
The Boiler

The Newsletter of the Minnesota Homebrewers Association

June 1998

The 4th Annual Northern Brewer

Competition, held May 2 at The Town Hall Brewery in Minneapolis was a grand success. The Best of Show was emceed Mark Stutrud of Summit Brewing Company and judged by nationally known homebrew author Dave Miller of St. Louis, Missouri, Ray Taylor of Fargo, North Dakota, and our own Andy Leith of Minnetonka, Minnesota. 51 judges who volunteered to judge 331 entries and nearly \$3000 in prizes were awarded.

Best of Show was awarded to Chris Stomberg for his Altbier in the German Wheat/Hybrid Category. Chris also won Best of Show at last year's Minnesota BrewFest! The Big Cheese Award went to Ray Estrella who took home 5 medals, two golds, two silvers, and a bronze. The Prolific Homebrew Club went to the Minnesota Home Brewers Association.

Thanks to Northern Brewer for put-

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is a publication of **The Minnesota Homebrewers Association.**

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For those with e-mail, the club has a "mailing list". To subscribe, send the following command in the body of your e-mail message:

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Club Web Page

<http://www.visi.com/~mpv/MHBA>

The Homebrew Hotline

229-5129

The Malt Advisor - "How to do and what to brew"

by Ray Estrella

Welcome to the Malt Advisor. This column will be a regular addition to the MhBA club newsletter, if there is interest in it. It will be a question and answer format advice column geared towards beginning, and intermediate brewers. Advanced brewers are welcome to send inquiries, but questions will be chosen to be answered based upon the greatest possible help, for the largest possible audience.

While I am not the most knowledgeable, or accomplished brewer in the club, I do enjoy doing research, and recipe formulation. If a question comes up that I can not answer, I will hit the books, and/or throw it out to our brewing colleagues on the MBA-list. Whenever possible I will base answers upon my own brewing experiences, and I will warn you now that I do not agree with all of the accepted brewing procedures. Where I differ, I will explain the common technique, and why I think differently. Rebuttals are welcome, if courteous.

To ask a question, send it to me at:

Ray Estrella

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or e-mail to:

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It seems that First Wort Hopping (FWH) is make the rounds again on the Home Brew Digest. Since I have been using the technique for a year now, I will introduce those that do not read the HBD, to the concept.

First Wort Hopping is the turn-of-the-century practice of adding your (normally) late addition hops at the beginning of the sparge, not during the boil. As soon as your wort is running clear, and you start to collect in the kettle, add your flavor and aroma hops. It was originally used to enhance bitterness, but was also found to preserve aroma, and flavor contributions as well. The higher pH

of the first runnings assists the isomerization of alpha acids.

A couple of years ago, George Fix posted to the web an article from a German brewing journal Brauwelt International. It was very detailed, but the gist of it was that two large commercial breweries brewed identical recipes, one of which was First Wort Hopped, the other with their traditional method. The beers were then blind tasted, with the FWH beers being overwhelmingly better received. They recommend using only noble type hops, using only what would have been added for the late addition, and not deducting for bitterness contribution.

I have been using the practice for the last year, and am very pleased with the results. I have made 17 FWH batches, and have concluded the following. It works. The beers do retain a lot of flavor, and some aroma. In a batch that I made for co-workers this year, I used a half ounce of 3.2% Hallertau FWH, and a half ounce of Galena for 60 minutes in the boil. (6.25 gallons, 1.060 O.G.) It still had very noticeable hop flavor, and aroma. Too much for some of the golden-ice-light-dry-draft drinkers. (~bland over everything)

It is not just for Lagers. I have made 12 Ales FWHed, and have the same good results. I have even used high alpha Columbus hops twice to FWH American Ales, but you need to account for bitterness contributions. If you only use a little Saaz, or Hallertau, you can probably get away with not figuring the IBUs added. I found that I was ending up with overly bitter beers when using even the 5% range hops. I have decided to figure all of my FWH hops as a 75 min boil, less 10% utilization, for the bag that I put them in. So if I FWHed 1 ounce of East Kent Goldings at 5.4% AA, for the mash, and a 90 minute boil, I would figure an IBU contribution of 24 instead of 27.

