

The WIZARDS Newsletter

October - December, 2002

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WIZARD's Upcoming Events

Upcoming Club Meetings

Club meetings this quarter will be October 15, November 19 and December 17 all at Deja Brew in Shrewsbury. Check our web page, call Strange Brew or call Deja Brew for directions.

Upcoming Trips & Outings

Activities	Club Meetings
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Oct 12 - Fall Brew Day, Strange Brew• Dec TBA - Holiday Party	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• October Meeting - Strong Belgian Ale• November Meeting - 2002 Invitational Chuck Off Club Competition• December Meeting - Barley Wine

Upcoming club activities are always posted on the club's website at <http://www.brewbeer.org/wizupcoming.htm>. Additional details will be published in the newsletter as they become available and provided via email to the club's egroups email list.

The WIZARDS are pleased to announce the "2002 Invitational Chuck Off"

Long time club member Chuck Stevens has recently and graciously provided the club with some free hops that he received from Hop Union. It was decided during the August meeting to utilize these hops during a club event.

The concept is simple - we need brewers to make some beer!

- The club will provide you with the hops.
- No hops other than those provided may be used.
- There are no style, gravity, adjunct or color restrictions so what ever you want to do is fine. The beers WILL NOT be judged against the BJCP style guide.
- Each participating brewer must provide 3 sample bottles on the night of judging (November club meeting) as well as one extra road beer for Chuck to take home (and bring to his "other" homebrew club in Florida).

The hop varieties are as follows:

- Magnum 16.5% AA
- Mt Hood 6.9% AA

In return for their generous offer, Hop Union asked for feedback on what we thought of the hops. We will collect this feedback on judgement day for a future newsletter article that can be sent to Hop Union.

Please contact Bill or Greg if you would like to take part.

Fall Club-Only Brew Day

The next club brew day will take place on Saturday, October 12 in the Strange Brew parking lot. Brew days are always a good time so pack up your equipment and plan to join us for a day of brewing, drinking and BBQing starting at 10 AM.

Even if you can't brew, please try to find the time to come down and support the club. This has always been a fun event and sometimes the beer comes out well too. Brian has talked John D into doing some of his fantastic culinary voodoo again! If you would like to bring a dish/snack/desert type item of your own to share that would be most appreciated too.

Brew days are a great opportunity to brew with the other club members. It's also a great time to get some new techniques and ideas by watching and learning from others.

The fact that it's at Strange brew also means homebrew is welcomed and encouraged. Bill has said he will bring his beer engine but we are still looking for fine quality ales to dispense with it!

Finally, for those who haven't made an entry for the Chuck-Off, this could be an ideal opportunity to get it going!

Please let us know soon by emailing to the egroup if you'd like to brew that day.

Brian has offered to provide complimentary grains for participating brewers. One week's notice is required. Contact him at Strange Brew for more details.

WIZARD's Club Business

Dues

Dues for 2002/2003 are now due. Dues are still a bargain at \$12/year and cover most, if not all, of our club activities. Dues pay our nominal expenses like buying the pretzels and cups for meetings. The biggest way your dues are spent is at club functions where the club finds some way to treat everyone in attendance like buying the pizza at our holiday party this past December or buying the appetizers on the annual pub crawl.

Newsletter

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

WIZARD's Recent Events

August Club Meeting - IPA Night

IPA was name of the game at our August club meeting. We only had a few (okay - one) homebrews to try so the focus was clearly on the commercial examples. Four such IPAs were tasted and rated as follows:

Smuttynose Big A IPA	3.1/5	Intense Cascade flavor and aroma, decent malt background
Shipyard Fuggles IPA	3/5	Nice Bouquet, grassy, clean finish (and Brian liked the sample size referring to it as an "ample sample")
Fullers IPA	3/5	Malty, softer gentler hop presence (and it was 18 months out of date)
Red Hook IPA	1.5/5	Metallic, some hop taste, didn't get the best vote

September Meeting - The WIZARDS First Ever Cider Night

Tony and Brett combined forces to make September's Cider Night a club meeting to remember. They both dug deep into the cellar to bring out plenty of choices for the club to sample. And what a treat it turned out to be! We started with apple ale and then moved straight into the ciders. We sampled natural yeast ciders, fruit ciders, a cranberry cider, cider with honey, cider spiced with coriander, mead, dandelion mead, cyser and who knows what else. Along with each ample sample, Tony or Brett gave a brief commentary about the sample or the style. Below are some of the highlights of what they told us:

- The good thing about cider is it's cheap and easy to make. If its no good, just dump it and forget it.
- The basic recipe for cider is to add 1/2 to 1/3 cup sugar per gallon of apple cider. The sugars can be honey, white sugar or brown sugar. The goal is to get to an OG of 1070 to 1090 but its better to use the 1/2 to 1/3 cup guideline than to use a hydrometer. This is because it is hard and unreliable to measure OG as the sugars don't blend well with the cider right away.
- Any kind of white sugar can be used. There didn't seem to be much support for corn sugar over cane sugar. Cane sugar was even suggested as the preferred alternative because it's cheaper to buy.
- You can use the natural yeasts in the cider to do the fermenting or you can use packaged yeasts.
- Sulfites can be used to kill the natural yeasts before adding your favorite yeast but not too many people do this.

- Yeast starters can be made in the same way as for making beer, using either sugar or malt extract as the basis of the starter.
- Fruits can also be added to cider. Just freeze the fruits long enough to pop the skins first.
- Try making a New England Barrel Cider. For each gallon of cider, add 1# raisins, 1# brown sugar, 1# white sugar, 1# honey and ferment with the cider's natural yeast for 6 months. Age for at least a few years. The one we sampled was aged for four!
- Ciders can be made in any batch size. That's one of the nice things, it easy to split batches and do different things with them. Try making it a gallon at a time!
- Cider Jack may be illegal but it's easy to make. Or so we heard. Take a cider and put it outdoors to freeze. The water will freeze but not the alcohol. Then it's just a matter of removing the ice and bottling the cider jack left over.
- Try making a coriander cider. The coriander nicely sets off the tartness of the apples. Tony used 1/2 ounce freshly crushed coriander to 5 gallons.
- Cyser is actually a cider where greater than 50% honey is used.

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Part II: Cider Making Tips and Examples

by Brett Schneider

Overall, the whole deal with cider is to be less anal about the 'stuff' than with beer and brewing and sanitizing etc. Have fun with it and since there are no rules to follow, make up your own.

There are really no hard and fast rules for any recipes or additions to be made to your ciders. The BJCP treats them just like beer, with ranges of characteristics for every part of the drink.

The best basic method to work through is normally something like this for the ciders I make:

- MEASURE the OG of the cider juice as purchased, normally 1.040->50.
- DECIDE how strong you want the cider to be and start adding sugars to boost the OG to the range of interest. I do this only by math and never really go back and take a second OG reading. Values I use in the math profile are:
 - white or brown sugar = 1.045 /lb/gal
 - honey = 1.035 /lb/gal
 - fruit = I ignore the sugar additions, but as you know they will also boost the OG by some small measurable amount. I simply add 1 lb/gal to the primary and then again at 1/2 lb/gal in a secondary to obtain aroma.

Example:

Here is an example to demonstrate the calculations discussed above:

1. 4 gals cider @ 1.045 = 180 pts sugar
2. If you add 4 lbs of white or brown sugar the calculations would be: $180 + 4(45) = 360$ sugar pts -> $360/4 = 1.090$ OG.
3. If you add 4 lbs honey you would get $180 + 4(35) = 320$ pts -> 1.080 OG.

4. So, if you were instead trying to make a CYSER you would try to obtain an OG >1.090 (more than 360 sugar pt total in the 4 gals of cider) and would need to add 1.14 lbs more honey to get 50%+ sugar points from the honey (360-320 = you need 40 more points from honey). I would simply add another 2 lbs and boost it bigger as in bigger is better.

Finally, using the basics above and trying to re-create my barrel cider from the meeting I would have the following mix:

1. 4 gal cider (4*45) + four lbs white & four lbs brown (8*45) plus 4 lbs honey (4*35) for an OG of 1.170.
2. Now that I have done the math I would actually think that 2 lbs each white brown honey would be sufficient. Of course you would need to add 4 lbs raisins and then find the patience to let it sit for 5 years, but it can be done.

Adding Fruits and Raisins to the Base Cider

Again, there are no rights and wrongs, just listings of the way other people have done it before you. Most of the time, just dump the fruit in however it comes to you. The same goes for raisins, just dump away.

For things like grapes and cranberries, freeze them first. This will expand the guts and pop the skins to open up the sugars to the cider and yeast to ferment. The skins impart the tannins so leave them on the fruit. Soft fruit is a pure no brainer in the dump and wait world.

You could also heat the fruit if it is fresh just to the point of the skins popping. This will kill some of the yeast in these skins so they don't get into a battle with the yeast from the apple skins, should you decide to not add a controlled yeast starter.

