



The Wort Alert

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

<http://hopbarley.org>

President's Corner

Coby Royer

Well it's time for another club meeting and Wort Alert. It's with great pride I welcome Hop Barley and the Alers to our 21 year anniversary. I have to say there's some irony in finally being of legal age! With our anniversary at the end of March we'll have some special surprises--so be sure to check the web site for updates. In the more than two decades since Charlie Papazian helped form the club we have inspired a lot of homebrewers to new heights--and spawned more than a few pros as well. I'm guessing quite a few thousand brews have gone to compete in the Dredhop, NHC, and many other events. It's also great to see the excellent relationship our club has with the brewing community (Colorado and beyond).

At this month's meeting, Peter Bouckaert, head brewer at New Belgium Brewing, will be speaking about his brewing history. Peter has been instrumental in the many exciting craft brews at NBB, and came to the US from Belgium, where he brewed at Rodenbach . Peter is also notorious for his creative defiance of conventional beer styles.

Along with Peter's talk, Greg will tell us a bit about Lagers to inspire upcoming club brewing. I'll be bringing the Blue Group's Extract/American Pale Ale as well. It was pretty tasty when we racked it two Saturdays ago.

We are nearing in on the Dredhop homebrew competition so please submit entries. We will need help getting prizes for winning brewers, sorting entries, judging, stewarding, and general help. The event is at Falling Rock March 6--check out our web site for details.

This has been a great month for beer--I hope you all had a chance to check out Mountain Sun's Stout month. I was glad to see quite a few of you at Vail last month as well for the Vail Big Beers fest. For those lucky enough to get tickets, I'm sure I'll

see you at the Avery Sour Beer festival coming up soon, too. Many thanks to Diana for keeping us all up to date on these events, and for organizing our First Fridays Out. And of course many thanks to Jeff from Golden City for the Second Runnings--I look forward to tasting the creative results of the wort Jeff provided. And of course thanks to Brandon for the tour of Rock Bottom this month as well.

Don't forget to come visit us at <http://www.hopbarley.org> and I'll see you at the meeting on Tuesday, February 23, 7pm, at the Masonic Lodge (northwest corner of Broadway and Pine in Boulder).

Cheers!

Coby

Vice President's Corner

Greg Toothaker

Competition Update

At the February meeting we will select an American Ale to represent us in the upcoming COC. Entries for this event are due April 3rd for judging April 10th. Styles that fall under Category 10 in the BJCP Style Guidelines are eligible and these include American Pale Ale, American Amber Ale and American Brown Ale. We will judge Extract Beers at the March meeting for a COC in May. Anyone interested in judging at our meetings or learning about judging, please send an email to vice@hopbarley.org indicating your interest.

Our own Dredhop with entries due on February 27th with judging on March 6th. The Peak-to-Peak ProAm entries are due March 19th. The National Homebrewers Competition Old West entries are due April 1st.

Lager Beers

With the cooler temperatures, this is a great time of year to brew lagers and get ready for spring and summer celebrations. Lagers take longer to produce, but well made lagers are worth the wait. While the largest quantity of commercial lager beers and thin and tasteless, at home you can craft delicious malty lagers to enjoy all year. In preparing this article, I referenced the books and presentations recommended at the end of this article.

What makes a lager a lager?

Greg Noonan describes lagers this way: "Lagers are defined by the process used to brew them. They are essentially distinguished from ales, the other beer family, by relatively slower fermentation at cool (40 to 55 degrees F) temperatures, followed by a relatively longer period of cold conditioning." Lagers employ a different strain of yeast that works at lower temperatures. This allows lagers to avoid the fruity esters and other byproducts of warmer fermentation. A majority of craft breweries in the United States product ales because of the extra capacity needed for lagering beers to condition. This is a great reason to make them at home.

History

In "Tasting Beer", Randy Mosher explains one story of the origin of lager beers. "The story goes that brewers in Bavaria were fermenting beer either in natural caves or from cellars dug into the limestone hillsides. As time went on, the yeast they were using became adapted to the cold and emerged as a truly new strain, sometime during the sixteenth century." Lagers spread through Germany and the rest of Europe, replacing top fermenting beers as the most popular style. German immigrants brought lager yeasts with them when they came to the States prior to the civil war. Most early lagers were of the dark Munich type. In the 1870's, brewing scientists perfected the adjunct cooking method that allowed the use of less

expensive and body lightening ingredients such as corn and rice. The temperance movement, war rationing and prohibition stripped the character and flavor from modern day commercial lagers. Only in the last few decades has flavor returned to American lagers through the craft and home brew movement.

