



The Cellar

The Official Newsletter of the Colonial Ale Smiths and Keggers

Spring brings CASK Sweet Competition Successes!

2007 is shaping up to be a good year for CASK in competitions. First, a hearty round of congratulations to Harrison Gibbs for his 2nd place finish at the 1st Round of the 2007 AHA National Homebrew Competition - East Region with his Weizen-Doppelbock in Category 15- German Wheat and Rye Beer!

Second, congratulations to Greg Nowicki for his Honey Brown Ale winning the CASK Club-Only Competition for Extract Beers, judged during the April Meeting. Greg's beer was sent off to Peoria, IL to compete against other extract beers from clubs across the nation.

And last, but not least, three big CASK cheers for Ken Gillespie, who did very well at this year's Spirit of Free Beer, which is sponsored by the DC area club, BURP. Last Saturday, May 12, 2007, 290 beers were judged as part of the 2007 Spirit of Free Beer, which according to BURP's web site is described as; "... one of the best, largest, and most fun competitions on the east coast". Ken took a 2nd with his Robust Porter in the Porter category as well as a First in the German Wheat & Northern English Brown Ale category with his Northern English Brown Ale.

In addition, Ken took BEST OF SHOW for the entire competition with his Northern English Brown Ale.

The Spirit of Free Beer is also one of the Qualifying Events for the Masters Championship for Amateur Brewing (MCAB) X, which will be held early in 2008.

Also at this year's Spirit of Free Beer, Steven Davis took 3rd in the Amber & Dark Lager category with his Schwarzbier.

Congratulations to Ken, Harrison, Steven, and Greg for hoisting the CASK Banner high!

Dominion Cup Details Released

The James River Homebrewers in Richmond Virginia will this year host the 14th Annual Dominion Cup Homebrew Competition on Saturday July 14, 2007 at Richbrau Brewing Company. This is an AHA/BJCP sanctioned event. We will be judging all BJCP styles except meads and ciders.

Richbrau Brewing Company is located in Richmond's historic downtown Shockoe Slip at 1214 East Cary Street (Richmond Virginia, 23219) near the corner of East Cary Street and South 13th Street.

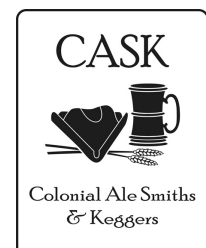
If you would like to judge or steward, or would like any additional information please contact Graham Cecil DCup2007@comcast.net

For judges and stewards also wishing to enter the competition, homebrew entries will be accepted between Wednesday June 27, 2007 and Wednesday July 11, 2007. Entries must be received by July 11th to allow time for registration.

Entry forms and additional information is available at our website <http://www.jrhomebrewers.org>

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The Cellarmaster

By Steven Davis



CASK Goes to Washington

Every year the months of April through July present a large number of homebrew beer contests available to enter, especially for those of us on the East Coast. This year was no different with the AHA National first round just finishing up, as well as the Shamrock Open last month in Raleigh. Of course, we are all aware that the Dominion Cup (CASK's contest of choice) is also just around the corner in July.

This month offered the well renowned Spirit of Free Beer, held in Ashburn, Virginia just outside of Washington DC. This contest is hosted every year by our neighbors to the north, BURP, and is open to all BJCP styles including Cider & Mead. Having never attended this particular event before, I decided that it was time to make an appearance and see what BURP was all about. Also, the contest was being held at the Old Dominion Brewing Company, so I saw this as an opportunity to check out the brewery before their new owners, Anheuser-Busch, decides to modify it to their liking.

The contest began early with an 8:00 am registration. I was a little surprised how reserved and internal the BURP members were, as I found it hard to find anyone willing to talk to a stranger in their presence. This did not last long though, as the 8:30 am calibration beer came quickly, followed by the first flight. There were 17 tables per round with at least 3 judges at each table. I have to admit that the 54 judges BURP was able to get was the most I have ever seen in one event other than the AHA Final Round which is held at the National Homebrew Conference each year. Most of the judges are from their own club, but that is still impressive that they have so many BJCP registered judges in one club.

