



The Cellar

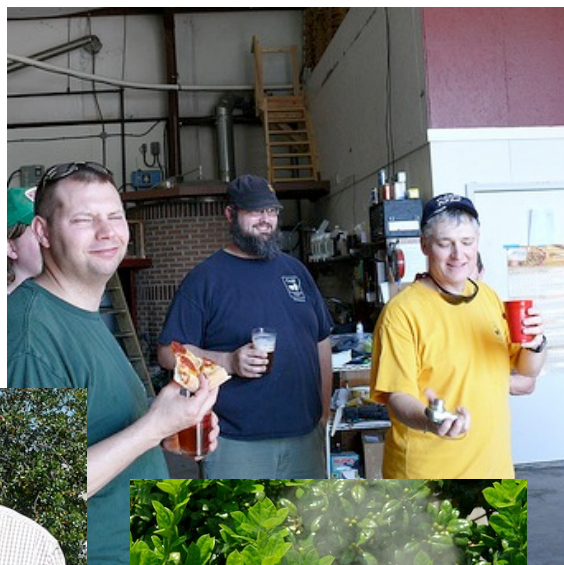
The Official Newsletter of the Colonial Ale Smiths and Keggers

CASK - Big Brew 2010

Photos By Bryan Falman

CASK celebrated one of the official homebrewing holidays by holding a Big Brew on Saturday, May 1, 2010.

Big Brew was graciously hosted by Geoff Logan and the Williamsburg Alewerks.



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CASK



Colonial Ale Smiths
& Keggers



Beer Style of the Month: Bock

By Harrison Gibbs

This article originally appeared in the May 2006 Issue of *The Cellar*.



A style of German beer, Bock Beer is a bottom-fermented lager and is thought to be named for the famous medieval German brewing town of Einbeck in the Hanover area of Germany. The beer is a heavy bodied lager and is darkened by judicious amounts of munich malt and usually darker crystal malts.

Traditionally brewed in the winter time for drinking during the Spring, Bocks also have a long history of being brewed and drunk by monks in Bavaria. During the Spring religious season of Lent, monks were required to fast. These strong and fortifying beers provided sustenance during the fast.

The image of the goat is associated with many Bock beers since Bock in German means billy goat. Moreover, in the local dialect, Einbeck is pronounced similar to "Einbock," which sounds like "ein bock" (a goat).

Variants of Bock include Maibock (brewed for the month of May), Eisbock (ice bock), Weizenbock (wheat bock), and Doppelbock (double bock). The names of Doppelbock brews commonly end in "-ator" in honor of the original, Paulaner Salvator (Latin, "Savior")

Maibock/Helles Bock

Since the month of May is associated with Bocks, a closer look at the Maibocks and the similar Helles Bocks, is appropriate.

The lightest colored of the bock beers, these two are generally grouped together. Brewed in winter and first tapped in spring, these pale strong lagers often to coincide with spring celebrations. Ranging in color from deep gold to light amber, the use of light colored malts means that styles are fairly new to the bock scene. Pale malts were unheard of until early in the 19th century, when malting technology was refined, but they soon found their way into strong lagers in central Europe. This is not your "brother's" Doppelbock.

Bock producers usually employ a decoction mash. Because no dark malts are used, the soft, clean malt flavor and aroma remains totally unobstructed. Helles/maibocks are often given a slightly higher dose of hops than other bocks, giving them a fresher, livelier aroma and more balance.

Because of their relatively broad color range, pale bocks present a nice diversity. They could actually be segregated into two subcategories, with helles bocks being the golden hued and maibocks being those that appear more amber. The helles version contains almost exclusively pilsner malt, while the maibock contain a significant dose of toasty Vienna or Munich malts.

Many German breweries, especially in Bavaria, include a pale bock in their lineup. Einbecker itself brews both a helles and a maibock. Spaten makes a golden helles known as Premium Bock that is very good. Ayinger maibock, is not as light and is spicier on the palate. For something really unusual in the style, Schlenklera of Bamberg, Germany, makes a rauch maibock that uses the brewery's famous smoked malt quite liberally.

