



# The Wort Alert

*December 2009: Volume 21, Issue 12*

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

<http://hopbarley.org>

## *President's Corner*

Coby Royer

I hope everyone had a fantastic Thanksgiving. I'm looking forward to our December Holiday Meeting and an even better year in 2010. As the year comes to a close I like to reflect on the past year and think about the next one. Last year I had the honor of serving as club secretary, and really gained an understanding of the many things our club does. Helping Bob and Deb with Dredhop gave me an appreciation for all the coordination and effort to run a successful competition. Tracking, sorting, and judging over 300 entries is a logistical miracle only made possible by all of the help from club members. Reaching out to our many sponsors put me in contact with some great folks, and I was amazed at all the contributions we received for Dredhop, and the auction--which raised near-record funding for our next year. Thanks to all of you for your contributions and support, too.

Last year was also a great year of meeting other homebrewers. The National Homebrewers Conference (NHC) was a great chance to see what clubs across the country are doing. I've also made friends in other local clubs and continue to be amazed at the creativity, dedication, and engineering taking place in the community.

Between First Fridays Out, AHA Rallies, Brew-Ins, and the many Beer Festivals and brewery events, 2009 was a great year for beer. Personally, I also had many firsts: I attended NHC, brewed mead, and brewed my first all-grain batch, and took the BJCP exam.

Looking into next year, Deb will be taking the lead with the Dredhop—so get those winning brews going and mark your calendars for Saturday March 6, 2010. And Chris Black will be hosting us again at Falling Rock. This year NHC will be in Minneapolis and the officers are planning how we can make another outstanding Alers appearance. We'll have some interesting speakers and events lined up for club meetings. Greg is organizing the styles of the month to make it easier for color groups and Club Only Competition submissions. We've now joined the social networking movement by setting up Twitter, so please send us your tweets and share what you are up to as you patronize breweries and attend events. Anyone

who wants to blog can also post content to our web site, so if you have anything to say about the club or beer, feel free to post your thoughts!

For this month, we will have the holiday meeting. Bring a bomber (or two 12 oz bottles) for the Bomber White Elephant Gift Exchange. Greg will present English Brown Ale as the style of the month (and the COC judging of this style will be held at our January meeting). Please also bring a dish to share, as we are having a potluck dinner at this meeting. Blue group has pulled pork and other good things in store; desserts and bread would be welcome additions (or bring a favorite side dish).

Don't forget to come visit us at <http://www.hopbarley.org> and I'll see you at the meeting on Tuesday, December 22, 7pm, at the Masonic Lodge (northwest corner of Broadway and Pine in Boulder).

Cheers!

Coby

## Vice President's Corner

Greg Toothaker

The February 2010 Club Only Competition is "The Session Challenge - English Brown Ales" and covers BJCP Category 11 Styles. These include Mild, Southern and Northern English Brown Ales. Entries are due February 16th and we will judge which entry from our club goes to the competition during our January Meeting. As these beers all have low starting gravities, and require little conditioning time, you should have time to make any of these beers before the meeting.

### History:

Brown Ales and Milds are definitely English styles. References go back to the 1300's where texts speak about how the reverend fathers "loved their nut-brown ales". Brown Ales were likely originally brewed with all Brown Malts and were relatively smoky before the use of coal and coke as fuel sources and the invention of kiln technologies that allowed for the creation of both pale malts and black malt. Brown Ales started to fall out of favor when porters and stouts began to gain notoriety. They continued to fade from popularity when paler ales caught on due in part by glass becoming affordable. Brown ales were pulled back from obscurity in the 1920s when Scottish and Newcastle brewery developed and launched Newcastle Brown Ale. This style is called 'the dog' in the northeast of England because pub-goers refer to their nightly trip to the pub as "going out to walk the dog". Newcastle Brown Ale is also interesting as it is a blend of a strong and small beer.

### Styles:

There are three sub styles in BJCP Category 11. These include Northern and Southern Brown ales as well as Mild ales. It is useful to note that American Brown ale is not in this category, but is in the American Ales Category. Northern English Browns are exemplified by Newcastle Brown Ale, Samuel Smiths Nut Brown Ale, and a local favorite, Ellie's Brown from Avery. Northern Brown Ales are drier and slightly more hop-oriented than Southern styles. They also tend to have a nutty character rather than caramel. Southern or London Browns are a bit sweeter, darker, and more malt accented. Commercial examples are hard to come by in the US, but Manns Brown is a classic example. The Tasty Weasel up at Oscar Blues brewery in Longmont has a Southern Brown on tap. I haven't gotten a chance to sample this yet to see the name is referring to the style or not. Milds are generally a lighter-flavored malt accented beer that is readily suited to drinking in quantity. I haven't seen any commercial examples of this style on the liquor store shelves, but the milds I have made at home did not last very long. This is an interesting style to make for get-togethers when you want to be able to consume a lot, but not necessarily cripple yourself and / or others.