The first round found me sampling 8 very average smoked and wood aged beers. This was followed by a fantastic German lunch including an endless supply of Old Dominion beer for our drinking pleasure. Then it was on to the second flight which presented me with 7 quite impressive Foreign Export and Russian Imperial Stouts. I have to admit that the afternoon session definitely made up for a somewhat disappointing morning. One other item that made this contest quite unique is that BURP combines all 26 BJCP styles into 14 prize categories and breaks up the beers into 2 or 3 tables to be judged. The top 2 or 3 beers of each table are then combined into a "mini" Best-of-Show to determine the top 3 beers of each category. At first I thought this might be an interesting idea, however as I participated in both flight's mini-BOS, I came to understand that what actually happened was that the winning beers were being selected based on 3 or 4 peoples "final impressions" and some beers that had finishing with top score of all the tables in their style, were actually finishing 2nd, 3rd or not in the top 3 at all in the final standings. This seemed to undermine the original judging of the beers in my opinion.

I would end the day with a self guided trip around Old Dominion Brewery. As I looked around, the continuing theme everywhere I looked seemed to be clutter. The brewery is old, or at least the equipment it, and there is "junk" everywhere you look. The place is not clean at all, and the caustic cleaning station for the keg machine presented a serious safety and health hazard that I'm sure OSHA would not take kindly to if they were to see it. The one thing that did surprise me was the large inventory of non-alcoholic beverages. I never realized how much root beer, lemonade and ginger ale this company produces. It easily equaled or exceeded their beer inventory. Overall though, I was not impressed with the brewery, and will be quite surprised if A.B. does not strip it clean and start over when their current lease expires in 3 years.

In closing I would say that my trip to DC was enjoyable. I found the competition to be very well organized and run, probably the best I have ever observed, and for this the organizing committee for BURP needs to be recognized for a fantastic job in setting things up and conducting the formalities. As for the atmosphere, I have definitely seen better at every other competition I have judged at. Perhaps what I learned the most from this trip was that every Club has much that they can learn from each other, and CASK will definitely benefit from this in future Club competitions and events. Cheers.



A Big Time at Big Brew

By Dave Bridges

Saturday, May 5, marked the celebration of National Homebrew Day and the annual Big Brew event. 5 CASK members set up their brewing equipment in the parking lot behind the St. George Brewing Company in Hampton, joining with thousands of homebrewers worldwide to show just how popular homebrewing has become.



Jeff Stuebben, Steve Davis, Greg Nowicki, Craig Mayotte, and Dave Bridges brewed a total of 28 gallons to (hopefully) beat the 7000 gallons of beer brewed worldwide by last years participants. At 12 noon Central Time, which is 1800 GMT (Guinness Mean Time?), a simultaneous toast to homebrewers, homebrew and friends was conducted, with a special toast to astronaut Wally Schirra, who passed away 2 days earlier on May 3. Wally Schirra trained across the street from St. George's at the NASA Langley Research Center in the early 60's. He was the only astronaut to fly in all 3 of NASA's Mercury, Gemini, and Apollo space programs, with his last flight as commander of the first manned Apollo spaceflight.

Several club members stopped by with family and friends to enjoy the morning, learn more about brewing and have a picnic lunch of hamburgers, hot dogs, and all the fixings. Mark Fowler's son Joshua was put to work helping Dave Bridges mash-in and vorlauf his doppelbock, while Dave's daughter Rebecca lent a hand wherever it was needed. May 5th also marked the first day of St. George's summer schedule, when they are open on Saturdays, so many St. George customers were able to see exactly how homebrew was made and ask questions about the club.



Homebrew was available for tasting, with a keg of a Kolsch, 2 kegs of different APA's, and several bottles of ESB's, schwarzbier, and pilsener on hand. Thanks to Don Welsch for bringing a selection of Williamsburg Alewerks' special releases in celebration of the 400th Anniversary of the founding of Jamestown.



A special thank you goes out to Steve Davis for arranging Big Brew this year, Dave Bridges for cooking lunch, Don Welsch and Greg Nowicki for the side dishes, and especially to Bill Spence and Jack York of St. George's for providing a great place to have Big Brew. As a token of the club's appreciation, a picture of the group toast was presented to the brewery.

When the final numbers for Big Brew are compiled, they will be presented a future club meeting. This was a great event, and the only question is "How can we make it bigger and better next year?"



