

BURP NEWS

**NOTHING BUT
MALT, HOPS,
YEAST, WATER,
PAPER, AND INK**

The Official Newsletter of
BREWERS UNITED FOR REAL POTABLES
"So Many Brews So Little Time"

Bruce Feist and Polly Goldman, Editors
E-Mail: bfeist@mnsinc.com
polly.goldman@f615.n109.z1.fidonet.org

926 Kemper Street
Alexandria, VA 22304-1502
(703) 370-9509, Voice / (703) 370-9528/3171, BBS

January 1997

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- January 18, 1997 Meeting at Clipper City 3:30 p.m.
- January 23, 1997 Deadline for February BURP News
- February 11, 1997 at 6:00 PM **Elections** / Meeting / Stout Competition at Oxon Hill
- February 14 Deadline for BURP Guide to DC Area Beer (see page 9)
- March 15 at 1:00 PM Meeting at Alison Skeel's home in Kensington. Beware the ides of March!
- April 19, 1997 Meeting at Langlie home in Silver Spring
- May, 1997 Meeting at Tom and Colleen Cannon's home
- June, 1997 Meeting at Larry and Trish Koch's home



BURP News is the official newsletter of Brewers United for Real Potables. BURP is dedicated to promoting homebrewing. Annual dues are \$15 for individuals and \$20 for couples. If you care about the beer you drink, join BURP. Please submit new memberships, changes of address, and corrections to BURP, 7430 Gene Street, Alexandria, VA 22315-3509. Articles for the BURP news should be delivered on diskette or paper to the Editor (address is in the masthead), uploaded to the Enlightened BBS at (703)370-9528, or e-mailed to Bruce Feist at bfeist@mnsinc.com. Microsoft Word or text format is preferred.

Koch's Koncepts

Larry Koch

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Now, wasn't that a great holiday banquet! The feast was grand, the ales were plentiful and the roads were clear. Last year's ice storm limited attendance to 26 people; this year was the largest crowd I've ever seen at the Oxon. Hill facility.

As I handed out "Thank you's" to our officers, project leaders, meeting hosts and the other deserving individuals it became obvious how many people it takes to keep a club like ours running smoothly. There's so much more to do than the small number of officers can handle. Your many individual efforts is what makes it work. I hope there were no club efforts that went unrewarded.

Our January meeting is at the Clipper City brewery just south of Baltimore. It sounds like an excellent place to meet and taste beers and it really isn't too far away.

It's going to be a busy new year. We've got most of the events of 1996 to build upon, a very likely Real Ale festival and who knows how many new breweries and brewpubs to visit.



BURP Finances

Doug Kruth

12/1/96

Category 12/24/96

Inflows

Events +:

Events +: Baltimore	\$137.50
Interest Earned	\$4.98
Dues	\$1130.00
Total Income	\$1272.48

Outflows

<i>Events -:Baltimore</i>	\$25.00
<i>Events -:Mashout '96</i>	<u>\$157.67</u>
Total Events -	\$182.67
<i>Membership -:</i>	
General & Admin	<u>\$12.94</u>
Total Membership -	\$12.94
Total Expenses	<u>\$195.61</u>
Overall Inc/Exp	<u><u>\$1076.87</u></u>

BURP Account Balances

12/24/1996

Cash	\$13.00
Payable	\$12.94
Receivable	\$0.00
Savings	\$3,041.88
Checking	<u>\$3969.87</u>
Net Worth	\$7011.87

Competition Notes

Dave & Becky Pyle

February's Competition: Stout

Style Guidelines:

<u>Style</u>	<u>Gravity</u>	<u>IBUs</u>
Classic Dry Stout	1038-1048	30-40
Foreign-Style	1052-1072	30-60
Sweet Stout	1045-1056	15-25
Imperial Stout	1075-1095	50-80

Classic Dry Stout: A rich, dry, extra-dark almost black ale. The dryness comes from the use of roasted unmalted barley and a high hop bittering rate; flaked unmalted barley may add a creaminess. A small percent of soured beer is sometimes added to balance the dry roast flavors. Starting gravities are low in Ireland, higher elsewhere.