Style Info for BJCP Category 11	OG	FG	IBU	SRM
A. Mild	1.030-38	1.008-13	10-25	12-25
B. Southern English Brown Ale	1.033-42	1.011-14	12-20	19-35
C. Northern English Brown Ale	1.040-52	1.008-13	20-30	12-22

**Ingredients:**

English Pale Malt, or Malt extract are the base for each of these styles. Crystal Malts add color as well as caramel and toffee characteristics. Darker malts may be used in small amounts to help augment color and may contribute a biscuit and coffee flavor to Southern English Brown. Roasted or black malt bitterness should be kept to a minimum. English hops are most appropriate, but hopping rates are so low that other hops can be substituted. A good English yeast is also appropriate for these styles. When choosing your yeast, pay attention to attenuation to make sure your beer will finish correctly.

**Process:**

All three styles are relatively easy to brew either as an extract or all grain batch. If brewing all grain, a single infusion mash temperature can be varied to achieve a lighter to fuller bodied beer. Mild ale can employ a mash between 150 to 152. Northern English styles should aim a little warmer, 152 to 154. For the medium bodied Southern English style, target 156 to 158. A 90 minute boil will help caramelize the wort, but a 60 minute boil is sufficient if you are pressed for time. Hop additions are generally early in the process at 60 and 30 minutes. You can ferment this style anywhere from 55 degrees to 68. The three styles call for different ester levels, but most are on the low side. Fermenting in the 58 to 60 degree range is safe, and a bit easier this time of year.

## *Upcoming Club Events*

- Tuesday, December 22, Club Monthly Meeting at the Masonic Lodge on Pine and Broadway in Boulder--Holiday Bomber Exchange
- Tuesday, January 26, Club Monthly Meeting at the Masonic Lodge on Pine and Broadway in Boulder

## **Monthly Meetings**

Our monthly club meetings are the 4th Tuesday of every month at 7pm. We meet at the Masonic Lodge, located on the corner of Pine and Broadway, Boulder, Colorado 80303. Additional parking is available at the Lutheran Church.

Each month color groups coordinate beer, food, and setup/cleanup.

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

<b>Group\Day</b>	<b>12/22/2009</b>	<b>1/26/2010</b>	<b>2/23/2010</b>	<b>3/23/2010</b>
<b>Red Group</b>	<b>Relax</b>	<b>Food</b>	<b>Setup/Cleanup</b>	<b>Beer</b>
<b>Orange Group</b>	<b>Beer</b>	<b>Relax</b>	<b>Food</b>	<b>Setup/Cleanup</b>
<b>Green Group</b>	<b>Setup/Cleanup</b>	<b>Beer</b>	<b>Relax</b>	<b>Food</b>
<b>Blue Group</b>	<b>Food</b>	<b>Setup/Cleanup</b>	<b>Beer</b>	<b>Relax</b>

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

Color groups please coordinate food and beer.

One brew per group will be reimbursed. The brew should be in the style of the month.

Food will be reimbursed for up to \$75. Please see the treasurer in an unusual circumstance.

Bring in your receipts to be reimbursed by the treasurer.

## *Monthly Beer Styles*

December - English Ale

January - American Ales (Bring English brown ales for Club only competition)

February - Lagers

March - Marzen

\**Club only competitions* (see [http://www.beertown.org/homebrewing/club\\_only/](http://www.beertown.org/homebrewing/club_only/))

## *Upcoming Beer Events*

Also see upcoming *Club Events*, above.

- Big Beers Festival, January 7 - 9, Vail, CO: <http://www.bigbeersfestival.com/>
- Boulder SourFest, February 27, Boulder, CO: <http://averybrewing.com>

## *Announcements*

Email your announcements for the Wort Alert to [secretary@hopbarley.org](mailto:secretary@hopbarley.org).

New Officers for 2010:

Coby Royer president

Greg Toothaker vice president

Debra Lee treasurer

Mike Paige secretary

Ryan Thomas webmaster

Diana Vann social coordinator

Please give a special thank you to last year's officers for their service