Carbonating and Getting Ready for the Judges

Read the BJCP guide since there are all sorts of data a brewer **MUST** provide to the judges if you were to enter. I can't emphasize this enough for anything you enter, but especially for meads and ciders. The more you tell the judge the better they will treat your entry. So, let's also look at them as more insight to you, the brewer, trying to create something they can define to others.

FG range is given as 0.990 - 1.012, and you are asked to specify dry, semi-dry, or sweet. So dry is the lowest FG and sweet the highest. I'd say 1.008 and higher is sweet, depending on OG, and unless it really dries out call it semi-dry. But measure it to be sure.

I carbonate my bottled ciders with corn sugar, just like beer, since it is pretty easy to use and simply gives it CO₂ - does nothing to taste or sweetness or body or anything like that in small doses. BJCP gives this range:

- still - no carbonation
- petillant - very lightly sparkling, visibly and in the mouth
- sparkling - clearly, but not heavily carbonated.

- spuming or spumante - heavily and vigorously carbonated, bordering on gushing, with tight, fine bubbles, champagne-like

I would classify sparkling to be like 'normal' beer carbonation (not English style or others where they say low CO₂ in the descriptions), whatever that may be. Charge it like beer with 1/2 cup per 5 gal, or whatever scale you normally use. I got away from measuring by the cup and started weighing it out. More consistent results. Whatever your method for priming beer, just do the same for cider too.

Unless you used no honey in your blend, and/or you waited a very long time, still cider is something you will need patience for. I highly recommend sampling a bottle before you might enter it, to judge the character and answer the questions from CAT 26 in the BJCP style guide.

The Festival of Ales at the Higgins Armory



On Saturday, September 21, the club members joined club sponsors Strange Brew and Deja Brew at the Higgins Armory for the 2nd annual Festival Of Ales. Brewers attending the festival and providing the samples included Deja Brew, Concord Junction Brewery, Z Street, Berkshire Brewing Company, Wachusett Brewing Company and Magic Hat. In addition to the breweries, both Strange Brew and the Homebrew Emporium had booths at the festival and both put on brewing demonstration for the festival goers! At the end of the day, Brian even raffled off the brew made during the demonstration! But beer was only one part of the day. Besides being able to tour the museum there were a number of special activities planned for the day such as sword fighting, Morris Dancers and Songs of the Ale! All who attended had a good time and look forward to visiting the museum again next year.

Club Samplings



Homebrew tastings over the last few months have included Jeremy's IPA (in the SNPA style), Imperial Stout and the Mystery Beer (runnings from Jeremy's and Bill's brews at the May brew day). Commercial tastings included Heileman's Special Export Light (2/5), Dogfish Rason Detre (2/5) and Orkney Skullsplitter (3.5/5). Note, numbers in parenthesis, where available, show our rating on the five point scale with one being "it stinks" and five being "give me more."

The Other Stuff - Hints & Ideas

A Tale of Two Refrigerators

This month's feature articles come to use from Greg and Bill, who've both find different ways to put an old refrigerator to good use. Greg's is for serving and Bill's is for fermenting. Enjoy!

[My Keg-O-rator](#)
by Greg Guyton

[Keeping Warm With A Refrigerator](#)
by Bill Nevits

Beer Now Available for Sale on Sundays in Massachusetts

Did you know recent legislation was passed in Massachusetts that allows beer sales on Sunday? You still can't buy beer at the Mobil (believe it or not, that's fairly common in most parts of America) and the package stores certainly won't be opening up just for you, but a beer on Sunday is a lot closer than driving to New Hampshire. Thanks to our legislature, micro-breweries can now sell their beer on Sunday. So the next time you find yourself without a beer for the big game, hop in the car and drive to your local micro-brewery. And in case you're wondering where the closest micro-brewery is located, think Deja Brew. You know, where we have the meetings.

More of the Other Stuff

Ray reports that Dave Devries Pickup Porter is the best selling winning beer from the WIZARDS Homebrew Competition yet.

To reduce foaming from your keg tape, use an overly long restrictor hose. Use a hose that's close to double the usual length - that's four feet instead of two - to keep down foaming.

Did you know that both Strange Brew and Deja Brew are two words? I certainly didn't but will try to correct it in our newsletters and web pages in the future. My apologies to the both of them.
Bill

Feature Sites

Here are this issue's feature web sites! Everyone is encouraged to [recommend](#) a site for future issues.

- <http://www.zstreetbrewing.com> Z Street Brewing Company's Home Page



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