Foreign-Style: High gravity stouts brewed for 'tropical' markets. Both dry and sweet versions exist. They possess many of the same characteristics as the low gravity versions but with a much stronger alcohol level. Above 1.060 it becomes difficult to produce a truly dry stout as the malty fullness and fruity esters tend to take charge.

Sweet Stout: An English style of stout. Dark roasted grains and malts dominate the flavor as in dry stouts, though generally some unfermented sugar is left in the beer. Lactose is often added to provide this residual sweetness. Very dark amber to black. Gravities are low in England, higher in the exported product. Hopping is moderate and tends to be lower than in Dry Stout.

Imperial Stout: A robust and stronger version of dry stout, highly hopped for bitterness, aroma and flavor. High gravity and hops are used to prepare these stouts for export, much as was done with India Pale Ales. Often has an intense "burnt currant" character. Full bodied, it is dark copper to black. The high gravity leads to notable esters and fruitiness. Alcoholic strength should be evident.

Don't forget: January's Competition: Pale Ale

Style Guidelines:

<u>Style</u>	<u>Gravity</u>	<u>IBUs</u>
English Ordinary	1033-1038	20-35
English Special	1038-1045	28-46
English Extra Special	1045-1052	30-55
Classic English Pale Ale	1044-1056	20-40
American Pale Ale	1044-1056	20-40
India Pale Ale	1050-1070	40-60

English Ordinary: Gold to copper color. Medium bitterness. Light to medium body and low to medium residual malt sweetness. Diacetyl and fruity-ester properties should be minimized in this form of bitter. Lovibond degrees 8-12.

English Special: More robust than ordinary bitter. It has medium body and medium residual sweetness. In addition, the special bitter has more hop character than ordinary bitter. Lovibond degrees 12-14.

English Extra Special: Medium to strong hop qualities in aroma, flavor and bitterness. The residual malt sweetness of this richly flavored, full-bodied bitter is more pronounced than in other bitters. Lovibond degrees 12-14.

Classic English Pale Ale: Gold to copper color. Displays English-variety hop character. High hop bitterness, flavor and aroma should be evident. This medium bodied pale ale has low to medium maltiness. Low caramel is allowable. Fruity-ester flavors and aromas are moderate to strong. Chill haze is allowable at cold temperatures. Diacetyl (butterscotch character) should be at very low levels or not perceived. Lovibond degrees 4-11.

American Pale Ale: Ranges from gold to light copper in color. The style is characterized by American-variety hops used to produce high hop bitterness, flavor and aroma. American pale ales have medium body and low to medium maltiness. Low caramel character is allowable. Fruity ester flavor and aroma should be moderate to strong. Diacetyl should be absent or present at very low levels. Chill haze is allowable at cold temperatures. Lovibond degrees 4-11.

India Pale Ale: Gold to deep copper color. Characterized by intense hop bitterness with a high alcohol content. A high hopping rate and the use of water with high mineral content results in a crisp, dry beer. This ale has a full, flowery hop aroma and may have a strong hop flavor (in addition to the hop bitterness). Medium maltiness and body. Fruity-ester flavors and aromas are moderate to very strong. Chill haze is allowable to at cold temperatures. Lovibond degrees 8-14.

Competition Schedule for the Upcoming Year

January	Pale Ale
February	Stout
March	Alt
April	Bock
May	Pilsner
June	Wheat
July	Brown Ale
August	Indian Pale Ale
September	Oktoberfest/Marzen
October	Weird Beer
November	Belgium
December	Holiday Banquet - No competition held

December Meeting Report

Colleen Canon
CANNON_COLLEEN_M@hq.navsea.navy.mil

‘Twas the week before Christmas at the BURP holiday feast,
not a creature was stirring, not even the yeast.
The BURPer's arrived with ham, turkey and quail,
and six shiny beer engines pumping bitters, stouts, and
ale.

They feasted and drank, as if at an Irish wake,
and topped it all off with chocolate Samichlaus cake.
At an informal tasting of Snow Geoses past,
we decided drink it up; that stuff doesn't last.

