



# The Cellar

The Official Newsletter of the Colonial Ale Smiths and Keggers

## 4th Annual Virginia Beer Blitz --September 25th

*By Steven Davis*

CASK will once again be conducting our Club's national homebrew "Beer Blitz" contest on Saturday, September 25, 2010 at the St. George Brewing Company in Hampton, Virginia. This is the 2nd year that St. George has hosted this event and last year was a huge success.

CASK looks forward to an even bigger contest than the 2009 Beer Blitz which brought in 262 entries and hopes to even challenge the August Dominion Cup and their 422 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 their calendar to join us in what looks to be a wonderful event. Additionally, every CASK member needs to enter as many beers as possible to bolster our numbers as well as help guarantee that the Blitzkrieg award stays with CASK. Finally, we need to make sure the Best-of-Show award comes back to CASK where it belongs. The previous awards have gone to JRHB, FABTS and BARF, and it is high time we win our own competition.

Registration is now open. Full details are available to be viewed on our webpage so log on and sign up now.

## CASK Summer Party 2010

The CASK Summer Party was a great success! A special CASK Thank You to Frank and Gail Clark for hosting the party!



Congratulations to our Summer Iron Brew Winners:

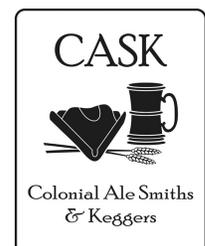
- 1st Place - Ted Hale
- 2nd Place - Phillip Vaughn
- 3rd Place - John and Jared Smith!

Thanks to Jeff Flamm for the pictures.



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# Upcoming CASK Events and Club Information Topics

*By Steven Davis*

The following is a list of upcoming Club events and information topics for CASK Members and their friends.

1. The **4th Annual Virginia Beer Blitz** will be held at St. George Brewing Company in Hampton, Va on September 25, 2010 at 9:00am. This is CASK's very own AHA/BJCP sanctioned homebrew competition covering all 28 BJCP styles. See the CASK website for details.
2. The **1st Annual Gloucester Beer Festival** is scheduled for Saturday, October 9th in Gloucester. Our Club Vice-President, Warren Haskell is actively involved in organizing this event and is looking for club support in both sponsorship as well as volunteers. This presents an opportunity for CASK to set up a booth where we will be able to provide a public homebrew display (possibly including an actual brewing demonstration). This will enable us to help educate the public on homebrewing in general and the great hobby we all enjoy so much. Hampton Roads sincerely lacks adequate beer festivals for the size of our community and this will be a great opportunity to help promote a new festival for locals to enjoy good food and beer.
3. The Club is finalizing details for a **BJCP exam** in May or July 2011 (the BJCP does not schedule exams in June due to the National Conference). YES, we finally have a proctor who has agreed to help us out. Many thanks to Mike Dixon from Raleigh, NC who has volunteered to come up and administer the exam. We will be looking at starting the class just after the holidays so that the info is fresh in everyone's mind for the test. Also remember that members can arrange to travel to one of the currently scheduled exams if they wish to take it earlier.
4. The Club's "**Member Profile**" and "**The Beer in Front of Me**" sections of the newsletter have been a big success. If you would like to volunteer to be spotlighted in either of these columns, please contact Norm ([webmaster@colonialalesmiths.org](mailto:webmaster@colonialalesmiths.org)).
5. **MONTHLY MEETING FORMAT CHANGE:** Beginning in August, we will be mixing up the format of the monthly meeting in an effort to get more Club involvement and help promote more homebrew tasting & evaluation. The meetings will now be conducted in the following format:
  - i. A brief overview of important Club information will be covered by the Club Officers, as necessary
  - ii. Club members will present their homebrew to other members and guests for tasting and evaluation. This is intended to allow members to comment on each other's beers as well as solicit input on things such as "What is that flavor/aroma in my beer?", "What should I try differently?", "What do you like about it?" etc.
  - iii. Club Only Competition (if required that month)
  - iv. Technical presentation. We want to get back to some sort of technical presentation every meeting. This does not need to be long and drawn out. A quick 5 minute presentation on anything that will interest Club members will suffice.
  - v. Lastly, we will have the Style presentation and tasting of the Style of the Month Beers. We are moving this to the end because we have found that once the style beers start being poured, the meeting starts turning into a social event and no further Club related business gets accomplished.
  - vi. Additionally, the plan will also be to start selling raffle tickets early in and throughout the meeting so that the raffle can be conducted sooner after the Style of the Month presentation is done.

This is just something new we are experimenting with based upon feedback & requests from Club members. Keep those great ideas and suggestions coming, and let us know what you would like in the future.