Kanpai! An Introduction to Sake

By Harrison Gibbs

Kanpai! is the shouted Japanese sake toast that means “empty your cup.” But before you shout it out, it may help to know a little about the elusive beverage from Japan. Sake is a beverage fermented from steamed rice, which is a grain making it more of a beer than wine.

Generally, Sake is not carbonated and the brewing process requires the yeast to work along with the koji, a type of fungus that converts the rice starch into sugar, during the mash. Because of the slow propagation of the koji as it penetrates to the core of the steamed rice kernel, repeated additions of rice and koji are necessary to build up mash volume. On the other hand, the subtleties and nuances in flavor are more reminiscent of wine. However, in both flavor and brewing process, Sake stands apart as a truly unique and enchanting beverage. The alcohol content of Sake is generally between 15% and 17%.

It takes basically a month to brew, but this does not include the (usually) six-month period sake is “aged” before it is ready to drink. Beyond this six-month period, sake is not aged, and is meant to be consumed soon after purchase.

Because the brewing process requires the use of koji along with the yeast and the need to press or drain off the clear liquid from the rice, sake was traditionally prone to contamination. The Japanese introduced pasteurization long before Louis discovered the concept. Although this permits a longer storage time, it also makes the beverage more susceptible to problems from aging. If kept cold and dark, it will last six months to a year without degradation in flavor. Sake should be stored away from light and kept cool. Refrigeration is best, although not absolutely necessary unless the sake has not been pasteurized.



Although some sake is deliberately aged, there is no such thing as a vintage year in the sake world. Be sure, then, to notice the bottling date on the label. If the sake was brewed in Japan, note that the year 10 (for Heisei 10) is 1998. So a sake with 9.4.23 would have been bottled on April 23, 1997. Try to buy it if bottled within the last year. If it was refrigerated, that is even better, keeping it fresher.

Sake production in Japan started soon after the arrival of rice irrigation cultivation in the third century BC. The first written mention of Sake appeared in the Kojiki. The Chronicle of Ancient Matters, written in the 1700's, tells a heroic tale of defeating an evil dragon and rescuing a princess by getting a little help from Sake. A brave, young hero brews three large batches, entices the dragon to drink along and finally slays the very intoxicated dragon.

In ancient Japan, Sake production was strictly limited to the confines of the Imperial Court and large religious institutions, and was used as Omiki or sacred life water for rituals and festivals. Even today, Sake is deeply embedded in the Japanese culture, where most traditional ceremonies would not start without a Sake toast: with three consecutive sips of Sake from single cup, a bride and groom exchange vows in a Shinto marriage. And Kagami Biraki, or the Sake Keg-breaking ceremony, is often seen at large celebrations, such as construction ground-breakings and corporate gatherings.



Styles of Sake

Junmai-shu (rice-only sake) that uses rice and rice koji only. No distillates are added. Junmai is the only type brewed by America's sake brewers. Generally, earthy and full bodied, with more rice flavor and umami. (Umami is a Japanese word meaning "savory" or "meaty" and thus applies to the sensation of savoriness).

Honjoozu-shu has alcohol added back in small quantities. Smoother and cleaner than junmai sake, there are more mineral notes and a generally a clean finish.

Genshu are sakes fermented to their fullest, somewhere between 17 and 20% alcohol and left undiluted. This is a general type more than a style and quality and flavors depend on the level of rice polishing and the water quality. Soft water creates a softer smoother sake while hard water can create a crisper drink. The higher alcohol genshu may have a sleeker texture, mineral and spice notes with a crisp finish. Examples include most American and Japanese sakes.

Junmai Ginjo shu ("singing brew") is sake made from rice polished to 50% or less, resulting in a very complex and nuanced sake. This style is fruitier and more floral than the two styles above. Examples include American Ozeki Premium Ginjo and sakes by Takara and SakeOne, and Japan's Fukucho, Kanbara, and Mantensi.

Dai-ginjo shu ("great singing brew") is sake made from rice polished to less than 50% and sometimes below 40%. This is the most expensive and complex of all sakes. Again fermentation is done at lower temperatures and has an extremely floral and grateful flavor and nose. Examples include Harushika, Otokoyama, Dewazurka, and Yuki no Boshu.