The judges all gathered in a corner after dinner,
and declared Jim Caldwell's Belgian Strong Ale the
winner.
Congrats also to Doug Kruth and Andy Anderson for their
brewing troubles;
they took second and third with their Trappist-style
Dubbels.

Our fearless leader, Larry Koch presented "thank-you beers"
to our hard working officers and other volunteers.
In all there were 40 members thanked and rewarded with brew,
what makes BURP great is the effort of people like you.

It was a very nice evening sharing good food and beer
in the spirit of friendship and holiday cheer.
Then we went home and nestled in bed,
while visions of the Orange Bowl danced in our heads.

I'd like to close with one odd little note,
which was scrawled in the margin of the page where I
wrote.

It said "Ralph Bucca... origin. of Xmas"
Surely I must have been drinking in excess!
Could Ralph be the Christ child, the Messiah, the Savior?
I wondered about this, and then I recalled
It was Ralph who originally got us the hall.
The Oxon Hill Center, we've using for years
because of Ralph Bucca, let's give him three cheers!

Thanks to our 1996 Officers and Volunteers:

Pres and first lady: Larry and Trish Koch

Ministers of Truth: Bruce Feist and Polly Goldman

Minister of Finance: Doug Kruth

Minister of Education: Wendy Aaronson

Scott Bickham, BJCP exam proctor; Robert and Ann
Stevens, Lynn Ragazzini, BrewMasters, and Brew
America, for hosting beer judging classes;

Delano DuGarm, Tom Cannon, Rick Garvin, Randy
Paul, Rob Mullin, Jim Busch, Bob Dawson, and Bill
Ridgely for teaching classes;

Ministers of Culture: Dave and Becky Pyle

SOFB volunteers Alison Skeel, Jim Tyndall, Bill
Ridgely, Debbie Parshall, Rick Garvin, Tom Cannon

Spirit of Belgium Volunteers Tim Artz, Scott Bickham,
Tom and Colleen Cannon, Rick Garvin, and host Dan
Litwin

Thanks also to Jim Tyndall for organizing the BURP volunteer
effort for the National Geographic Society's Michael Jackson
Lecture, and helpers Larry, Tim and Dot, Bill, Wendy, Polly,
Doug, Lynn, Dan Brown, Jim Busch, Liz Potts, Scott, Jim
Dorsch.

Last but not least, thanks to those who hosted meetings: Dan
Litwin, Bob Cook, Jim Caldwell, Jim and Alice Davison, Chuck
and Helen Popenoe, John Esparolini, Alan Hew, and Pub Crawl
organizers Mark Stevens and Bret Wortman.

BURP Officers

Office	Officer	Phone
Fearless Leader	Larry Koch	(301) 587-5293 H
Minister of Education	Wendy Aaronson	(301) 762-6523 H (301) 594-5649 W
Ministers of Culture	Becky & Dave Pyle	(703) 273-2108 H
Ministers of Truth	Bruce Feist Polly Goldman	(703) 370-9509 H
Minister of Propaganda	Bill Ridgely	(703) 971-5744 H (301) 827-1391 W
Minister of Finance	Doug Kruth	(703) 671-0857 H
Libeerian	Bob Cooke	(703) 451-1540 H



Michael Jackson and BURP

How to Enjoy Awful Beer

Jonathan Feist

The old saw proclaims, "There's no such thing as bad Scots whiskey; some are just better than others."

Nobody ever says such things about beer. The sad, sorry truth of the matter is that beer can get pretty awful. And to be perfectly honest, there really are bad Scots whiskeys too — it's just too expensive to pour down the laundry sink. So, Scotch drinkers have learned to compromise by keeping bottles of the lousy stuff around for decades, hidden way in the back of their cupboards, awaiting the arrival of some guest who doesn't know the difference.