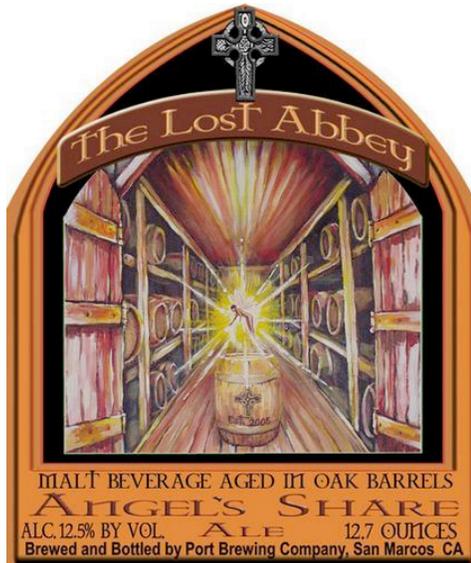
Cheers.



## The Beer in Front of Me ...

"The Beer in Front of Me ..." is a new feature where you can tell your fellow CASK members about a beer that you are enjoying right now. Be it "true-to-style" or "way-out-there creative," if it is a beer that's your current "favorite" and you want to tell the club about it, e-mail your description to [beer@colonialalesmiths.org](mailto:beer@colonialalesmiths.org)

**This month, Jeff Stuebben tells us about The Lost Abbey's Angels Share ...**



On a recent trip to the west coast I picked up a bottle of Lost Abbey's Angel Share. The brewery and beer is "For Sinners and Saints alike," and signals the creation of a line of newly branded beers from The Lost Abbey Brewery. These inspired beers are made by Port Brewing Co. at their brewing facility in San Marcos, CA. Rooted in the Monastic and artistic Belgian brewing traditions, The Lost Abbey brewery project is the brainchild of Vince and Gina Marsaglia, former head brewer of Pizza Port in Solana Beach.

The beer is a Strong Ale that is brewed with copious amounts of Caramel malt to emphasize the vanilla and oak flavors found in freshly emptied bourbon or brandy barrels. The beer spends a year in oak before it is packaged for release. The beer is 12.5% ABV. This is not a beer we can get here on the east coast (not yet anyway). Color is a deep brown, No head present and very low carbonation levels. Smell is very complex with oak, malt, roast being most prominent followed by a whiskey/alcohol smell. Taste, this is a very full body beer where oak is prominent along with sweet malt. Very little hop in this beer and warmth from alcohol comes on quick after the malty sweetness leaves the palate.

Overall, this is a good beer but price is a little high at \$15.00 for 12oz.

## Immersion Wort Chiller Supercharger for Summertime Brewing

*By Jeff Flamm*

Last weekend I brewed a quick extract brew of HombrewUSA's 3-point *Dunkleweizen* to stock up my dwindling homebrew supply. I picked it up from their new Hampton store. I am so glad I don't have to fight the tunnel traffic to pick up some ingredients at the spur of the moment anymore!

One problem with brewing this time of year is that it is 90°F+ outside and my tap water is coming out of the faucet at 82°F. It takes quite awhile for my immersion wort chiller to cool 5 gallons of wort down. The wort will never get to a pitchable temperature below 80°F without intervention.

I decided to try something a little different than just hooking the wort chiller up to the hose spigot. I took out a chest cooler and an old sump pump I had in the garage. I added a few gallons of water to the cooler and then dumped in all the ice I had from our icemaker bin (about 7.5 lbs of ice cubes) plus a gallon jug of frozen water and several cold packs. I connected the sump pump to the wort chiller and placed the pump in the cooler (Safety Note: be sure to plug the pump into a GFCI outlet). I also placed the wort chiller return line in the cooler (on the opposite side from the pump to allow the water to mix with the ice and cool rather just sucking immediately back into the pump).

I had not planned to try the ice bath recirculation originally. I had not stocked up on ice before I started the brew. I had thrown all of the ice on hand into the cooler and it did not seem like enough to go from boiling down to sub-80°F. I wanted to be sure I got to a pitchable temperature quickly before I ran out of ice. So for this attempt I actually went ahead and hooked the chiller up to the water spigot initially and let it exhaust in the back yard for



the first few minutes. I watched the wort temperature until the temperature change slowed. It took about 5 minutes to cool the wort to 120°F. I then switched over to my ice water recirculation system for the final cool down. The water temp was initially about 45°F (should have been 32°F – I needed more ice!). Once I turned the pump, the water reservoir temperature rose to 68°F within a few minutes and remained relatively steady. The wort temperature continued to drop. It took another 16 minutes to drop the wort down to 75°F. Total time 21 minutes start to finish.



