouthfeel and fullness akin to a substantial white wine. The body is less than that of beers. Full-sparkling ciders will be champagne-like.

The apple varieties are intended to illustrate commonly used examples, not dictate requirements when making the style. In general, adjuncts are not used except where specifically allowed in particular styles. Yeast used for cider may be either “natural” (the yeast which occurs on the fruit itself and/or is retained in the milling and pressing equipment) or cultured yeast. Some Malo-lactic fermentation (MLF) may be necessary.

Enzymes may be used for clarification of the juice prior to fermentation. Malic acid may be added to a low-acid juice to bring acidity up to a level considered safe for avoiding bacterial contamination and off-flavors (typically pH 3.8 or below).

Carbonation may be either natural (by maintaining CO<sub>2</sub> pressure through processing or by bottle-conditioning) or added (by CO<sub>2</sub> injection).

## BJCP Cider Guidelines

These are prepared from the 2004 official BJCP guidelines. The BJCP recognizes two basic categories for cider/perry: Standard Ciders and Perrys (Category 27) and Specialty Ciders and Perrys (Category 28). While the guidelines apply equally as well to cider and perry, we will discuss only cider made from apples. The Standard ciders are primarily or entirely made from the juice of apples. The BJCP recognizes sugar as the only adjunct permitted in the Standard category, and only in some sub-categories where a limited addition of sugar is OK to achieve a suitable starting gravity. Note that honey is not a “sugar” for this purpose; a cider made with added honey must be entered either as a specialty cider or as a cyser under the appropriate mead sub-category. Other





sugar sources that also add significant flavors (brown sugar, molasses) would also create a specialty cider (such as New England style).

The styles represented in the Standard category are the principal established styles. There are other well-known styles not represented here, for example, Asturian (Spanish) Sidre, but there is presently insufficient appreciation and a lack of commercial examples for reference. When identifying a specific style in the Standard category, the cider maker must determine whether the cider was made with apples with significant tannin content providing a noticeable astringency or bitterness. If not, it is a Common Cider. If yes, the choice is between the English and French sub-categories; the decision being based on whether the cider tends more toward sweet, rich, somewhat fruity (French) or drier and more austere (English).

For all of the categories, carbonation level may vary from still, petillant, to sparkling, and there can be any level of sweetness (dry, medium, or sweet). If entering a competition, please specify the carbonation and sweetness levels.

## 27A. Common Cider

OG: 1.045 - 1.065 FG: 0.995- 1.020 ABV: 5 - 8%

Sweet or low-alcohol ciders may have apple aroma and flavor. Dry ciders will be more wine-like with some esters. Clear to brilliant, pale to medium gold in color. Sugar and acidity should combine to give a refreshing character, neither cloying nor too austere, a medium to high acidity. Medium body with some tannin should be present for slight to moderate astringency, but little bitterness. The overall impression is variable, but should be a medium, refreshing drink. Sweet ciders must not be cloying. Dry ciders must not be too austere. An ideal cider serves well as a "session" drink, and suitably accompanies a wide variety of food.

**Apple Varieties:** Common (Winesap, Macintosh, Golden Delicious, Braeburn, Jonathan), multi-use (Northern Spy, Russets, Baldwin), crabapples, any suitable wildings.

## 27B. English Cider

OG: 1.050 - 1.075 FG: 0.995 - 1.010 ABV: 6 - 9%

This includes the English "West Country" plus ciders inspired by that style. These ciders are made with bittersweet and bitter-sharp apple varieties cultivated specifically for cider making.

In aroma and flavor expect no overt apple character, but various esters that suggest apples. May have "smoky (bacon)" character, from a combination of apple varieties and malo-lactic fermentation, which rounds out the harsher malic acid into more palatable lactic acid. Some "Farmyard nose" may be present but must not dominate; mousiness is a serious fault. The common slight farmyard nose of an English West Country cider is the result of lactic acid bacteria, not a Brettanomyces contamination. These ciders can appear slightly cloudy to brilliant, medium to deep gold color. Mouthfeel is full with a moderate to high tannin apparent as astringency and some bitterness. Carbonation still to moderate, never high or gushing. The overall impression is generally dry, full-bodied, austere.