There are several reasons, mentioned throughout this treatise, why it is better to be able to enjoy awful beer than be a victim of its disgrace, but the basic idea is this: the more we can enjoy in the world, the happier and more fulfilled we will feel. Luckily, the task of enjoying awful beer is made easier by several fortuitous truths. There is much more to be considered about a beer besides its taste, smell, and mouthfeel. Every beer has a history, has traveled a journey, and is a product of a region and its people. Also, beer has physical and mental effects on the body, and thus provides sensual stimulation beyond those already mentioned. So, we have allies, in this Herculean task of modifying our perceptions and sensibilities.

The techniques outlined below are designed to assist one in the process of enjoying any beer — no matter how awful it is. While they specifically address awful beer in order to suit this forum, the techniques are easily adapted to any beverage or food, and even to art (though they don't quite make their way up to awful people, alas...).

We begin by examining the enemy. Awful beer is declared as such for three primary reasons: it may have severe technical flaws, resulting from problems during brewing or transportation; it may be a style which, though well-prepared, is not to our taste; or it may be a "dishwater lager" or other such insipid commercial style.

Among the most important reasons for why it is good to be able to enjoy even the most vile, offensive swill of a beer is that it may have been made by someone whose feelings we do not wish to offend. Imagine the following scenario. Someone you care about, who doesn't know much about beer, has decided that, as an act of bonding with you, buys a home-brewing kit, and brews a batch of stout. They name it, say, "Stout to the Honor of my Very Best Friend in the World," and include a picture of you on the label.

And, of course, it tastes like hot-buttered bubble gum, boiled with a cardboard box in a rusty can. In an etiquette book somewhere, you read that you're supposed to say things like, "Great first attempt!" and "How unusual!" and "You must tell me how you did it!" And, by God, you'd better say them! Alas, however, at the end of your stream of half-truths, you find yourself still stuck with a pint to get through, and if you immediately pour it down the laundry sink, your host may suspect that something is up.

At times like this, real strategy is needed.

A problem for experienced beer tasters is their custom of always hunting for off flavors. In the above situation, such flaws are easily found. Why not turn the tables, and hunt for hints of malt or hops instead? Keep hunting until you find them — they are almost certainly there, somewhere. The monomaniacal quest for off-flavors has undermined the potential enjoyment of many a half-decent pint, and several "pretty good" ones besides. By refraining from such critiques except during formal judgments, we might enjoy gallons more beer, in our lifetimes. After the first few sips of any beer, most of the information we can get out of it will already be apparent (unless changing temperatures are revealing additional flavors). The proper parts of our tongues will have already tingled, and our lips will already be ready with the appropriate foofy chemical buzz-words. Why not spend the remainder of the glass trying simply to enjoy what's good about it instead? It would be at least the equal workout for sharpening one's palette, particularly if the good traits are unusually evasive.

So, this first technique is that we can focus on what's good about a beer, rather than what's bad about it. I suggest caution with this practice, however: carefully read all labels. You may mistake a bottle of shoe polish for a bottle of beer, and if you drink more than a pint or two, your friends will never let you live it down.

An easier circumstance is that of being served a well-crafted beer of a style which we don't like. Some people have trouble with very sour Belgian varieties, for example. Others despise Pilsner. The common argument in favor of such samples is to point out technically what is superb about them, and to try to inspire admiration of the craftsmanship of it. Indeed, this should be the first approach.

However, a different set of considerations might also be helpful in this circumstances — namely, that of the beer's history.

If we meet some Martians at a party, whether or not we like them personally will be of secondary importance to the fact that they are from Mars. This same attitude can be used towards beer. When sipping, say, a lambic, so sour and with such a strong cherry taste that it makes your taste-buds shake their fists in anger, close your eyes and instead try to think about Belgium. Think about castles, and verdant countrysides, and chocolate, and air, all so many thousands of miles away. Think about the Flemish-speaking truck driver who took it from the brewery to the exporter's warehouse. Did a Flemish speaking mouse scurry past it in the bottling line? It is extraordinary that such visitations to this country are so common. Considering a beer's history is a good distraction when trying to ignore how it tastes.