The pump I used had a pretty high flow rate so the water was mixing well in the cooler with the cold packs. If anything, it may have been too high a flow rate. The cold packs and water jug were still partially frozen when I was done. Although, all of the loose ice cubes were gone. The system would probably do better with a just small pond pump and large spoon to make sure the ice water stays mixed and cold. I did not really have enough ice on hand to get the ice bath as cold as I wanted this time.

My article was originally going to end with a few summary comments here. However, this weekend we had some family friends visiting. They really liked the homebrew I served and were interested in the brewing process. So this past Saturday we decided to brew another extract batch of beer to introduce them to making beer and in the process try the ice water recirculation system again (with more ice). This time we brewed *Myer's Award winning Hefeweizen* once again from HomebrewUSA's Hampton shop. Getting a little long on weisse beer, but I like it because it is quick, easy and a good summer style.

This time I had 40 lbs of ice cubes on hand in addition to the aforementioned ice packs and frozen jugs of water. So I decided to go with 100% recirculation. The ice bath was at 32°F at the start. It raised to as high as 50°F near the end of the process, but generally remained in the mid 40's as I ran the system. Once again, the wort chilled to about 120°F at the 5-minute mark. However, the overall cooling process went quicker than the first attempt. The wort hit 100°F at 9 minutes, 90°F at 10 minutes and finally 75°F at 14 minutes. There was still some loose ice floating in the ice bath in the end (but not much) and the frozen jugs and cold packs were still mostly frozen.

In these two trials the loose ice cubes with their large surface area did a much better job of keeping the ice water slurry cold than just the ice packs and frozen jugs alone.

The next time I try this I will stock up on some more ice before hand, both loose ice cubes and a few more frozen jugs. I want to be sure I have a good ice water slurry chilled down to 32°F at the start as well as at the end of the process. I may also go back to the hybrid approach and try exhausting the first minute or two of exhaust flow from the chiller (when the wort is near boiling) into the yard. The initial flow out of the wort chiller is quite hot and melts the ice quickly.

Besides chilling the wort down faster, another advantage of this method is that there is less water waste by recirculating rather than just letting it run off to water the yard or worse down the drain.

Prost, Jeff





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# Tips from the Tap

*CASK Members Like You*

"*Tips from the Tap*" is a new feature where we can share with each other all the little "tricks of the trade" that we have learned over the years to make the brew day easier. So if you have some tips to share, send them to [tips@colonialalesmiths.org](mailto:tips@colonialalesmiths.org).



When brewing in warmer weather, use evaporative cooling (a "swamp cooler") to keep your fermenting beer at an acceptable temperature. Place your carboy in a large tub with some water. Drape the carboy with a wet towel extending into the water and blow a fan across it to increase the evaporation rate. I recently did this with a hefeweizen. The room temperature was 74 °F and the fermenter was too hot at 77°F (yeast give off heat). Within a few hours the fermenter had cooled to a reasonable 67° F. You can add a little ice or cold packs to the tub to help it along just don't overdo it. **[A tip of the hat to Jeff Flamm for this tip]**



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# Mead: A lesser-known beverage

*By Warren Haskell*

In the world of fermented beverages mead is possibly the oldest (dating back as far as 7000 BC) but definitely the least known in modern times. Though there is some contention about which of the three (beer, wine, mead) is truly the oldest, I side with mead since it does not require the malting of barley nor the cultivating of grapes in order to be made. Simply the combining of honey and water.

I would assume that the majority of people have not tried mead, and possibly didn't even know it was available, maybe something only heard of in the verse of Chaucer or some old Viking song. It does however have a growing commercial availability, made as nearby as Floyd, VA or as far away as South Africa. It ranges from sweet to dry, may be still or sparkling, and can be just honey or with additions of fruits, spices, or other flavors like coffee or malt.

Do you like honey, because you will probably like mead if you do. When encountering mead for the first time, as with most new experiences, you need to come with an open mind. Though commonly referred to as honey wine, it is not wine, though it can be made with the addition of grape juice, which is called a pyment. Mead should have a nose of honey, with the dryer styles being lighter on the nose, some floral qualities are often present and some essence of the type of honey used. Wildflower honey makes a distinctly different mead than Orange blossom or Tupelo honey. If drinking a fruit mead (known as a melomel), which usually takes on the color of the fruit, you should get a sense of the fruits that were used, common ones include tart cherries, blackberries, strawberries, peaches, and many others. For body, the level of sweetness determines the mouth feel, dry meads are thinner and crisper where as sweet meads are thicker and more luxuriant. Fruit meads take on the character of the fruits so you should expect a tart pop from cranberry mead and more a tannic bite from blackberry mead, though all should still have a strong back-bone of honey character.