**Apple Varieties:** Kingston Black, Stoke Red, Dabinett, Foxwhelp, Yarlinton Mill, various Jerseys, etc.

## ***Want to Learn More?***

### **Vintage Virginia Apples**

Presents the

### **Fifth Annual CiderMaker's Forum**

**Saturday, November 19, 2005**

**10 a.m. to 1 p.m.**

Rural Ridge Orchard, North Garden, VA 22959

phone: 434-297-2326 , [www.vintagevirginiaapples.com](http://www.vintagevirginiaapples.com)

An important craft and industry in the American colonies and young republic, Cider was a source of nutrition and barter. Orchards grew hundreds of varieties of apples just for cider making. The art of blending and fermenting a fine cider is enjoying a renaissance today with artisanal cider makers practicing this craft in various corners of the country. This meeting is dedicated to fostering this pursuit. Attendees will discuss varieties of apples, the challenges of developing an orchard, and of fermenting fine cider. If you have any cider of your own, please bring it along. Cost is \$45.00.



**Commercial Examples:** (US) White Oak Traditional and Kingston Black, Westcott Bay Vintage, Farnum Hill Farmhouse and Kingston Black; (UK) various from Hecks, Dunkerton, Burrow Hill

## 27C. French Cider

OG: 1.050 - 1.065 FG: 1.010 - 1.020 ABV: 3 - 6%

This includes Normandy styles and ciders inspired by those styles, including ciders made by various techniques to achieve the French flavor profile. These ciders are made with bittersweet and bitter-sharp apple varieties cultivated specifically for cider making. Traditional French procedures use small amounts of salt and calcium compounds (calcium chloride, calcium carbonate) to aid the process of pectin coagulation. These compounds may be used, pre-fermentation, but in limited quantity. It is a fault if judges can detect a salty or chalky taste.

Expect a fruity character in aroma and flavor. This may come from slow or arrested fermentation (from the French technique of *défécation*) or approximated by back sweetening with juice. Tends to a rich fullness. Clear to brilliant, medium to deep gold color in appearance. Medium to full, mouth filling feel. Moderate tannin apparent mainly as astringency. Carbonation moderate to champagne-like, but at higher levels it must not gush or foam. The overall impression: is medium to sweet, full-bodied, rich.

**Apple Varieties:** Nehou, Muscadet de Dieppe, Reine des Pommés, Michelin, etc.

**Commercial Examples:** (US) West County (various), Rhyne Cider; (France) Eric Bordelet (various), Etienne Dupont.

## 28A. New England Cider

OG: 1.060-1.100 FG: 0.995-1.010 ABV: 7-13%

This is a cider made with characteristic New England apples for relatively high acidity, with adjuncts to raise alcohol levels. Clear to brilliant, pale to medium yellow in appearance. It is a dry flavorful cider with robust apple character, strong alcohol, and derivative flavors from sugar adjuncts and a substantial, alcoholic, moderate tannin mouthfeel. Expect substantial body and character in this style.

Adjuncts may include white and brown sugars, molasses, small amounts of honey, and raisins. Adjuncts are intended to raise OG well above that which would be achieved by apples alone. This style is sometimes barrel-aged, in which case there will be oak character as with a barrel-aged wine. If the barrel was formerly used to age spirits, some flavor notes from the spirit (e.g., whisky or rum) may also be present, but must be subtle. Carbonation level may vary from still, petillant, to sparkling, and there can be any level of sweetness (dry, medium, or sweet).

**Apple Varieties:** Northern Spy, Roxbury Russet, Golden Russet

**Commercial Examples:** There are no known commercial examples of New England Cider.

## 28B. Fruit Cider

OG: 1.045 - 1.070 FG: 0.995 - 1.010 ABV: 5 - 9%

This is a cider with other fruits or fruit-juices added - for example, berry. Note that a "cider" made from a combination of apple and pear juice would be entered in this category since it is neither cider nor perry. The cider character must be present and must fit with the other fruits. It is a fault if the adjuncts completely dominate. Clear to brilliant. Color appropriate to added fruit, but should not show oxidation characteristics. (For example, berries should give red-to-purple color, not orange.) Like a dry wine with complex flavors. The apple character must marry with the added fruit so that neither dominates the other.