And when you do taste it, don't think "Ugh, how awful!" Think instead, "So, this is what Belgium is like." And what is beer, if not the embodiment of its native country's soul? What we drink was once a vast, rustling field of grain. It was the lusty sexuality of a hop flower in full bloom, a colony of yeast more populous than most universities, all united by the world's ultimate traveler: water.

The lives of water molecules are dramatic, indeed, filled with thunderstorms, oceans, clouds, and even people. Water gets recycled, regardless of where we get it or where we put it. The water in our beer could have been absolutely anywhere on the planet, and inside absolutely anyone. Why, we could be drinking beer that included the same molecules of water as one once quaffed by Beethoven or Emperor Constantine or Will Cuppy — or even all three! Granted, it may be best not to consider this last point in too much detail, but the possibilities are indeed endless.

The third set of techniques for enjoying awful beer is frequently helpful when drinking the nearly invisible, insipid “dishwater lager” varieties of beer-like carbonated beverage which we only drink in major emergencies, such as washing down an airplane dinner. Often, the brew choices in such circumstances are heart-rending, but we do what we must.

Such liquids have no history worth mentioning. They have no flavors — good or bad — for which to hunt, and any thoughts regarding ingredients could very well be entirely incorrect, as they are generally made with plastics and unpronounceable chemicals, rather than our four old friends.

There are only two positive things to be said about such liquids: they are generally made with sterile water, which is thirst quenching, and they are generally slightly alcoholic. If we think of them as an odd-colored, medicinal water, rather than beer, such liquids become somewhat more bearable. As we drink them, rather than concentrating on feelings in the mouth, I recommend that we “drink the alcohol with our brain,” feeling the sensations of having our thirst quenched and of growing intoxicated in as deep sensual terms as possible.

If this doesn't work, there is another game that one can play with beer — that of pretending that the beer is something else entirely, such as fried chicken. Perhaps the beer's head is really an enormous fluffy batter surrounding a juicy morsel of chicken (or a mushroom, if you are a vegetarian). Really push your imagination, and try to convince yourself that the texture of the beer is that of chicken. Hell, the color is nearly the same! And consider it particularly good form to look up from a beer that, before reading this essay, you might have had harsh words for, and instead proclaim, “Taste's like chicken!” What could be a better a battle cry than this against the forces of evil beer?

One of Pope John Paul II's advisors was asked recently if the pope would give up the papacy if his health declined further. The advisor's answer was that the pope considers all suffering a reflection of Christ's suffering, and John Paul would never let any such personal pain stand in the way of his service to God.

That's the spirit!

When drinking awful beer, we would do well to keep such a philosophy in mind. Take the opportunity to reflect on the pain that humankind suffers. Consider how, by drinking the offending drink, you are cleansing the world of something potentially painful for someone else. And then, notice how you suddenly feel embraced by a warm, joyful glow.

It is probably just the alcohol, but one can never be sure.

Letters to the Editor

Crawling Back to Clarendon

Colleen Cannon

I feel a need to defend my favorite local brewpub. After reading Bret Wortman's DC Pub Crawl Review in the December newsletter, I'm afraid that BURP Newsletter readers who have never been to Blue'N'Gold might wrongly get the impression that the Blue'N'Gold Brewing Co. is not worth a visit.

I'm a Blue'N'Gold regular, and here are several reasons why:

First, I'd like to put in a good word for the manager, Dennis Gease. Dennis was our point of contact for the Spirit of Belgium dinner reservations and payment. Dennis was very friendly and professional in dealing with us, and he was a genuine pleasure to work with. Taking on a first-of-its-kind event in a newly opened restaurant is a tall order, and one can expect some glitches in a system that doesn't have much practice. Dennis made sure that whatever challenges he faced in performing those functions did not become BURP's problems. Hats off to Dennis for his helpful expertise in running an event for which BURP is nationally renowned. I'd also like to add that whenever I go to Blue'N'Gold, Dennis always greets me with a smile, although I've never tested him by showing up three hours late with a party of thirty.

Secondly, I've never had a problem with the bar or wait staff. I don't know the entire bar staff personally, but the bartender who usually serves me is always friendly, courteous, and knowledgeable about the beers.

