



The Cellar

The Official Newsletter of the Colonial Ale Smiths and Keggers

3rd Annual Virginia Beer Blitz Scheduled for December 12th

By Steven Davis

CASK will once again be conducting our Club's national homebrew "Beer Blitz" contest on Saturday, December 12, 2009 at the St. George Brewing Company in Hampton, Virginia. Previously referred to as the Virginia Sports Hall of Fame Beer Blitz, the event has been renamed to the Virginia Beer Blitz following the Hall of Fame's revocation of their sponsorship in these troubled economic times. This has allowed us to enter into a new, and better, partnership with Bill and Andy at St. George Brewery for this event.

CASK looks forward to an even bigger contest than the 2008 Beer Blitz which brought in 121 entries and hopes to even challenge the August Dominion Cup and their 366 beers judged. We will be in desperate need of judges and stewards, and ask all CASK members and friends to free that day up on your calendar to join us in what looks to be a wonderful event.

More details will be forthcoming as specifics are ironed out, but for now you can see the basics listed on our preliminary webpage at <http://www.colonialalesmiths.org/beerblitz/>.

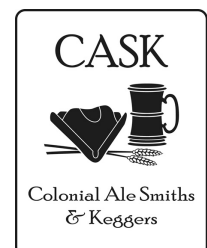
Cheers.



Don Welsh and Tom Mierle enjoy the day at last month's Green Leafe Looking for Hop Leafe Party.

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The Cellarmaster

By Steven Davis

Off-Flavors (Part II)

All homebrewers strive to make beer that is flavorful and delicious. They want their beer to taste like the style they were trying to clone or create from scratch, and never want to have to dump their brew down the drain because it is just undrinkable.

One of the biggest culprits to unenjoyable beer is the presence of nasty off-flavors which can turn your precious brew into a form of some unintended beverage which resembles anything but beer. This article is the second of a multi-part presentation on some of these off-flavors, what causes them and what can be done to minimize or eliminate them. In Part II we will look at 3 more of the most common off-flavors: diacetyl, esters and metallic.

DIACETYL

Identification / Cause: Diacetyl is recognized as a buttery or butterscotch flavor and aroma often accompanied by "slickness" on the palette. NOTE: Some brewers are able to detect diacetyl at concentrations as low as 0.15 ppm while others can not detect it even in very high quantities.

Where does it come from?

1. Diacetyl is a byproduct of the initial fermentation stage; however it is later reabsorbed by the yeast during secondary fermentation.
2. Gram-positive bacterium, *Pediococcus Damnosus*, and other lactic acid bacteria in cooled beer.
3. Can be caused by premature removal of wort from yeast.

Prevention: Make sure primary fermentation has run its course fully before racking to secondary or bottling. Practice good sanitation, and be sure to adequately aerate wort before you pitch your yeast. Lager brewers sometimes employ a diacetyl rest, conditioning the beer at 60-65F for a few days to assist in removing the byproduct.

Removal methods: Natural removal by healthy yeast.

ESTERS

Identification / Cause: Esters are aromatic compounds identified as fruity and estery at high levels, and may include descriptions such as banana, apple, strawberry, raspberry, plum, raisin, pear or grapefruit. NOTE: Esters can be highly desirable in some ales and high gravity beers, while undesirable in most pilsners and lagers.

Where does it come from?

1. Esters are typically a byproduct of fermentation and characterized by the yeast strain.
2. Higher levels of esters are usually experienced in higher gravity beers.
3. Ester concentrations increase dramatically with higher fermentation temperatures.

Prevention: Use of lower ester yeast strains. Fermenting ales at temperatures around 60°F or less and lagers around 50°F or less. Use of lower gravity wort.

Removal methods: None once established.



METALLIC

Identification / Cause: A harsh metallic off-flavor produced by certain chemicals that cause an unpleasant feel throughout the mouth and tongue (specifically on the tip of the tongue and the roof of the mouth). Often described as tinny, coin-like, & blood-like.

Where does it come from?

1. Caused by ferrous iron compounds formed by the hydrolysis of cereal lipids in grain and oxidation of free fatty acids contributed by any of the following:
2. Iron or mild steel contact with beer.
3. High iron content in water.
4. Cleaning stainless steel without passivating (re-oxidizing) surface.
5. Poorly processed grain.

Prevention: Primary control of metallic off-flavors would be to eliminate all sources of contact with beer & iron/aluminum surfaces, such as unplated mild steel, aluminum & cast iron. Use of low iron water. Use of fresh, high quality grain malt.

Removal methods: None once established.

2009 Dominion Cup Results

CASK once again had a strong presence at this year's Dominion Cup, both in entries and in judging and stewarding. The Dominion Cup has a record 366 entries this year making for a busy day. But due to the tremendous efforts of the Competition Coordinator, John Van Itallie, and the other members of JRHB, the competition went off without a hitch.