Nama sake is unpasteurized and drunk when only a few months old. It should always be refrigerated. Fresh and fruity, with green apple, citrus or spice flavors.

Nigori sake is a primitive ancient style, raw, pressed, but cloudy and unfiltered. It can be a bit sweet with big tropical fruit flavors and quite delicious. Still containing some rice solids, it should be shaken before serving. Many on the American market are rather poor in quality, and low in alcohol content. According to Fred Eckart, America's and homebrewings number one sake expert, there are only two nigori sakes worth noting: SakeOne's Momokawa Pearl, a genshu (full strength--18%abv) nigori sake and Sho Chiku Bai Nigori. Both of these are made in America

Yamahai-shikomi & Kimoto are two variations on the brewing method in which the yeast starter is made in a special way that allows more funky yeast and bacteria to be present, often lending the sake a gamier, wilder flavor that can be rich, lush and fascinating. While no outside acid is added, a lactic acid rest is included to develop the necessary pH and sourness. Think lambic. No known commercial examples are available, with the rare exception of Kasumi Tsura.

Koshu has been aged in a storage tank or bottle for several years. Amber in color with earth, nut or wood flavors. Some oxidized flavors as well, like an aged sherry. An example would be Koten.

Jizake is a vague term that usually means sake from smaller breweries out in the boonies; sake that is not mass-produced.





If my mother was tied up and held ransom, I might think about making a light beer.

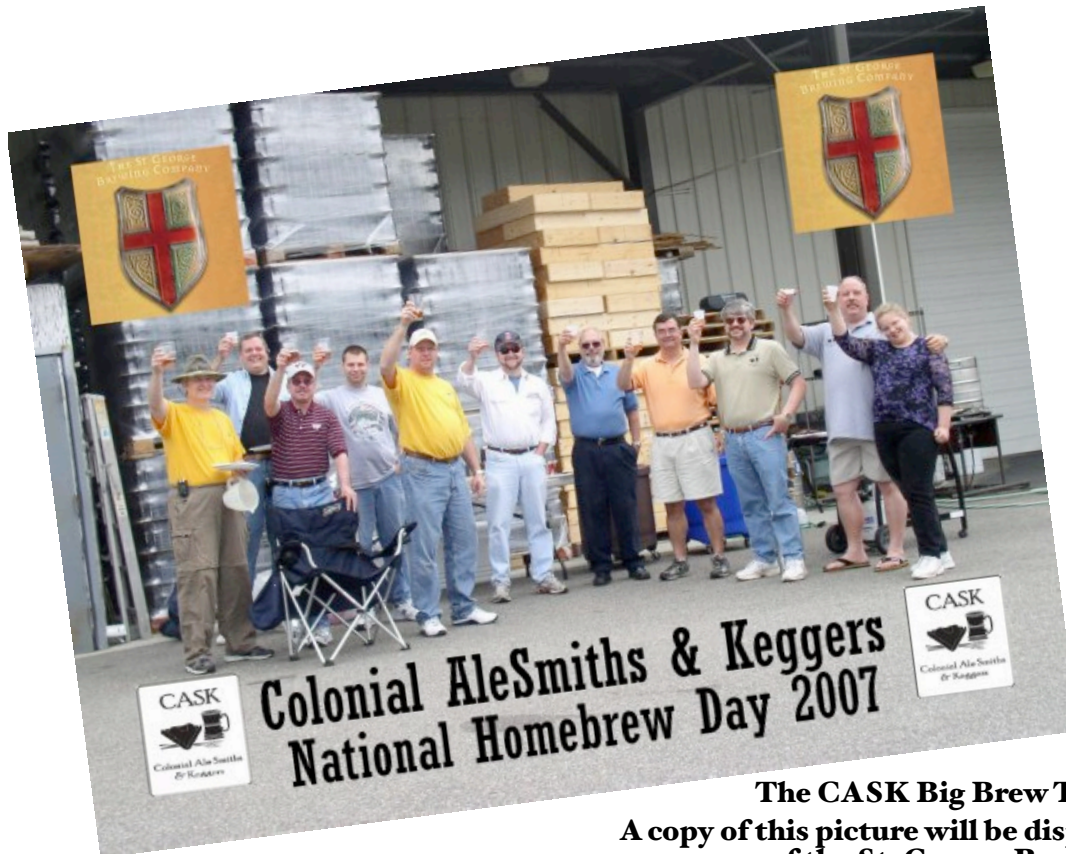
Greg Koch, CEO and co-founder of Stone Brewing



It's good to win cycling races in Belgium!