Last, but not least, the beer. While I've never been fortunate enough to catch the cask-conditioned Union Jack at its peak of freshness, the kegged version is consistently good. It has an assertive and refreshing hop bitterness and flavor, well balanced with a solid, malty body and appropriate ale esters. The other regular offerings, a Mild, a Pilsner, and a Scottish Ale, are all consistently good. My favorite of these is the Pilsner. It is very thirst quenching, with a crisp clean malt flavor, noble hop aroma, and a drying hop bitterness. I find Pilsner a difficult style to brew well, so I am pleased to find such a good one in a local brewpub. Of the seasonal and specialty offerings, I've particularly enjoyed the Belgian Ale. It had a delightfully orangey-citrus flavor and I found it drinkable enough to have a yard of it on my birthday. My favorite, perhaps, of all their beers was the Maibock. I can hardly wait 'til spring to have another one.

If you haven't been to Blue'N'Gold, it's definitely worth (in this humble BURPer's opinion) a stop on the Orange line. Their happy hour prices, at \$2 per half liter, are the best around, and, if you stop in on your birthday, they give you a free yard of beer. Furthermore, owner Dan Litwin, a BURP member himself, has always been friendly and gracious to BURP. In addition to hosting the highly successful Spirit of Belgium, he also hosted the January elections meeting and has offered to host other contests/events, and has given free yeast to homebrewers as well. I feel we owe Dan a big BURP thank you, not unfair criticism based on one bad experience.

San Diego Brewpubs

Sergio Cerda

I have just returned from a month working in San Diego and offer the following report.

Ballast Point Brewing Company

This is a brewery attached to a homebrew supply store (what a great idea). It has four taps with 8 oz. tasters for \$.50. There are four great beers; German Wheat (not as good as BBC's but real good), a wonderful Bitter, great Porter and wonderful Barley Wine (this one is worth the visit). All but the wheat are pushed with nitrogen, giving a great cascading beer with a creamy head. They have a good homebrew equipment supply. The owners are homebrewers who expanded into microbrewing and kept their homebrewing roots. It is definitely worth visiting on any trip to San Diego.

Cerveceria La Cruda

500 4th Ave.
San Diego
619-239-9117

Brewers: Troy Hojel and Tom Arthur.

The brewer personally came out to answer beer questions and offered way too much free and yummy Belgian Double. It's a good thing I was walking! They bought the old Pacific Beach Brew Pub equipment (GW brewery, tables and chairs). Aside from beer, they offer good Mexican food, wine, cigars (in a separate enclosed cigar lounge) and liquor.

Tidal Wave Wheat (unfiltered Amber Wheat) - good basic American wheat.

Las Brisas Ale - Okay yuppie golden ale.

Red Blush Ale - Good general American Red; a little weak on bittering and aroma hops.

Blowfish Bitter - Way too dark. A little astringent. While highly hopped, it is all bittering.

Makanudo Porter - Good, well balanced porter.

Belgian Double - Great! They didn't have this on tap. The brewer had it in Cornie kegs. Wonderful aroma, nice alcohol warming effect, mild raisin taste.

By the way, La Cruda translates roughly to "the hangover".



Baja Brewing

203 5th Ave.
San Diego
619-231-9117

Brewer: Gene Owen (UC Davis educated)

This brew pub has been open for 8 months. They serve yuppie Mexican style food with weak beers. The wait staff was clueless on their beers or their brewing equipment.

Aguave light - real watery.

Nut Brown - okay but weak for a nut brown.

Sangria Fruit Beer - You can imagine what weak beer and fruit tastes like. Unfortunately I don't have to imagine anymore.

Golden - didn't try after the first three.

Karl Straus Brewery and Grill Downtown

1157 Columbia St.
Downtown San Diego
619-234-2739

Karl Straus is the big brewery in San Diego. They have a strong market share and their product is sold in many restaurants and bars. They also have a brewery and grill in La Jolla (in a great marketing ploy they have free parking is validated across the street at Victoria's Secret) and a beer garden in Sorrento Mesa. They offer a good selection of upscale bar food plus good dinner menu, and have a good, knowledgeable waitstaff.