And what about extract brewing? You can do it also. Take one fourth of

Continued on Page 7

Artisan Breweries of Holland and Belgium - November 1-12, 1997 (Part 2)

by Steve Piatz

Last issue, we left Steve and Janice as they were about to arrive at the Boon Brewery

Gueuze and Lambic Day - Saturday, November 8 (continued)

Brouwerij Frank Boon

While **Brouwerij Frank Boon** (Frank Boon Brewery) is much newer than the Cantillon brewery, having started brewing on the current site in 1989, much of the operation is similar. The brewhouse was not new in 1989 though the stainless steel coolship appears to have been built for the location. Frank stood in his coolship to point out features of the brewery during the tour. Boon produces 90 batches a season. He started the current brewery in part because the wort he was getting for blending was becoming too acidic.

Boon still uses the old, turbid mash process. Frank says that with the turbid mash the wort is still clear when it is run into the kettle and feels that the wort may have even less protein than that from an infusion mash. When the castout wort is sitting in the coolship overnight there are just a couple of small fans that are used to draw outside air into the room and over the wort. For the fruit lambic the fruit is added after the lambic has been pumped to large stainless steel

tanks. The fruit is frozen so that it is available throughout the brewing season as needed. The beer is dosed with isinglass several days before bottling and then chilled. Since the beers are bottle conditioned the beer is warmed with a heat exchanger (just like those used to cool wort) prior to being run into the bottles. Note, Frank says they have switched the type of corks they use so that the bottles can now be stored vertically - the corks are more expensive but felt to be necessary in today's market.

The walls of bottles aging seemed even larger than at Cantillon. The inventory required is impressive, getting started in this business requires a lot of capital. The walls have an occasional void where a bottle has broken.

The rows of assorted sizes of casks are impressive. I always wondered why some of the cask had the ends of the staves painted in the pictures of lambic breweries I saw in places like

Michael Jackson's books. Frank said that the oak casks don't need to be painted but that the chestnut ones need the paint on the ends to reduce the amount of liquid that is lost through the wood. It looks like Frank has a lot

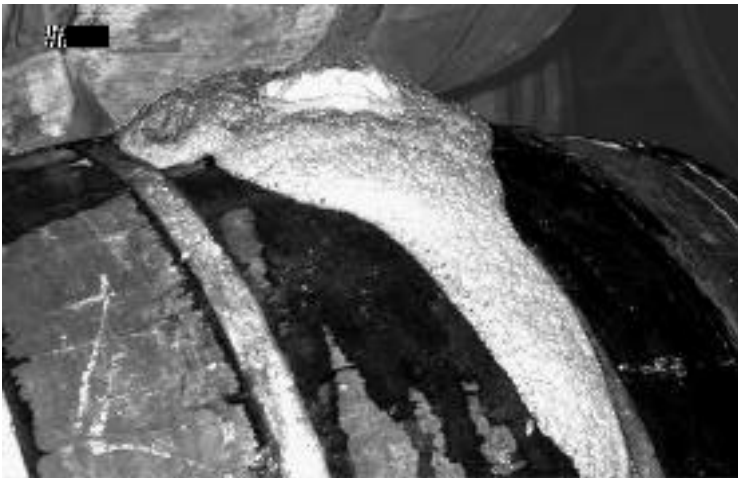


of Chestnut casks in his brewery.

As we walked along the rows of casks, Frank showed us how active the fermentation was by blowing away the foam at the opening so we could see how fast it reformed. He also drained samples from a few of the casks so we could compare the product at different ages. Early on the beer has a little hop character but it doesn't last long, it rapidly changes from a "normal" beer in to a sour, young lambic.

The Boon Kriek is made from 75% young lambic and 25% old lambic while the Mariage Parfait is made from 100% old lambic. Young lambic in this context is from 6 to 8 months old.