Congratulations to the Winners from CASK:

- Rich Maurer won 3rd Place with his American Wheat,
- Steven Davis won 2nd Place with his Biere de Garde,
- John and Jared Smith won 2nd Place with their Oktoberfest and 3rd Place with their Brown Porter,
- Greg Nowicki won 1st Place with his Russian Imperial Stout,
- Bryan Falman won 2nd Place with his Dunkel and 3rd Place with his Weizenbock,
- Christopher Reed won 3rd Place with his Wood Aged Quadrupel and a Honorable Mention with his Tripel.

Congratulations also to Daniel Patterson, an independent homebrewer from Harrisonburg, VA, for winning the Best-Of-Show with his American IPA. Also, congratulations to Jamey Barlow of CAMRA for being the inaugural Plato Award winner this year. Jamey had an amazing 8 beers place in the competition this year giving him a total of 25 "degrees Plato" and easily securing the award.

The entire list of winners have been posted on the website at: <http://dominioncup.jrhb.org/DomCupWinners2009.php>

The Richmond-Times did a story on the Dominion Cup on the following Sunday. There is an on-line version and a slideshow with a few familiar faces at http://www2.timesdispatch.com/rtd/news/local/article/BEER30_20090829-215606/289328/



Oktoberfest: The Style and the Event

By Norman W. Schaeffler

(This article originally appeared in the September 2007 Issue of *The Cellar*)

First, there was the event. The first "Oktoberfest" took place in Munich, Germany on October 12, 1810 as a celebration of the marriage of Crown Prince Ludwig, later King Ludwig I, and Princess Therese of Saxe-Hildburghausen. At that time, the beer that was served was probably a Dunkel, a dark lager. The festival became an annual event from the very beginning, with time off for the Napoleonic War in 1813.

The beer style that we know as Oktoberfest, is actually more accurately called a Märzen. Märzen gets its name from the German word for March, which is the traditional time of year that the beer is brewed. In the days before temperature controlled fermentation, German law required that breweries not brew beer during the summer months to avoid spoiled beer. So March and April were busy times of the year, as brewers brewed over-time to insure a continuous supply of beer in the fall and into the winter. A beer with a slightly higher level of alcohol was brewed to be lagered in the ice caves over the summer and enjoyed at the fall festival. The style is said to have been invented by Gabriel Sedlmayr in 1872.

The BJCP style guidelines describe Oktoberfest/Märzen as dark gold to deep orange-red color in color. The flavor is described as "Initial malty sweetness, but finish is moderately dry. Distinctive and complex maltiness often includes a toasted aspect. Hop bitterness is moderate, and noble hop flavor is low to none. Balance is toward malt, though the finish is not sweet. Noticeable caramel or roasted flavors are inappropriate. Clean lager character with no diacetyl or fruity esters." This is a beer where malt is dominate flavor with just enough hops to balance the sweetness. The overall impressions go on to state that the beer should be "Smooth, clean, and rather rich, with a depth of malt character. This is one of the classic malty styles, with a maltiness that is often described as soft, complex, and elegant but never cloying." German law requires that an Oktoberfest beer have an original gravity of at least 13.5° Plato (OG 1.054), resulting in a beer which is about 5.4% ABV. The grain bill is usually made of either Munich or Vienna malts and German noble hops are used exclusively. American brewers sometimes make wider use of two-row malt.

Oktoberfest is now a celebration that takes place during the 16 days up to and including the first Sunday in October. Oktoberfest is known as the "Largest People's Fair in the World" and in 1999 there were six and a half million visitors. There are six Oktoberfest breweries: Spaten, Augustiner, Paulaner, Hacker-Pschorr, Hofbräu, and Löwenbräu. There are also currently 14 main tents to hold all the visitors, one of which is shown in the accompanying photo.



Oktoberfest! (Photo from Wikipedia)



The CASK Calendar of Club Events and Competitions

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

September European Amber Lagers (Club Only)
October Saisons (**New!**)
November Belgian Strong Ales (Club Only)
December Winter Party

You too can add items to the CASK calendar and keep your fellow club members informed about beer-related happenings in the area. Logon to the CASK Message Board to find out how!

September 18-19, 2009 - Capital Ale House Oktoberfest Celebration - Midlothian - Each guest of legal drinking age will receive a complimentary 1-liter stein upon entry. Families are welcome however anyone under the age of 21 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. Fill your stein with your choice of over 15 German beers on draft.

September 18-19, 2009 - St. Benedict Catholic Church - Richmond - will hold its 5th Annual Oktoberfest with breweries, wineries, authentic German food, German music, German dance, children's activities and entertainment!

September 18-19, 2009 - Capital Ale House Downtown Oktoberfest Celebration - Richmond - There is no cover charge and each guest of legal drinking age will receive a complimentary 1-liter stein upon entry. Fill your stein with your choice of over 15 German beers on draft.

September 25-26, 2009 - Capital Ale House Oktoberfest Celebration - Glen Allen - Each guest of legal drinking age will receive a complimentary 1-liter stein upon entry. Families are welcome however anyone under the age of 21 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. Fill your stein with your choice of over 15 German beers on draft.

December 12, 2009: Third Annual Virginia Beer Blitz

<http://www.colonialalesmiths.org/beerblitz/>.