Berliner Weiss - A wonderful Berliner Weiss. However, the fruit is not added at the tap.

Old Columbia Amber Lager - This is their flagship beer. They also bottle this beer. I prefer it over Sam Adams but it isn't up to Eel River or Dominion's lager.

Red Trolley - A wonderful American Red. Fully hopped.

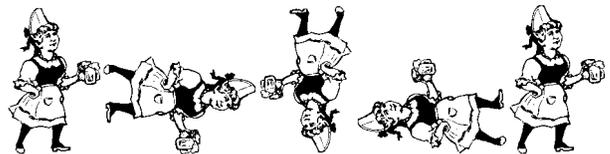
East of India Pale Ale - Good IPA but weak on aroma hops.

Downtown After Dark - weak Brown Ale. Little aroma or character.

Horton's Hooch - Great Doppelbock. Smooth, malty and well balanced. This one can catch up on ya.

Jeff & Jer's Hooch - Good Doppelbock. A little rougher than Horton's Hooch but when they ran out of Horton's I made sure it stayed good.

Strauss Stout - slight metallic taste.



Hops! Bistro & Brewery

310 Fifth Avenue
San Diego

Brewer Paul Sagora

This is where Brewski's (the real one) was, followed by R.J. Riptide. There is also a Hops in La Jolla (and in Scottsdale AZ)

While R.J. Riptide used the old Brewski's intact, Hops is targeted to the upscale yuppie crowd. To be honest they had only been open two weeks, but they have experience with their other two brewpubs to get it mostly right. The food is upscale yuppie and expensive (as is the beer). The waitstaff matched their image: looked good, but no substance.

Raspberry Lager - A good lager doesn't need fruit extract but this isn't even a good lager.

ESB - This isn't their cask conditioned ESB. It was just an ale with a lot of bittering hops which can cover other off tastes.

They had more beers but I think they need more time before they can get a fair evaluation.

Summary

All in all, there are some great brewpubs in San Diego and I only had time to sample a few. With my schedule it was only a quick walk to Karl Strauss for regular evaluation and they stood up to the task.

"Great spirits are often violently opposed by mediocre minds."
Albert Einstein

"Blessing of your heart, you brew good Ale" William
Shakespeare, Two Gentlemen of Verona



Carboys

Benjamin L. Schwalb

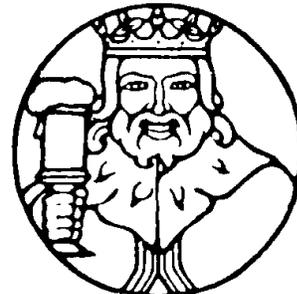
Food-grade plastic buckets are fine for brewing: they're sturdy, cheap, and easy to use (all right, I won't make any references to my ex-wife here). The only drawback is that over time, little scratches appear inside, leaving nooks and crannies for microbes to hide in, avoid our wash cloths, and leap into our wort later. Personally, I think that there are so few of these that they get beaten out by the yeast, but we're talking about an opportunity for a new gadget here, so let's not confuse ourselves with facts. There's also speculation that air can seep through the plastic bucket into the wort. I think that this is paranoia, but you never know. A lot of brewers use a large, thin-necked, glass container called a carboy. It's heavy, expensive, difficult to handle, and fragile (another passed opportunity for an ex-wife analogy). Glass is very smooth so carboys do not scratch with the kind of use we give them, and air definitely cannot seep through, but does the ostensibly cleaner environment merit the extra hassle? I've heard stories about smashed carboys that were funny because they did not happen to me, but would not have been so funny otherwise.

If you decide to get a carboy, you'll need a carboy brush for scrubbing the inside, as you can't fit your hand through the neck. You'll also need a cover or rubber stopper with a hole for inserting an airlock. A blowoff hose might be desirable, as foam can be pushed out during high krauesen (when fermentation is at its most vigorous and there are a lot of bubbles). You might also want a carboy handle, which is attached to the neck and makes carrying the carboy easier and safer.