Not surprisingly, many North American microbreweries that specialize in German-style brews also make pale bocks. Gordon Biersch includes a blonde bock that is smooth, malty and crisp. Other commercial versions to look for are Haake-Beck Maibock, Spaten Premium Bock, Ayinger Maibock and Rogue Ales Dead Guy Ale (a bock beer brewed with an ale yeast).

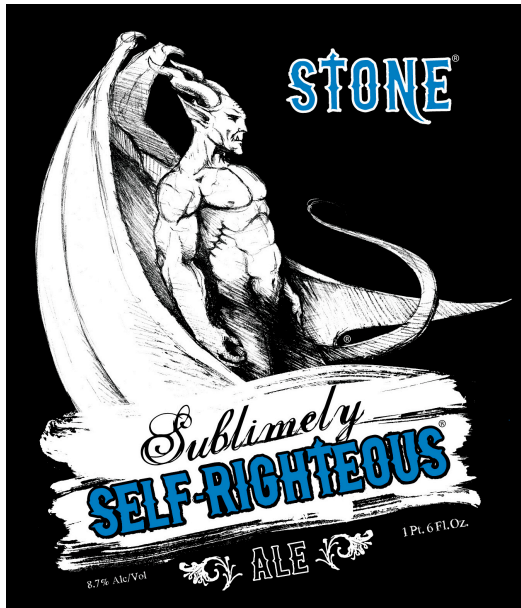




The Beer in Front of Me ...

"The Beer in Front of Me ..." is a new feature in the newsletter where a CASK member tells other members about a beer that they are enjoying right now. Be it "true-to-style" or "way-out-there creative," if it is a beer that is your current "favorite" and you want to tell the club about it, e-mail your description to beer@colonialalesmiths.org

This month, Eric Gold tells us about Stone's Sublimely Self Righteous Ale ...



I have had several opportunities recently to enjoy Stone's Sublimely Self Righteous Ale (SSRA). SSRA is Black IPA or "Imperial Black Ale" brewed by San Diego County based Stone Brewing Company. Black IPAs are still sort of newly chartered territory and there are only a few commercial examples out there (this one being the best). It rings in at a potent 8.7% ABV and only comes in 22 oz bombers; what a great beer to share with a friend.

This beer defines the balance between American hops and robust malt. Being aggressively dry hopped (In true West coast fashion), my nose first picks up both citrus and pine notes. According to Stone, they use Chinook for bittering and then

switch to Simco and Amarillo for flavoring and dry hopping. The amazing aroma is perplexing considering the deep brown/black color and thick tan head. These two things just typically don't go together! Flavorwise, the roasted bitterness of the chocolate malt matches perfectly with grapefruit and tropical hop flavors. If you happen to see this on the shelf of your favorite retailer, be sure to grab it as it usually sells out quickly!

STONE Sublimely SELF-RIGHTEOUS ALE

We're brewers whose substantial mettle and idiomatic approach to brewing allows us to consistently create works of art such as this justifiably self-righteous ale. Its bitterness hits our sweet spot. Its blackness lightens our hearts. Its liquid dichotomy pulls it all together in this sublimely sacrosanct ale. Yes, we damn well know our stuff here at Stone, and it would be irresponsible of us not to acknowledge how remarkable this heavenly creation of ours is. Thus the name we are compelled to give it — Stone Sublimely Self-Righteous Ale — serves as a reminder of just how good we are, in both liquid and verbal form.

We're certainly not perfect. Too often, we allow our modesty to get the best of us as we're simply not inclined towards senseless braggadocio. When you're good, you're good. And when you do something great, the least you can do is acknowledge it. Others benefit from knowing. In this case, we find that we are compelled to point out how amazing this beer is that we rightly call the Stone Sublimely Self-Righteous Ale.