Boon uses a 4 to 5 hour boil and only whole hops that are over a year old. They only use hops that have been treated with sulfur in the old way. The sulfur helps the hops stay green as they age. Frank says hops used to make pellets aren't treated with sulfur. The grist consists of 30% to 40% red winter wheat. The barley is typically a pils type of malt (Boon currently uses a malt custom made to their specification) made from a winter barley since winter barley has more husk for use in filtering. The





turbid mash system results in a 12 or more hour brew cycle. Frank said Lindemans also uses the turbid mash while Cantillon and Timmerman use an infusion mash. We could have easily stayed and talked to Frank for hours longer but we had a schedule to adhere to, we were past due at our next stop. De Cam

The first new gueuze blender in years is De Cam. Proprietor Willem van Herreweghen says de cam is an old term for a brewery associated with a farm. In addition to starting De Cam, Willem has a regular job at the Palm brewery and is involved with a new brewery in Poland.

De Cam's casks are new to the production of lambic. They were built by the coopers at Pilsner Urquell from wood used to make the old (circa 1860) Pilsner Urquell casks. The casks even have the Pilsner Urquell brand on the end. In the process of making the casks Willem wanted (which are smaller than those formerly used at Pilsner Urquell) I think he said the wood was milled from the original 7 centimeter thickness to something closer to 3 centimeters in thickness. Willem also said that Pilsner Urquell no longer uses wood for any of their beer. Willem has approximately 30 casks in the area

we saw, he has sold some of the Pilsner Urquell casks to Armand Debelder from Drie Fontainen (Three Fountains) Gueuzeblendery.

De Cam has 4000 liters of old lambic made from wort

obtained from Boon and Lindemans. Their young lambic is 8 months old, made from wort from the same sources. The kriek spends 7 to 9 months on the cherries. The young lambic (8 months old) is 4.8% alcohol while the old lambic is 6.2% alcohol, lambic becomes very attenuated over time. The pH of the beer is about 3.8 which is pretty sour.



Just as Frank Boon tapped a few casks to offer us samples, Willem offered samples from several different casks of his beer. Unfortunately, he hasn't bottled any, yet, so there wasn't an opportunity to take some with us. Note, he does have a bottling system.

Willem talked briefly about the new activity to protect the term gueuze. De Cam is one of the producers involved with the HORAL v.z.w. that is working to protect the term gueuze. According to Willem the St. Louis and Jacobins breweries would no longer be considered gueuze breweries since they are actually outside of the geo-

graphic area considered essential for producing gueuze. If you have tasted the St. Louis or Jacobins products you won't be disappointed to hear this. These two breweries get their lambic character by using casks that were previously used in the Senne valley. If you have internet access you can learn more about the ongoing activities of HORAL starting at the URL <http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/pvosta/pcbier1.htm>.

We had to leave De Cam to continue on our schedule and Willem had to leave to catch a plane to Poland.

In Den Haas

Our next stop was **In Den Haas** (The Hare). Even with a guide who had been there (Stephen D'Arcy) this place was hard to find. We had to go down an extremely narrow gravel/mud road to get there, the brush on both sides of the road was brushing the van at the same time. Once we arrived the parking lot was very busy, they were having some sort of mussels special in a large tent on the property. The beer list here was very surprising for a rural pub, the selections included several brands of gueuze, some trappists and an assortment of other good beers. The beer list even includes a breakdown of the beers by characteristics, alas the breakdown was in Flemish. It was pointed out to me the next day (by our tour leader, Dick Cantwell) that this was where I screwed up and had my only non-gueuze liquid for the day. I don't remember if I ordered it for Janis or me but I did drink some Westvleteren Abt 12 thus destroying my chance at a perfect gueuze day. Sometimes the rules are very hard to remember.

In't Bierhuis

Next to the **Oud Beersel (Vander-velden) Brewery Museum** is the bierhuis with an interesting old organ. The lambic comes from the brewery next door. Unfortunately, there just weren't enough hours in the day for us to visit the brewery. In Belgium people bring the dogs into pubs, we had a good time watching a little boy

play with another patron's puppy while we drank our gueuze.