Thorwald Veneberg (Rabobank) tastes success in the form of a Bolleke filled with De Koninck, Antwerp's popular beer

Photo ©: Luc Claessen



The CASK Big Brew Toast 2007!

A copy of this picture will be displayed in the tasting room of the St. George Brewing Company.



The CASK Calendar of Club Events and Competitions

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

May	Sake
June	Brown Ales
July	Strong Ale (Club-Only)
August	Bock (Club-Only)
September	Marzen/Octoberfest
October	Pilsner (Club-Only)
November	Winter/Christmas Beers
December	Free-For-All

May 14, 2007: American Craft Beer Week May 14-20, 2007 American Craft Beer Week

May 17, 2007: May Meeting of CASK 7:30 PM at the [Coastal Wine Connection](#). **Style of the Month: Sake**

May 19, 2007: 5th Annual Virginia Beer Festival
1:00 pm - 7:00 pm, Town Point Park, Norfolk Beer Tasters (age 21+) \$20 advance, \$25 day of, Non-Tasters (age 13+) \$10 Table for eight \$240 - Advance purchase required; deadline May 1 call 757-282-2822 to reserve yours.

Water, hops, yeast, and malt equal beer!

Let's celebrate. Grab your gang and join us for a Saturday full of live entertainment, fabu food, and a bevy of beers, microbrews and other libations from 32 different breweries, domestic and international. You asked and we've expanded the hours, plus added more tables for reservation. See you at the waterfront.

June 21, 2007: National Homebrew Conference - Denver, CO. June 21 - 23, 2007 National Homebrew Conference - Denver, CO. Sunshine, a beautiful mountain backdrop, an upbeat city and a state with more than 100 breweries (according to the Brewers Association) is home to this year's American Homebrewers Association National Homebrewers Conference. An estimated 800 homebrewers from across the country will come to Denver for the American Homebrewers Association 29th Annual National Homebrewers Conference. The National Homebrewers Conference is the world's largest conference devoted to amateur brewers.

June 21, 2007: June Meeting of CASK 7:30 PM at the [Williamsburg AleWerks](#). **Style of the Month: Brown Ale**

July 14, 2007: Dominion Cup Richmond, VA. Location: TBD

August 4, 2007: National Mead Day The American Homebrewers Association (AHA) Mead Day is a national event to help increase camaraderie among homebrewers and meadmakers and introduce or reintroduce the meadmaking hobby. Each year on the first Saturday in August, homebrewers around the nation are encouraged to invite non-brewing and brewing friends and family to celebrate by making mead.

August 16, 2007: August Meeting of CASK 7:30 PM at the [Williamsburg AleWerks](#). **Style of the Month: Bock**

September 20, 2007: September Meeting of CASK 7:30 PM at the [Williamsburg AleWerks](#). **Style of the Month: Marzen/Octoberfest**

October 6, 2007: World Beer Festival Durham The Historic Durham Athletic Park
Downtown Durham, NC

1st Session: 12 noon to 4 pm

2nd Session: 6 pm to 10 pm

Over 150 World-Class Breweries Participate in "All About Beer" Magazine's World Beer Festival Durham Serving up some of the World's Best Brews. USA Today says that the World Beer Festival is one of the "10 great beer festivals to tap into for some suds in the summer sun."

October 18, 2007: October Meeting of CASK 7:30 PM at the [Williamsburg AleWerks](#). **Style of the Month: Pilsner**

November 3, 2007: Teach A Friend to Homebrew Day The American Homebrewers Association (AHA) Teach a Friend to Homebrew Day is an international event to introduce people to the homebrewing hobby and establish relationships with local homebrew supply shops.

November 15, 2007: November Meeting of CASK 7:30 PM at the [Williamsburg AleWerks](#). **Style of the Month: Winter/Christmas Beers**

December 20, 2007: December Meeting of CASK 7:30 PM at a location to be determined. **Style of the Month: Free-for-All**