



The Wort Alert

March 2010: Volume 22, Issue 3

**Newsletter for Hop Barley and the Alers Homebrew Club,
Boulder, CO**

<http://hopbarley.org>

President's Corner

Coby Royer

Wort Alert - March 2010 Newsletter

This is a special month for Hop Barley and the Alers. On March 30 we officially turn 21 years old! Twenty one years ago, Charlie Papazian recognized the need to organize a local community of homebrewers here in Boulder—as was happening all over the country at the time. He agreed to lead the group for a mere three months, long enough to establish the group. Jim Homer was at the first meeting. I had the chance to interview Charlie recently and will be posting the article to our web site soon. On Monday, March 29, we will be having a birthday party to celebrate. Check our web site for more details.

There are lots of good things brewing and with spring now here. Look for brewing events on our web site, such as April 9 First Friday Out at Upslope Brewing, May 1 Big Brew on National Homebrew Day, and of course NHC is coming up soon in June. You can also find lots of great activities like beer pairing dinners, special beer releases, and brewing competitions.

i'd like to thank everyone for making this year's Dredhop such a great success. This year we had a record number of entries! Many thanks to Deb Lee, Competition Director, Chris Black's Falling Rock Tap House for hosting us, and everyone else who pitched in to make the event a great success. And especially, thank you to all of the sponsors who helped make this happen.

This month, John Carroll from White Labs will be talking to us about—you guessed it—yeast. Join us Tuesday for our monthly club meeting. Red group is providing the brew and Green Group is cooking.

Next month, Charlie Papazian will be speaking at the club meeting. And in May, Jeff Griffith from Golden City will be judging the Second Runnings brews.

Don't forget to come visit us at <http://www.hopbarley.org> and I'll see you at the meeting on Tuesday.

Cheers!

Coby

Märzen and Oktoberfestbier - Greg Toothaker

Overview

"Smooth, clean, and rather rich, with a depth of malt character. This is one of the classic malty styles, with a maltiness that is often described as soft, complex, and elegant but never cloying" (BJCP Guidelines). "A clean, malty-rich lager with lots of smooth complex malt character, minimal hop flavor and minimal hop aroma" (Brewing Classic Styles).

Oktoberfest and Märzen are always described as clean, malty, lowly hopped lagers.

This beer takes quite a bit of skill to pull off. During Dredhop I was fortunate enough to judge an excellent example of a well made Oktoberfest. This beer won the European Amber Lager and Bock flight against some very good Eisbocks. This was an extremely clean beer with a soft munich malt background. It was a pleasure to evaluate.

Origins

Oktoberfest and Märzen are part of the same subcategory under European Amber Lagers. Oktoberfest is the style associated with the Munich Oktoberfest celebration and Märzen is made in March. Why is a style named after the month a beer is brewed? Over the millennia Bavarian brewers found that beers made over the warmer southern months tended to spoil easier than those made during colder seasons. In 1553 summer brewing in Bavaria was outlawed. To have an ample supply of beer on hand during the summer months, brewers worked overtime in March to produce stronger, well hopped beers that would store well through the summer. This beer was stored in cellars and mountain caves, sometimes packed with ice from the winter. By October the brewers needed to reclaim casks storing the Märzen for new brews from the harvest. The well lagered beers were polished off during harvest festivals. Märzen is traditionally aged 4 to 8 weeks, so it can be served from late spring through out the summer, not all Märzen makes it to

Oktoberfest. With modern brewing controls, Oktoberfest can be brewed during the summer, so not all Oktoberfest is Märzen. A Märzen-Oktoberfestbier is a beer brewed in March, aged until the Oktoberfest celebration. That should clear it up.

Ingredients

The Märzen and Oktoberfest styles have changed quite a bit over the centuries. In the 1840's, the brewers from Spaten in Munich and Dreher in Vienna introduced a recipe make with a lighter malt, now called Vienna malt. This lightened the color of the traditional Oktoberfest beers. In 1871 Spaten darkened the malt, now referred to as Munich malt. The base malts for this style include a mixture of continental pilsner, Vienna and Munich malt. Specialty malts such as CaraMunich can also be used to add color and body. Hops should be noble German hops such as Hallertau. Hops are mostly to balance the malt in this style, so early additions are key. Any late additions should be low. Munich water has a relatively high total alkalinity, moderately high permanent hardness and contains high levels of sulfates. These all lend to making amber and dark lagers. For yeast, Oktoberfest / Marzen from White Labs or Bavarian Lager from Wyeast.

Procedures

With today's highly modified malts, this procedure can be simplified to a single infusion

mash at 151 degrees F. For those traditionalists out there, a decoction mash is perfectly acceptable. An undermodified malt with a single or double decoction will help add to the malty backbone for this style. If you use a high percentage of pilsner malt, a 90 minute boil and rapid cool down will help diminish DMS in the final beer. Pitching and fermentation temperatures between 46 and 52 help limit fruity ester production during fermentation. A diacetyl rest toward the end of primary fermentation will help ensure diacetyl is cleaned up by the active yeast. Lagering / storage should last from 4 to 8 weeks depending on the strength of the brew. The stronger, the longer lager period.

Recommended Reading / Sources

German Beer Institute - <http://www.germanbeerinstitute.com/index.html>

Jamil Zainasheff and John Palmer - Brewing Classic Styles

Beer Styles of the Month

April - Bock

May - Dunkelweizen

June - Lagers

July - Mead (COC)

August - Sour (COC)

Sept - Oktoberfest

Oct - Strong Ales (COC)

Nov - Bitters

Dec - Wiezenbock

More details for these events can be found on our web site hopbarley.org

Stone Brewing Co. Tasting & Dinner@BJs Aurora

Great Divide Release Party

Saison & Farmhouse Ale Fest@Trinity Brewing

Avery Society for the Pursuit of Hoppiness@The Rackhouse Pub

Craft Beer Tasting Series @ Pumphouse

Vine Street Pub Turns Two-Years Old

Twisted Pine Hemp IPA tapping

Asher Earth Day Dinner@Chautauqua

Taste Beer History: Paulaner & Fuller's Tasting!

Microbreweries for the Environment Benefit @ Boulder Theatre

Crabtree Brewing's Springfest 2010

National Homebrew Competition Round One Judging

Twisted Pine benefit for the Boulder Autism Society

Beer & Cheese Pairing@Great Divide

April's Foolish Beer Dinner@Wynkoop

Avery Strong Ale Festival

Denver International Beer Competition

Big Brew on National Homebrew Day

Boulder Brew & Music Festival

Avery Beer Dinner@George

Cinco de Mayo Beer Dinner at Cilantro Mary in Lyons

FFO - Downslope Distillery and Dry Dock

Next Meeting is April 27th, 2010

Monthly Meetings (4th Tuesday)--Who's Doing What and When

Group\Day	3/23/2010	4/27/2010	5/25/2010
Red Group	Beer	Relax	Food
Orange Group	Setup/Cleanup	Beer	Relax
Green Group	Food	Setup/Cleanup	Beer
Blue Group	Relax	Food	Setup/Cleanup