Drie Fontein

At present, **Drie Fontein** (Three Fountains) is merely a gueuzeblender. However, on November 12th the welders were to start the installation of the new brewery at Three Fountains. Come January of 1998, Three Fountains will become a brewery. The current product is blended from wort obtained from Boon, Girardin, and Lindemans. Armand Debelder, the proprietor walked us through the cellars where the lambic is aged in the traditional casks. He said that humid cellars result is a more sour beer. Armand is an experienced gueuzeblender and is the chairman of the HORAL v.z.w. Beyond adding a brewery Armand has gone so far as to plant cherry trees to provide for more of the scarce Shaarbeek cherries in the future. Three Fountains now has a label (sometimes an unusual feature for lambic beers in Belgium) and sells shirts with their logo. They also sell 750 ml bottles as well as 5 and 10 liter plastic barrels to go. In the cellar it looked like they were also filling a few corny kegs - a tempting concept.

After the tour, Armand brought out an old bottle of gueuze for us to sample. The bottle was from an 1990 batch, after waiting 4 years for it to clear after the isinglass treatment it was deemed to be "lazy" lambic and was relegated to kitchen use. Many of the menu items are cooked with gueuze, my venison cooked in gueuze was excellent. After 5 years the beer was considered to be good. When we tasted it was effervescent with an almost citric-like acidity with some fruitiness. The color was darker than the standard gueuze. This beer was made from Lindemans and Girardin wort.

Armand said he has 90,000 liters of gueuze in stock and doesn't have the capacity to export since the bar/restaurant needs nearly all he produces. At first I thought I heard wrong but then remembered that De Cam has 4000 liters on hand and only started in

June so I guess 90,000 liters isn't that much when you age the stuff for years. Cantillon only produces 85,000 liters per year. The cellars have the typical walls of bottles aging. Armand said he has another aging cellar nearby.

Ghent and Brugge - Sunday, November 9

We left Brussels after breakfast, we will spend the next two nights in Brugge. Our first stop along the way is in the historic town of Gent. We spent a little time touring the restored 12th century Castle of the Counts. The castle looks old and you can see some the restorations due to the differences in materials and mortar. When you get inside and see some of the displays you learn that very little of the structure is original anymore. The other thing that becomes obvious is that you didn't want to be a prisoner back in the 12th century, they had an awful lot of area dedicated to torture. The exhibits of old instruments of torture might be considered macabre by some. While the displayed guillotine isn't original, the blade is, the wood long ago gave up the ghost so to speak. The branding irons for marking criminals wouldn't be allowed today. Apparently, there were many revolts against the overlords that lived in the castle.

After a tour of the castle and a brief tour around the town we adjourned to **De Hopduvel** (The Hop Devil) for lunch and beer.

De Dolle Brouwers (The Mad Brewers) Brewery in Esen was our next stop. The brewery was originally built in the 1840s and was purchased by the current owners, the Herteleer



brothers, in 1980. Their friends thought them mad to buy the old place, thus the name. The brewery is only open on the weekend since the owners are professionals that have other careers. Our tour was conducted by architect Kris Herteleer who is also known for his published drawings of breweries and cafes.

All the beers are bottle conditioned, even the kegs have a refermentation in them. They only bottle 9 times a year. Their main product is Oerbier (original beer) which is generally available in Minnesota. Oerbier is fermented at 20 degrees Centigrade, the wort is 16 degrees Plato or about 1.062, the beer includes some dark candi sugar, the hops are Goldings and Nugget. The mash is conducted at 63 degrees C.

Their summer beer, Arabier doesn't include the sugar and is 22 degree Plato, we didn't get to sample this one. Even bigger is the Christmas beer Stille Nacht (Silent Night) which starts out at a whooping 27 degrees Plato which is a specific gravity of about 1.115 and has approximately 65 percent attenuation. The 1997 Stille Nacht was bottled the day before we arrived and was available on draft at the bar. The brewery's bar was doing good business, it appeared that bus loads of people were arriving for the bar and the tours.

The brewery uses a direct fired copper. They brew 40 times a year and produce 1200 hl (just over 1000 barrels) per year. The fermenters are



open-topped, copper. The mask tun appears to be iron, the lagering tanks appear to be porcelain lined steel. While the original brewery equipment is old, the lab is well equipped. Since the bottles are carbonated via priming sugar just like homebrewers would, the brewery has to be sure the yeast gets a chance to consume the priming sugar before the beer is shipped. The bottles of Stille Nacht that were filled the previous day were being held in a warm room to accelerate the process.