Wort Preparation

All books and articles I have read about lagers always speak highly of the positive impact decoction mashing has on lagers. The New Brewing Lager Beer book has very detailed information on the background and procedures for decoction mashes. A line from Noonan's book touches on this: "Decoction mashing is often met with open skepticism by brewers who have no experience with it. The fact remains that the beguiling maltiness of European lagers is only achieved by boiling undermodified malt." The basic idea behind decoction mashing is to remove a portion of the mash (the decoction) and heat it through the diastatic-enzyme temperature range to boiling. The boiling process explodes unconverted starches making them easier to break down by enzymes once returned to the main mash. The decoction also raises the main mash to the next temperature rest. Can you make a good lager without employing a decoction mash, absolutely. Ray Daniels mentions in "Radical Brewing" that a brewer can 'fake' a decoction by extending the boil an extra hour. It won't be exactly the same, but it will save you time.

On boiling, remember that if you use pilsner malt in your mash, it is a good idea to do a rigorous boil for 90 minutes to drive off DMS precursors. For hopping, if you are targeting a traditional German lager, shoot for noble hops and keep rates low. For American lagers, the gates are open.

Pitching

Creating a sizable starter is also very advantageous when brewing lagers. Noonan recommends pitching .5 fluid ounces per gallon of wort. That equates to 2.5 and 5 fluid ounces of yeast slurry for 5 and 10 gallon batches, respectively. Noonan recommends pitching when the wort is 42 to 47 degrees with the yeast slurry up to 5 degrees warmer.

Fermentation

I like to ferment on the low end of the lager temperature range (40 to 55), with a large yeast starter. You should try to avoid temperature changes greater than 5 degrees in a day to avoid shocking the yeast. If you wish to use a diacetyl rest to decrease any diacetyl created during the early fermentation phases, wait till the high foam head from the high krausen phase begins to dissipate and raise the temperature 5 degrees, up to 55 or 60 for a few days. Once this is completed, you can chill the beer back down to the low 40's to finish fermentation. Care should be taken to only change the temperature a few degrees per day to avoid shocking the yeast.

Storage

Lager tradition calls for 7 to 12 days secondary fermentation and lagering for each 2 degrees Plato of the original wort gravity. This translates to approximately 7 to 12 weeks for a beer with an OG of 1.056

Recommended Reading

"New Brewing Lager Beer" by Gregory J Noonan

"Radical Brewing" by Randy Mosher

"Tasting Beer" by Randy Mosher

"German Brewing Techniques" by Steve Holle, 2008

NHC http://www.ahaconference.org/presentations/2008/SteveHolle_GermanBrewing.pdf

"Brewing Great German Lagers" by Michael Ferguson, 2009 NHC

<http://www.ahaconference.org/presentations/2009/Michael-Ferguson-NHC2009.pdf>

From the Archives...

Originally published in May 2003

Beer-Can Chicken: Brewmeister's Chicken with Porter Barbeque Sauce

By Roger Halperin

It's May, spring is here, the style of the month is porter, and we're approaching the start of the barbeque season. What could be better? Beer and barbeque go together like few other combinations I can think of. Other than being the perfect beverage with the tangy, sweet, and fiery spiciness of your favorite slow-barbequed meat, beer also lends itself perfectly to the barbeque process. One of the best examples is beer-can chicken. The chicken literally sits on an open can of beer on the grill. The beer slowly steams the chicken from the inside while you slowly smoke the chicken from the outside, resulting in a succulent bird with outstanding barbequed flavor and crispy brown skin. Grilling aficionado Steven Raichlen has devoted an entire book to this barbeque method: ***Beer-Can Chicken (and 74 other offbeat recipes for the Grill)*** (Workman Publishing 2002). I HIGHLY recommend it. Let's explore one of my favorites recipes, ***Brewmeister's Chicken***.

Equipment:

- A grill, gas or charcoal with a cover tall enough to cover a standing chicken
- Natural hardwood chips or chunks (hickory, oak, apple, mesquite, etc.)
- Can of beer or Chicken Sitter

While a can of beer is traditional, I prefer a vertical roaster known as a Chicken Sitter. A Chicken Sitter is made of ceramic and shaped like a travel mug without the handle. It is hollow in the middle to hold the beer, and it flares out at the bottom, adding stability to your sitting chicken. It's also re-usable, and avoids the debate of cooking with an aluminum can. Other vertical roasters are made of a metal frame that allows you to put a can of beer within it. Chicken Sitters and other

vertical roasters are available at The Outdoor Cooker at 72nd and Federal, or <http://www.barbecue-store.com>