First brewed in 2007 as the Stone 11th Anniversary Ale, this beer was an instant hit. With us. Other folks with great taste loved it too, but we were focused on how much we liked it, and we felt it was truly sublime. That euphoria didn't last long though, as it was soon replaced with the grim reality that when we sold out of it there wouldn't be any more. For us. And that was simply unacceptable. So, we are now blessing ourselves, and you the enlightened, with this beer on a fulltime basis. Thusly, you may now revel in your own self-righteousness as you see fit with this glorious example of ours. You are genuinely welcome, as it is our pleasure.

Session Beers

by Warren Haskell

Session [sesh-uhn] - noun-

1 : a meeting or period devoted to a particular activity

In the beer world we have come to use many words to describe our brews involving taste, aroma, mouth-feel, and color, and these do a good job in describing what the beer is, but not always what, or more precisely when, the beer is for. One of the when that is moving from the beer geek world into popular use is the "session beer." What is a session beer? A session beer is one that does not overwhelm the system with bitterness, sweetness, or alcohol, while at the same time not boring the palate or overly intoxicating the body. Something where each sip



begs the next and has considerable drinkability. This does not define a single style or flavor range but a general impression, this is not necessarily going to be the beer to have with your steak, or after cutting the grass, but something to enjoy in an undefined period without worry or exhaustion, where, as with many things in life, balance is key.

What you personally want in a session beer is completely subjective, and there is no need to come to a consensus because there is enough out there for everyone. That said here are some options that fall well within the guidelines.

Full Sail Session & Session Black – The name says it all, brewed to be drinkable beyond all else, and even available in a dark version for those who like a little more roast on the palate.

Murphy's Irish Stout - I firmly believe Irish Dry Stout is one of the most misunderstood styles. Not heavy or bitter, but smooth and creamy from the can or tap, 4% alcohol, and a clean dry finish

Czech Pilsner – Crisp clean, with a noted hop presence. Try out St George Pilsner, Victory Prima Pils or Lagunitas Czech Pils.

American Ale – Harder to find these days in the IPA crazed world, but quite sessionable when you do, try Troegs Pale ale, Boont Amber ale, Terrapin Rye Pale Ale.

Brown Ale – A broad category but stick with the more English inspired for your session, Bluegrass Nut Brown ale, Legend Brown Ale, Williamsburg Tavern ale.

CASK Member Profile: Paul Scott

Full Name: Paul Scott

Hometown: As a Navy kid, I have dozens ...

Town of Residence: Smack dab in the middle of Williamsburg, VA.

Occupation: Executive Director, Child Development Resources (www.cdr.org).

Years Brewing: 19 years.

Favorite Beers to Brew: Wheat beers, IPA's and Oatmeal Stouts.

Favorite Commercial Brew: Guinness. It's good for you.

Favorite Brew Pub or Beer Bar: In Virginia it's the Green Leaf Downtown.

How did you started brewing?: While working as a guide and instructor at Orvis in Roanoke, I had a co-worker named Tom who was a brewer and when his house mate moved to DC, I moved in and he taught me the basics of brewing.

Type of Brewing (Extract, Partial Mash, All-Grain): I plan on taking the all-grain plunge this summer, but so far it's just extract and partial mash. I also make a lot of mead and wine, so not many grains there. I've been getting into ciders and cyzers lately too.

Why do you brew?: Is this a riddle? A trick question? Why, for the beer of course! And the wine, mead, cyzer, melomel, etc, I can make. I love the creative aspect of brewing and there really is no limit on what a brewer can come up with if they let their imagination take over. I (usually) like sharing my creations, and also enjoy turning people onto brewing as a hobby. Once I see something that interests me I want to learn how to do it myself, and after being exposed to really good beer I wanted to know how they did it.

Awards, Beer Related Associations, etc: I've only been entering competitions for a few years. None of my beers have won anything yet, but I have two medals in the Winemaker Magazine International Amateur WineMaker Competition: A silver for a Fruit Mead (Kiwi mead), and a bronze for Other White Varietals (Viogner).