After the tour, Kris pulled out a sample of the 1995 Stille Nacht for comparison with the fresh 1997 version. The older version seemed darker and smoother than the current product. While not considered a barley wine by the brewery it seems like one to me. It definitely ages well.

We arrived in Brugge after dark.

Brugge, Poperinge, and Watou - Monday, November 10

We started the day with a walking tour of the town. Brugge is considered to be prettier than Gent in the guide books but much of Brugge is newer (even if it looks old). We walked through the Church of Our Lady that contains Michelangelo's Madonna and Child as well as many other beautiful works of art. We walked past but did not have time to enter the old Gruit Guild House which is now an art museum, gruit was used in beer before hops. Before searching for lunch we stopped in at the **De Halve Maan** (Half Moon) brewery. While the brewery had been in the Maes family for many generations it was acquired by the owners of the Riva Brewery in Dentergem in 1989 and now concentrates on producing Straffe (Strong) Henrick which is a golden ale first produced in 1982 to celebrate the new statue of St. Arnold (the brewers' patron saint) in the town. While we didn't have time to take a tour of the brewery we did stop for a beer and to view the museum of old equipment. The bar has a very large display of bottles from other breweries, if you ever go

there be sure to bring them some new US bottles so they can replace those disgusting Coors bottles.

After a quick lunch we were off to Poperinge and Watou. While it was too late in the season to see any hops we could see the poles and trelliswork as we drove to Poperinge. We were also too late in the year to see the hop museum. Off course we weren't too late to try the Hommelbier, a dry hopped ale.

Our local guide led us (by van) to a couple of pubs as well as past the **St. Bernardus Brewery**, the folks that use to contract brew for the trappist St. Sixtus Abbey. While we were in Brussels Stephen D'Arcy said the labels for St. Bernardus beers will be changing as a result of some litigation, apparently by the abbey. It was felt the current labels look too much like the one used when they were contract brewing the abbey's beer so a change will happen over the next several years.

While we were driving past the hop fields our local guide said that hop shoots are available for eating from December through March. That seems awfully early in the year to me, even though their weather is milder than ours December seems a might early for spring to arrive. He also said the shoots are expensive since if the grower harvests shoots then he won't harvest any hop cones that season - they must be taking all the shoots rather than the extra ones we homebrewers harvest in the spring.

We stopped in at the pub across from the **St. Sixtus Abbey** for a sample of some real fresh Westvleteren beers. The abbey does not conduct tours, you can buy beers from the abbey when they are available (the hours and days are restricted), individuals can only buy two cases at a time. The other way to buy the beer to go is at the pub across the street which does sell bottles to go.

Since this was an official holiday, Armistice Day, in Belgium, we stopped to watch the parade. This is a big holiday since Belgium has been a battlefield for many wars. The honor

guard was British since the British lost tens of thousands of troops in the area during World War II.

Back to Amsterdam - Tuesday, November 11

Most of our group was leaving for the US later in the day so after breakfast we started for the Amsterdam airport to drop them off. Since we had missed the first day in Amsterdam Janis and I were staying for another night. We walked around town and spent the afternoon at the Rijksmuseum. The most famous item in the large museum is Rembrandt's Night Watch. The painting is huge, even in the museum it requires an extra high ceiling. A much smaller painting of the Night Watch by one of the master's students showed that the original was actually larger at one time but that a previous owner had cut it down to make it fit elsewhere.

Later in the day we stopped in at De Beiaard, a small street cafe that has a small (70) beer list. De Beiaard is a small Dutch chain with several other locations. They had all the trappist beers except for Orval available, the La Trappe products were on tap. The van de tap (on tap) list also included Guinness, Liefmans, Corsendonck, and De Koninck, not bad for a small place. They also had lot of other Belgians available in bottles. The walls were covered with a lot of old American bar lights and the like. For example, they had a Schlitz light and a Leinies light, no they didn't have the beers.



Upcoming Events

A Beer Judge Certification Program will be held Saturday, June 6 from 10 AM till 1 PM at the Steve Piatz's home. If you are interested in the test contact Steve at 683-5268 or by sending e-mail to piatz@cray.com.

