

The WIZARDS Newsletter

October - December, 1999

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WIZARD's Upcoming Events

Brew Day with the WIZARDS - October 2

Sponsored in part by Strangebrew

On Saturday, October 2, the club will be having their second annual brewing and demonstration day. This year's event will get underway at 10:00 Am at Rich Granger's house where we'll be brewing in his back yard. The theme for this year's event is Big Brews, where all brews are encouraged to be a minimum of OG 1072. This should leave plenty of room for stylistic expression - the German bocks, the British Winter Warmers, the Christmas Ales and who knows what else! Last year's event was a big success. Not only did we make some great beers, we recruited some new members. Hopefully we do as well this year. Additional details about brew day are available from Brian at [Strangebrew](#). Hopefully we will see you at Rich's house. If not, maybe we'll see you at the Big Brew sampling which is currently planned for the February meeting.

Phil versus the Big Guys - October Meeting

Again this year, the club will have their annual Oktoberfest tasting. Pitted against Phil's homebrew will be Oktoberfest offerings from some of the areas biggest microbrewers. Possible contenders include Sam Adams, Harpoon, Paulaner and Spaten. Just to make things interesting, we'll also have one of those Oktoberfest Ales included in the competition.

Be sure to show up early at the October meeting. We'll probably have the Oktoberfest taste-off first thing. Last year Phil's Oktoberfest kicked butt, will he again?

WIZARD's Club Business

The Wizards New Web Site

The all new [Wizard's Homepage](#) is set to debut this October. Look for it at the usual address later this month. The new homepage features all the old information, some new information and most of the content of Bill's unofficial web page. One highlight of the new page is the updated and expanded recipe library containing many of the club's award winning brews! Other features include past copies of this newsletter, club rules, club officers and the wizards email group, which can be used to quickly and easily communicate with the Wizards by email.

Many thanks to Scott for his efforts in pulling this all together. Bill has also indicated his unofficial Wizards web page will be decommissioned shortly after the new homepage is released.

Dues

It is now past the due date for June 1999 through May 2000 dues, however, the good news is I believe members are paid up! Keep in mind your temporary membership card is also good for Strangebrew discounts year-round.

Newsletter

This quarter we changed the dating of the newsletter. To be in line with our major publications, the date will now reflect the upcoming quarter instead of the one that has just passed.

As always, articles and suggestions for the newsletter are both welcomed and encouraged and should be sent directly to [Bill](#).

Upcoming Meetings

Club meetings this quarter will be October 13, November 10 and December 8, all scheduled for the Vinotech Warehouse.

WIZARD's Recent Events

Octoberfest

As it is every year, the end of summer was marked by Phil & Katie's Octoberfest. Our hosts put on quite a spread this year with not one, but five different beers on tap! This year the feature selections were Terrapin Oktoberfest, Continental Pilsner, Olde No. 3 Porter, Strawberry Blonde Ale and Red Rooster ESB, and of course, all were brewed by Phil. To help all those beer neophytes out, Phil even provided some tasting notes for each selection. While I did have the opportunity to sample each of the choices, I found the Porter and the Oktoberfest to be the best selections on tap! Rumor has it the Strawberry Blonde was the hit of the party and the first keg to kick. As if the beers weren't enough, the homemade sausages certainly made the day. I'm already looking forward to the big yellow tent and next year's event.

Club Samplings

Like we said in the last newsletter, summer is the slow time for the club. Without any formal activities planned, we had to be content with a number of samplings at our regular club meetings. The single biggest recurring theme at the summer meetings has to be the Collaborator Milk Stout from National Homebrew Day. It seems like somebody is always pulling one of these out of the closet on beer night. But what else have we seen? Greg brought us a mild, Rich brought a Weizenbier (or was it an American steam?), Bill brought his southern brown, Phil brought the

Octoberfest and barleywine, Chuck brought Chuck's beer and then there were all the other homebrewed and commercial selections I just can't remember. We also had the opportunity to finish off the Club Red III, which got the same mixed reviews as always. Some liked it, some hated it, all we know for sure is its gone!

The Other Stuff - Hints & Ideas

Did You Know?