Is my Star San Solution Still Effective?

by Jeff Flamm

I recently emailed a couple of questions to Five Star Chemical Company (support@fivestarchemicals.com), makers of home brewer favorites such as Star San, Saniclean and PBW. I received a speedy and informative response from Jim Jennings.

I like to mix up some Star San to keep in a plastic spray bottle for quick sanitizing on brew day or bottling day. So, I wanted to know how long I could store a mixed solution of Star San in my spray bottle before it became ineffective. On a related note, I thought it would be time saving if I could clean a keg and then put some Star San solution in the keg, close it up and set aside for later use when the next batch of beer is ready (perhaps a day a week or even a month or two). So I also asked if there was a limit to how long I could store a Star San solution in a stainless steel corny keg. Star San is, after all, an acid based cleaner and acids and metals do not tend to get along. However, Five Star's promotional literature claims Star San is non-corrosive to stainless steel.

The short answers are: Five Star's official policy is to not store a Star San solution long term in any vessel and Star San is effective as long as the solution is clear and remains below a pH of 3.5.

As is often the case, the Devil is in the details. The longer answers...

In the interest of accuracy with regard to storing Star San long term in a stainless keg, I will quote Mr. Jennings; "As for storage in a keg or similar vessel over time there are a few issues. The first is the solution efficacy, addressed below. The second is that all the vessel manufacturers we have spoken to universally tell us that they prefer nothing be stored in their vessels over time, other than the beverage intended. While that seems odd to me I understand that they have no control over the great range of things folks might think to put in there and the only way they can always be right in their answer is to simply say, "don't do it". Ultimately each brewer must be the final judge of such actions and we make no claims for use of that product as some form of long-term 'vessel pack'. [ed. emphasis added]

Mr. Jennings provided some solid advice for checking the effectiveness of your Star San solution and increasing its shelf life. According to Mr. Jennings and the material he forwarded to me, the cleaning compounds in both Star San and Saniclean combine with the minerals in the water and pull them out of solution (a process called chelation). The chelated mineral compounds float in the solution. As more chelated mineral compounds are formed the solution becomes cloudy and less effective (there are fewer cleaning compounds left to work). The spectrum from a clear and effective to a cloudy and ineffective solution is subjective. To quote Mr. Jennings, "A perfectly clear solution is optimal and an opaque solution is worthless. [ed. emphasis Mr. Jennings]

The definitive check of effectiveness is to test the solution's pH level. If the pH is below 3.5, then the solution is still effective. This is easily done using pH test strips available for a few dollars at most home brew supply stores. (e.g. "pH Test Strips Universal" Item No: 7423 <http://www.northernbrewer.com/default/ph-test-strips-universal.html>).

Mr. Jennings also offered some advice on prolonging the shelf life of Star San/Saniclean solutions. Use distilled water to mix your Star San/Saniclean solution. Since distilled water is de-mineralized you will not introduce extra minerals into the solution, which will in turn chelate and turn the solution cloudy. Always store the solution away from sunlight and avoid large temperature swings. And of course follow the package instructions for the proper ratios of Star San/Saniclean to water. Prost!

Want more Information?

The folks over at the Basic Brewing Radio podcast did an interview with the inventor of Star San a few years ago. The interview with Charlie Talley was part of the March 29, 2007 podcast. It can be found in the archives of Basic Brewing Radio, over at basicbrewing.com. It covers both bleach and Star San and is quite informative.



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 - Bock

June - Irish & Scottish Ales

July - Summer Party / Mead (COC)

August - Sour Ales (COC)

September - Cider

October - Strong Ales (COC)

November - TBD

December - Winter Party

You, yes you, can add items to the CASK calendar and keep your fellow club members informed about beer-related happenings in the area!

Either:

1. logon to the CASK Message Board to find out how to add events to the calendar or

2. E-mail information about the event to calendar@colonialalesmiths.org