## 28C. Applewine

OG: 1.070 - 1.100 FG: 0.995 - 1.010 ABV: 9 - 12%

The term for this category is traditional but possibly misleading - it is simply a cider with substantial added sugar to achieve higher alcohol than a common cider. Aroma and flavor are comparable to a Common Cider. Cider character must be distinctive. Very dry to slightly medium. Clear to brilliant, pale to medium-gold. Cloudiness or hazes are inappropriate. Dark colors are not expected unless strongly tannic varieties of fruit were used. Lighter than other ciders – the higher alcohol is derived from addition of sugar rather than juice. Carbonation may range from still to champagne-like. Like a dry white wine, balanced, and with low astringency and bitterness.

**Commercial Examples:** AepelTreow's "Appely," Irvine's Vintage Ciders.

## 28D. Other Specialty Cider

This is an open-ended "catch-all" category for cider with other adjuncts such that it does not fit any of the categories above. This includes the use of spices and/or other sweeteners. A cider with added honey may be entered here if the cider character remains dominant. Otherwise it should be entered as mead in the cyser sub-category. In flavor and aroma, the cider character must always be present, and must fit with adjuncts.

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# News from the Beer World

*The Usual Sources*

**"World's strongest beer"** From Reuters, September 12, 2005

A German brewer has concocted what he says is the world's strongest beer, a potent drink with an alcohol content of 25.4 per cent that is served in a shot glass. "Everyone who has tried it is enthusiastic. It tastes like a quirky mixture of beer and sherry," said Bavarian brewer Harald Schneider. Schneider, who lives in southern Germany where beer is a tradition, said his beer fermented for 12 weeks for an alcohol content twice that of Germany's other strongest beers. "People will only be able to drink two or three glasses, otherwise they'll drop like flies," he said. Schneider expects the holders of the world's strongest beer, the Boston Beer Company, to put up a fight. "I'm pretty sure the Americans have something up their sleeve."

## **Best American Cask-Conditioned Beer from the 2005 Great British Beer Festival, August**

**2005:** Firkins of American cask-conditioned ales were shipped to London for this competition, and the winners were:

- Gold: Rogue Chocolate Stout
- Silver: Smuttynose Shoals Pale Ale
- Bronze: (tie) Victory Hop Devil and Berkshire Brewing Company Lost Sailor Ale



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# The CASK Calendar of Club Events and Competitions

Plan your brewing year now and hit as many club-only and other competitions as possible.

## 2005 Monthly Beer Styles

**September** Pilsner  
**October** Baltic Porter  
**November** English Bitter and Pale Ale  
**December** Free for all

**February 2006: Big Beautiful Belgians Club-Only Competition** Hosted by Lori Brown and the Greater Everett Brewers League of Everett, WA.

*Category 18\*, Belgian Strong Ale.* For more information, contact Lori Brown at [loribrown@att.net](mailto:loribrown@att.net). *Entries due February 4, 2006. Judging will be held February 11, 2006.*

**September/October 2005: European Amber Lager Club-Only Competition:** Category 3\* Hosted by Jack Kephart and the Society of Akron Area Zymurgists (SAAZ) of Akron, OH.

**September 29-October 1, 2005: Great American Beer Festival** Last year, the three-day event brought a record number of beer connoisseurs from around the world to Denver, Colo. (a city dubbed "the Napa Valley of beer" by many of the world's beer experts) to sample 1,454 different American beers. The roster of beers was the biggest collection of American beers ever presented in one location. It took 2,439 volunteers and 24,390 hours to put this festival on. "The Great American Beer Festival is the world's best beer festival by far," says famed international beer writer Michael Jackson. "No other one comes close."

## October 8, 2005: World Beer Fest, Historic Durham Athletic Park, Durham, NC

Over 300 beers and 130 World-Class Breweries in one place at one time! There's also food, live music and a cigar-friendly garden. The festival is held inside the ballpark where Bull Durham was filmed.

## November 2005: Teach a Friend to Brew Day

**November/December 2005: Baltic Porter Club-Only Competition:** Category 12C\* Hosted by Brian Lanius and the Ruffian Brewers of Suffern, NY. Entries due October 21, 2005. Judging will be held November 5, 2005.

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CASK  
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