Being glass, carboys allow you to watch your beer ferment. This can be fun. The downside to this is that sunlight, which causes hop resins to give off a skunky flavor and aroma, can get in, so keep the fermenting wort in a dark place, or wrap a blanket around it.

Solicitation for Campaign Statements

Campaign statements for the February election will be printed in the February issue of the BURP News. That's the next issue, folks! So, if you're interested in running, please submit a statement to us. Thanks!



BURP Guide to DC-Area Beer

This year, we are going to start what I hope becomes a new BURP News tradition: the Guide to DC Area Beer. This will be a short guide that we mail out (much like the BURP News) with information on local brew pubs, breweries, and homebrew supply shops. Let us know (preferably by e-mail) if you're interested in contributing a review to this! It's important to call first, because we don't want multiple people duplicating effort on a single establishment.

Reviews should be short – roughly 500 words long, which is the length of a column of the BURP News. The format needs to be consistent from one review to the next; here's the information that we want:

- Name of establishment
- Type of establishment (brew pub, brewery, or supply shop)
- Address
- Phone Number
- Directions for getting there
- Tour Information (if applicable)
- Brief description of beers made (brew pubs and breweries) or selection of equipment (supply shops)
- Price Information
- BURP Discount, if any

I want this guide to be useful as a reference for the rest of the year (by which time it will probably be obsolete, and next year's newsletter editor, if willing, will start over). If the beer is reviewed in addition to being listed, keep the reviews very short (a phrase or two). Please rate each that you're familiar with on a scale of 1 to 4; half steps are allowed.

Geographically, I tentatively want to restrict establishments reviewed to those within roughly one hour of travel from Washington, DC. So, Baltimore is borderline.

For homebrew supply stores, I only am interested in stores that have more than a bare minimum of equipment. So, a department store that carries starter kits only shouldn't be reviewed, whereas a beer and wine store that carries liquid yeast (for instance) should.

Here is an initial list of establishments I am aware of that should be included. This is not exhaustive; I am sure that there are many others out there which could be added; let me know if you're aware of any.

- Baltimore Brewing Company
- Bardo
- Blue and Gold Brewery
- BrewAmerica
- Brewmaster's
- Capitol City
- Old Dominion
- Potomac River
- Rick's Wine and Gourmet
- Sissions
- Total Beverage
- Virginia Brewing Company
- Wine Cellar

If you have an interest in the establishment, this does not rule out your review! Simply put in a disclaimer, and do not rate the beers or compare your establishment to others.

I want to send this out by March 1, so the deadline for submissions will be February 14.

BURP Web Master Candidate

Lynn Ashley

In mid-November I suggested to Bruce Feist, our newsletter editor, that BURP's web site might be better served if it had a dedicated BURP officer. He and others appear to think this was a good idea and it looks as though it might be an elected post in the upcoming BURP election.

I've told Bruce that if the office is created, I would like to run for it. With that in mind and to show my commitment, I've been doing some preliminary work on a new BURP Web Site.

My preliminary site is located at:

<http://www.mnsinc.com/lashley/>

Please take a look at it. If elected as your Minister of the Web, in addition to what you see in the preliminary site, I would:

- Add registration forms and information for upcoming competitions.

- List past BURP and other local competition results.

- work with Minister of Truth to provide BURP News online, including photos and graphics.

* Under consideration: a directory of BURP member (except, of course, for those who do not want to be listed). Let us know what you think.

I would not attempt to turn the site into a technical brewing resource since there are already many sites on the web which provide this information. The only exception might be the technical areas which are poorly covered by the other sites or for which BURP or its members excel, such as Belgian beers, Delano's adjunct addictions, etc.

I would attempt to keep the site's information current to be useful to both BURPers as well as the general beer public. And of course, I welcome your suggestions as to how to improve the site.

Please vote for me as your new BURP Web Master. I look forward to creating and maintaining a site of which BURPers will be proud!!

Thank you for your support. And remember, vote early and vote often! (Just kidding).