The June 6 Club Meeting will be held at the CSPS Hall, 383 Michigan St., St. Paul. (Corner of West 7th St., Western Ave. & Michigan St.), The speaker will be Dave Wolfe from **Red Hook Brewery**, so it should be a very interesting meeting.

We will also **auction** off a bag of Durst Pils and bag of a Durst Wheat Malt that the club won in the Northern Brewer competition.

A club trip to Minnesota Malting will take place June 27th starting at 1:00 PM. If you didn't make it last time, you won't want to miss this chance. The tour of the malting house and facilities is a rare opportunity to see a fascinating side of the brewing process. Bring beer for tasting with employees and plan to gather in the near by park afterward.

This years Minnesota Club Campout and Interstate Club Homebrew Competition is on July 17-19 at Collinwood County Campground near Cocato on highway 12, its about 55 miles due west of the twin cities. We have a group camp site reserved for camping on Friday and Saturday nights and the competition is on Saturday at 1pm. The styles are Open Lager, Open Belgian, Porter and Pale Ale. Each Club can enter one example of each style.

The winning club gets an award and the winning homebrewer gets an award and also gets to pick the styles for next year. Jim Gebhart was last years winner at the campout hosted by Minnesota Timberworts of Rochester MN. This is always a fun event in its sixth year (correct me if I'm

wrong) so dust off the tent and mark your calendar.

To get to the campground: take Highway 12 West, 55 miles, turn left before Cokato at big Collinwood County sign. Go 3 miles to the southwest. Follow the very good signs. At the campground entrance follow the gravel road to the left (not to the right- that is the main campground) we will have some MhBA signs up at entrance. Contact Ron Wolfgram 612-646-5364 or Bruce Benson 612-866-9641. The park manager is Louis Schmidt 320-286-2801

The group campsite we have rented has slightly primitive accommodations (a porta potty), but we have full use of the accommodations at the park campground about 100 yards away with showers and restrooms. The campground is designed for tents. If you have a motor home or camping trailer you would be willing to bring call Ron Wolfgram (612-646-5364) as we need a place to have the beer judging.

Here are the styles for the AHA Club-Only-Competitions for the rest of the year. Usually, we judge these at the club meeting just prior to the due. Now's the time to get brewin'!

- **Weiss**, August, no date announced (Berliner, Hefe, Dunkelweizen, Weizenbock)
- **Oktoberfest**, October, no date announced (Vienna, Marzen/Oktoberfest)
- **Scottish**, December, no date announced (Light, Heavy, Export)

Our Minnesota BrewFest Homebrew Competition is participating in the "1998 Midwest Homebrewer of the Year" competition. Midwest Homebrewer of the Year is determined by the overall score in 6 mid-western homebrew competitions. The remaining competitions are:

BUZZ Brew-Off (Urbana, IL), June

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your brewing water, heat to boiling. Turn off heat and add malt extract. Mix until extract is dissolved. Add hops and let sit for 30 minutes. Add the rest of your brewing water, (pre-warmed) and bring to a boil.

It wont take the place of massive late additions, or dry hops. But I like what it does for my beers. Try it, and you might like it also.

13th. Contact Joel Plutchak at plutchak@uiuc.edu; (217)333-8132 (D), (217)359-4931 (E)

MN Brewfest, October 11. Contact Steve Piatz.

Spooky Brew Review, October 31st. Entries due October 24th. Contact Tom Fitzpatrick at fitz@fnal.gov; (630)761-8386

HHHC, St. Louis, early December. Contact Brent Stafford at staffoba@maritz.com; (314)827-8752 (D), (314)240-2106 (E)

Contact the specific events for entry information. Information about the 1998 Midwest Homebrewer of the Year competition can be found on-line at: <http://fasicsv.fnal.gov/~fitz/mwhby> or by contacting Tom Fitzpatrick, fitz@fnal.gov or phone (630) 840-3230 or (630) 761-8386.

Notice

The club is planning on publishing a directory of members home addresses, phone number, and e-mail address to allow others in the club to contact them. This directory is intended only for club members. **If you DO NOT want this information made public**, or want to verify we have your correct name, address, phone, etc. contact Neil Schlagel at 653-9729 or neil@neonetworks.com

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