There are no oysters in Oyster Stout. The name dates back to the Victorian era, when oysters were so abundant and inexpensive that working-class families often made a simple, filling meal of oysters and stouts. Quoted from the 365 Bottles of Beer Calendar.

Bottling From The Keg

Have you given up bottling your homebrews and moved into kegs? If so, have you ever wondered how to fill bottles directly from your keg so you can take them on the road (to club meetings for instance)? Hopefully this article will provide some insight into how this can be done easily and effectively.

One of the most common ways of bottling from the keg is to use a counter pressure bottle filler. There are many of these on the market and numerous articles have already been written on them so we won't go into details (see Zymurgy xxx, 1999 for details). Most of them work fairly well but they can be real a pain, especially when you only want to fill a few quick bottles.

One popular approach is to fill your bottles directly from the tap. This is the way many of our club members bring their keged beer to our meetings. This article will discuss some of the various approaches used along with the pros and cons of bottling this way.

One of the biggest drawbacks of bottling from the keg tap is that the beer ought to be consumed quickly. Bottling in this fashion tends to lose some of the carbonation in the beer and I've found after time the bottled beers tend to get a little flat. In general, I've found beer bottled this way will last up to a week but is best when consumed within a day or two.

By far the most popular approach is to attach an eight inch piece of vinyl tubing to the end of the tap. The small size tubing (Brian - which size it is?) will easily slide onto the end of the black plastic tap faucets. The tubing should reach the bottom of the bottle and will help to prevent excess foaming. The procedure is simple - insert the tubing into the bottle and slowly release the tap to fill it up. Some foaming may occur, which I usually let overflow out of the bottle until the liquid level is right at the top of the bottle rim. When the hose is removed, the level should flow down to a reasonable level - about ½ inch from the top. If you find it too low, simply continue filling the bottle as the tube is being withdrawn from the bottle. Then cap or seal the bottle immediately.

Here are some additional hints, which should make the process go smoother.

- First and foremost, cold beer under very little pressure produces the least foaming. When the breweries bottle in this fashion, they get the beer much colder than possible for most home-brewers. I seem to recall Smuttynose telling us they bottle just above freezing.
- Gently let most of the pressure off of the keg before bottling to reduce foaming. You may, however, have to re-pressurize the keg every few bottles.
- Since colder temperatures favor less foaming, one of our members goes as far as chilling his faucet under cold running water before bottling. Keeping the tap in the refrigerator with the keg is another good way of solving this problem.
- Start the flow through the faucet very slowly and don't reach full steam until the bottom of the tube is completely submersed in liquid.
- Cold bottles also have also been rumored to help but no-one in the club has any experience with this. Try keeping bottles in the refrigerator for a couple hours before bottling and see if this helps. Should anyone try this, be sure to let us know how it turns out!
- Bottles should be cleaned before filling. Most literature would have us believe they should also be sanitized, however, I have filled many clean bottles without sanitizing and not suffered any ill effects. I am assuming when consumed without a few hours there isn't enough time for contaminants to affect the beer. In any case, if you're concerned about contamination you should sanitize as usual.
- Finally, some beers foam more than others. This is life. Don't worry about it. Just let the foam flow out of the bottle and cap when the liquid reaches the right level.

Hopefully you will find this approach both convenient and easy to use. Let us know either way by telling us an upcoming club meeting or by email at wizbrew@aol.com.

Feature Sites

This issue's feature web sites all come courtesy of Greg - he says these are some of his favorite places to visit. Anyone is encouraged to [reccomend](#) a site for future issues.

- <http://www.axess.com/users/jsm-mv/brasseurs-mv/homebreweries.html> if you want to see what real homebreweries look like - or at least what real over the top homebreweries look like. Greg says these guys are "off the dial."
- <http://www.alesmith.com> to read all about the Alesmith Brewery!
- <http://belgianstyle.com/mmguide> to read even more about Belgian beer than we had last month!
- <http://home.earthlink.net/~beerismylife/brewwww.htm> for 1071 links to breweries and beer marketing companies.



Comments, questions or information on the WIZARD's to [Bill](#)