



# The Wort Alert

August 2008  
Volume 20, Issue 8

*Newsletter for Hop Barley and the Alers Homebrew Club, Boulder, CO*  
<http://hopbarley.org>

## **Wanted: Fearless President of Homebrew Club**

If interested, please email [secretary@hopbarley.org](mailto:secretary@hopbarley.org).

### (Temporary) *President's Corner*

Hello fellow Alers. Looking forward to seeing you all at this month's meeting. Bring your donations and your checkbook for the auction items that you just cannot live without any longer! This month's meeting also includes a club only competition on Imperial anything's so bring your best big beers. Don't forget your money to pay for the cider shipment coming in a few weeks. A big round of applause to Matt for taking on this project and doing a great job of it. I love seeing enthusiasm among the new members and a new opportunity for many of us to make some cider. Maybe we could have a little friendly cider competition in a few months like we did with the Golden Brewer. Only this time no ringers from outside the club! :) I still think the 2nd place beer should have won the Golden Brewer award but then again, that is just my humble opinion. :) Upcoming fests of note: 9/6; Lyons and Crested Butte, 9/13; Steamboat, 9/20; Greely, Oct 9-11th the GABF. Get your tickets now and don't forget there are plenty of volunteer opportunities available for the GABF that may even land you some free tickets if you are available to help out the cause.

Don't miss out on our very own Dave Anderson's article this month on Imperials. A big dose of congrats to members Chris and Kelly on their new child. Send out some love their way!

Don't forget to take any opportunity to recruit new members and bring them into the flock. There are a lot of interested observers out there just looking for a mentor! That being said, I'd love to show you, Bob and Jim, how to make some great extract beers if you ever want to take that next step up. And maybe even you, Mr. HB of the Y, Dave Anderson, could learn a few things about making something as simple as a Cream Ale taste just a little bit better with the addition of just a few flowers!!!!

See you all at the next meeting.

Kevin

## *Vice President's Corner*

Even though there are only two BJCP subcategories listed with “Imperial” in their titles, Russian Imperial Stout 13F and Imperial India Pale Ale 14C, almost any beer with an alcohol content above 7 percent or so, can have “Imperial” tagged on its label; it simply means “bigger,” and “stronger” (if you don’t believe me, check out the 7.45% alcohol “Bosmo’s Imperial Cream Ale” recipe in the May/June 2008 Zymurgy). But a higher alcohol level isn’t necessarily the goal of the brewers who make these beers, it’s just a pleasant side effect of going heavy on the malted barley for the sake of aroma, flavor and general charisma! Thus, these beers can age—like a fine wine. These are special-occasion beers to be savored—and advocates brazenly boast that they pair more gracefully than most wines with foods like cheese, mousse and chocolate.

So where have these beers been all our lives? Clinging to existence in small brewpubs or chilling in the specialty-beer aisle of fancy liquor stores. Yet there was a time that the Imperial stout was all the rage in Europe. This beer was the first of the Imperial category, originally brewed in Britain about 300 years ago explicitly for Peter the Great of the royal imperial court in St. Petersburg, Russia. Mr. “the Great” had recently traveled in England, whose stouts and porters mightily impressed him, and upon returning home sent a request back for a shipment of dark beer. It arrived in due time—spoiled in the casks after the long sea voyage over the Baltic. Britain was notified that its beers were too feeble to survive such a journey, and so Barclay’s Brewery in London stepped forward with the idea of upping the alcohol level. This, presumably, would fortify the beer against spoilage and thereby quell any more angry messages from livid Russian importers with a bad batch of beer in the warehouse and a thirsty czar down the block raising Cain.

It did the trick. The second batch of Russian stout arrived in prime condition and with enough potency not only to preserve the beer but to floor a wolverine. With about twice the strength of a traditional stout, and the Russians dug it. The czar demanded more, his successors acquired the taste, and the style took on the name Russian Imperial stout—a majestic label most appropriate to the beer’s profound blackness and fireplace-warm finish.

Today breweries and homebrewers age their “Imperial Darks” in bourbon barrels; add oatmeal, chocolate and fruit; and bring the alcohol level up over 20 percent alcohol by volume. (Your typical brewski clocks in at 3 to 7 percent ABV.)

Another “bigger” beer with some history is called an India Pale Ale (IPA). As with the Russian Imperial stout, the IPA became what it was as a solution to a problem.