Meads range in alcohol content from about 8%-15%, and are generally aged for 6-12 months before bottling, though they can age for upwards of 5-10 years, with the alcohol and other characters mellowing over time.

Can you pair mead with food as you would your wine and beer, but of course. Start with something simple like a medium sweet spiced mead (called metheglin), think Christmas spices with a fresh apple pie. A sparkling Mead and cider (called cyser) would pair well with roast pork loin and mashed sweet potatoes, or try a fruit mead as an aperitif with a cheese course, honey and blue cheese is a great combination, a fig mead with some nuts and goat cheese could also be nice. And if you break out that old fruitcake recipe, try soaking it with straight or fruit mead instead of whiskey.

What is old can be new again, so get out there and drink some mead, and if nothing else you imagine you are a Norse god getting ready for battle



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# CASK Member Profile: Jeff Stuebben

**Full Name:** Jeffrey J Stuebben

**Hometown:** Novi, MI

**Town of Residence:** Newport News, VA

**Occupation:** U.S. Navy

**Years Brewing:** 6+

**Favorite Beers to Brew:** English Ales

**Favorite Commercial Brew:** Macro: Yuengling, Micro: Ommegang Witte, Local: St George Nut brown, and Alewerks Coffehouse Stout. (Just to name a few).

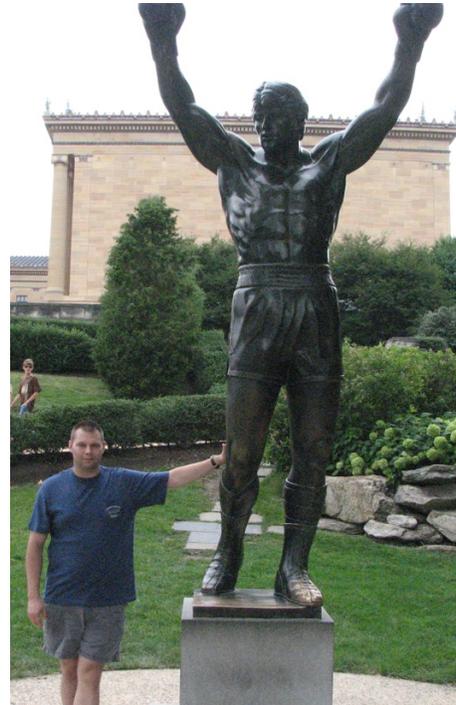
**Favorite Brew Pub or Beer Bar:** Bier Garden!!

**How did you started brewing?:** After years of beer tasting it sounded like something I could do, Bought a kit from Midwest Brewing and was hooked from the first sip.

**Type of Brewing (Extract, Partial Mash, All-Grain):** All-Grain, sometimes partial mash.

**Why do you brew?:** Fun, It is a hobby that can be shared with friends.

**Awards, Beer Related Associations, etc:** AHA member, have taken decent number of 1st, 2nd and 3rd Place finishes in the Dominion Cup and Beer Blitz.



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## Want to go to Belgium?

*By Bryan Falman*

For those wanting to visit Belgium, there are two tours offered by Belgian Beer Me scheduled for October that may be of interest.

The Best Damn Farmhouse Ale Tour of Belgium & France is a six day/five night tour of smaller independent breweries in southern Belgium and northern France. Scheduled for October 11-16, this tour is set to visit Brewery Kerkom, Ferme Au Chene Brewery, Brasserie Fantome, Brasserie Dubuisson, Brasserie Dupont and Brewery St. Bernadus in Belgium, as well as Brasserie Castelaine, Brasserie Thiriez, Brasserie LaChoulette, and Brasserie Brunehaut in France.

Immediately following the farmhouse tour, The Lonely Monks Trappist Tour is a 10 day/9 night tour featuring visits to the seven Trappist monasteries in Belgium and the Netherlands. Running from October 16-25, this tour will spend two nights each in Brussels and Bruges before visiting the abbeys of Chimay, Orval, Rochefort, Achel, La Trappe, Westmalle, and Westvleteren. Additionally, there will be tours of the Halve Maan and Duvel-Moortgat breweries and the World War I museum at Iepers.

I am already signed up for both tours (16 days in beer paradise!), but currently only the Trappist tour is confirmed; the tour operator is looking for two more travelers to confirm the Farmhouse tour. The deadline to sign up for the Farmhouse tour is September 15, and September 18 for the Trappist tour. For complete itineraries, pricing, and additional information on both of these tours, as well as other annual tours, checkout the Belgian Beer Me website at [www.belgianbeerme.com](http://www.belgianbeerme.com).