Marinade:

- One bottle of malty porter
- 4 cloves garlic, crushed
- 1/3 cup Dijon mustard
- 1 tsp. hot sauce
- 1/3 cup soy sauce
- 1 tsp. coarse salt
- 2 TBS fresh lemon juice
- 1 tsp. freshly ground pepper
- One medium onion, finely chopped
- One 3½-4 lb. Chicken

Remove giblets and any extra goodies from the body and neck cavities of the bird. Cut away extra fat on the outside of the body and neck cavities. Rinse the chicken and blot with paper towels. Starting at the body cavity, gently work your fingers between the skin and breast. This will enable the marinade to soak into the meat better. Whisk your marinade ingredients together. Put the marinade and chicken into a very large zip-top bag and marinate in the fridge for at least four hours, preferably overnight.

One hour before cooking, begin soaking a large handful of wood chips. Remove the bird from the marinade, pat dry, and let it come up to room temperature. Add eight ounces of porter to the chicken sitter, along with a little garlic powder, onion powder, etc. Consume the remaining four ounces of porter. Rub the chicken with your favorite spice rub, which may also be added to the beer in the sitter. Place the sitter in a drip pan, and sit the chicken onto the sitter. The chicken's body cavity should slip over the top of the sitter, its legs forming sort of a tripod with the base of the sitter (insert your favorite wise-crack here).

Warm up your grill. If you are using a gas grill and don't have a smoke box, create a pouch with heavy-duty aluminum foil. Place the drained wood chips in the pouch, fold it over to seal, and poke several small holes in the top. Turn the grill up to high, and place the pouch between the burner and the grill grate. Once you have a lot of smoke, turn down the grill to achieve a temperature of about 300-325F. If using charcoal, preferably natural lump charcoal, place the loose wood chips directly on the hot coals.

Place your sitting chicken on the drip pan on the grill grate. Close the grill cover. You should see a good amount of smoke coming from your grill. Try to maintain a consistent temperature of about 300-325F. Smoke may subside after the first half hour. Cook for 1¼ to 1½ hours until the skin is golden brown and crispy and an instant read thermometer reads 180F inserted to the thickest part of the thigh without touching bone.

While the bird is barbecuing, make the barbecue sauce:

Porter BBQ sauce:

- 1 TBS butter
- 12 ounces malty porter
- 1-3 tsp. hot sauce

- ¼ cup firmly packed dark brown sugar
- 1 slice bacon, minced
- 3 TBS Dijon mustard
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 1 TBS fresh lemon juice
- 1 cup ketchup
- a few dashes liquid smoke (in the condiment aisle)
- ¼ cup Worcestershire sauce
- salt and pepper to taste

Melt butter over medium heat, add onion and bacon, and cook until the onion turns golden brown (caramelizes), about eight minutes. Add beer, boil, and reduce by half. Add remaining ingredients, reduce the heat to low, and simmer for about 10-15 minutes. Let cool to about room temperature. The sauce will be rich, sweet, spicy, and full of flavor. Carve up the chicken and serve with the sauce.

I've made "beer-can" chicken with a variety of beer styles and spice rubs. This barbeque method lends itself to your own creativity and imagination.

Upcoming Club Events

<http://hopbarley.org/event>

- [Dredhop 2010](#) March 6
- [FFO - Oskar Blues Liquids and Solids](#) March 19
- HBA Meeting March 23
- [Peak-to-Peak ProAm Homebrew Competition](#) March 27
- [Hop Barley and the Alers 21st Birthday!](#) March

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

Group\Day	2/23/2010	3/23/2010	4/27/2010	5/25/2010
Red Group	Setup/ Cleanup	Beer	Relax	Food
Orange Group	Food	Setup/ Cleanup	Beer	Relax
Green Group	Relax	Food	Setup/ Cleanup	Beer
Blue Group	Beer	Relax	Food	Setup/ Cleanup

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 Discussion

February - Lagers

March - Marzen

April - Dunkelweizen

May - Old/Strong Ales

Club only competitions

(see http://www.beertown.org/homebrewing/club_only/)

February - American Ales

March - Extract

July - Mead

Aug - Sour Ales

Upcoming Beer Events

<http://hopbarley.org/event>

Also see upcoming *Club Events*, above.

- [Michael Bolton Birthday Party @ Ft. Collins Brewery](#) Feb 26
- [Avery Inaugural Boulder Sour Fest](#) Feb 27
- [Left Hand St. Patrick's Day Party](#) March 17

Announcements

Email your announcements for the Wort Alert to secretary@hopbarley.org.