After the British East India Company had established itself in India by the early 1700s, it had a large number of troops and civilians demanding beer. The problem facing the British during the 18th and 19th centuries was that beer did not keep well on long ocean voyages, especially voyages into hot climates. These hot environments often resulted in

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flat, sour beer and unfortunately places like India, and their local temperatures, prevented successful brewing. At the time not only were there social aspects to beer but it was a ready source of B vitamins that supplemented soldiers and civilians diets. The British Naval ships on station in the English Channel issued a ration of 1 gal of beer per man per day.

The answer to the great beer problem finally came from a man named George Hodgson, brewer at the Bow Brewery in East London. Hodgson took his pale ale recipe, increased the hop content considerably, and raised the starting gravity by the addition of extra grain and sugar. Extremely high attenuation resulted in strong ales with high alcohol content. Hodgson also added dry hops, probably an early version of Kent Goldings, to the casks at the time of priming, which provided a further measure against infection. During priming he conditioned the beer with more sugar than was typical for pale ales, but it made up for the carbonation lost on the trip to India. The result was very bitter, alcoholic, and sparkling pale ale that could withstand the rigors of travel and shelf life in India. Hodgson's success became legendary and the India Pale Ale was born.

Although some IPA's would list under the "Imperial" 7% qualification, some do not and today there is even a BJCP category Imperial IPA (14c.) In 1994, Blind Pig Brewing Company in Southern California brewed what is considered by many to be the first Imperial, or Double, IPA, now a fairly standard microbrew. The same brewer, Vinnie Cilurzo, today owns Russian River Brewing in Santa Rosa, where he makes a Triple IPA.

Today it's not hard to find available imperial beers. Some examples include:

Rogue Ales in Newport, Oregon features a line called the XS series which includes Imperial stout, an Imperial IPA and Imperial red ale.

Avery makes a Belgian grand cru called The Beast. Its recipe includes raisins, dates, honey, blackstrap molasses and turbinado sugar, as well as malt and hops and it runs 16 to 18 percent ABV.

Dogfish Head Craft Brewery of Delaware brews the renowned 120 Minute IPA—call it a Quintuple IPA, if you like—it is among the most powerful on Earth, at 120 International Bitterness Units and 20 percent ABV. Dogfish Head's highly regarded World Wide Stout is 18 percent ABV, and barrel-aged versions have grown to 23 percent.

The strongest lager in the world is called Samichlaus, brewed by Felschloesschen-Hurlimann-Holding Group, it sits at around 14-15%. It takes almost a year of slow secondary fermentation to develop to full strength.

Lastly, according to [ratebeer.com](http://ratebeer.com), Utopia, by Samuel Adams, sits at 27 percent ABV (non-frozen-method), Hakusekikan Eisbock, by Hakusekikan Beer/Stone Iwamoto Co., sits at 28%, and Hair of the Dog Dave, brewed by Hair of the Dog Brewing Company, sits at 29%! Talk about Imperial!!!

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With that, enjoy the available “Imperial” beers!

Dave Anderson

## *Events Calendar*

### **Who’s Doing What and When**

Month	August	September	October	October
Day	8/26/2008	9/23/2008	10/28/2008	10/28/2008
Red Group	Relax	Food	Setup/Cleanup	Beer
Blue Group	Food	Setup/Cleanup	Beer	Relax
Green Group	Setup/Cleanup	Beer	Relax	Food
Orange Group	Beer	Relax	Food	Setup/Cleanup

One brew per group will be reimbursed. Save your receipts.

***Color Groups – Please bring your recipe along with your beer and tell us about it!***

***Color Groups – Please coordinate with your group as there will be a \$75 max limit on reimbursable food per meeting. Please see the treasurer in an unusual circumstance.***

### ***HBA Club Meeting at the Masonic Lodge***

The Masonic Lodge is located on the corner of Pine and Broadway, Boulder, Colorado 80303. Additional parking is available at the Lutheran Church.

**Aug 26th, 7 PM**

### **Upcoming Beer Styles**

August - Imperial (any style)\*  
September - Marzen  
October - Spiced/Harvest  
November - Oaked/Smoked  
December - Stouts  
January - Belgian/French\*  
February - Pilseners/Light Lagers  
March - Big Beers(1.080 and up)\*

*\*Club only competitions*

The club sponsors an all-grain and an extract brew from club members each month. The brew should be the style for that month. Bring in a receipt and you will be reimbursed. It is that easy.

***First Friday Out***

Twisted Pine

September 5<sup>th</sup>, 6 PM – 8 PM

There will be a band playing outside in parking lot.

**Upcoming Beer Events**

**September 6<sup>th</sup>-Club Picnic/Campout at Heil Ranch**

**<http://www.hopbarley.org/event> for other events and details.**