
LIVIN' THE BREWS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTH TEXAS HOME BREWERS ASSOCIATION
VOLUME XXVII ISSUE VII



PINTS OF INTEREST

- THE NEXT CLUB MEETING AT RUGBY HOUSE IN PLANO —JULY 10TH
 - THE NEXT CLUB PARTY IS AT BILL JAMES' —JULY 27TH
 - THE NEXT CLUB ONLY COMPETITION IS PORTERS —JULY 27TH
 - LIMBO CHALLENGE ENTRIES DUE — AUGUST 3RD
-

Prez Sez

By Chuck Homola

It is hard to imagine we are already half way through this year, but even with the dog days of summer upon us – there is still a lot going on in the area. Thanks once again to Brian and Melinda for putting on yet another great Brew Day for the club – a lot of brewers, a big batch that was sold out and many attendees all braved the heat – but it was well worth it! We do have the Summer Party coming up in a couple of weeks – another of my personal favorites to attend – please come on out and enjoy the food and beer – and there are usually some good photo ops along the way!

We have also continued to increase our involvement with local breweries with our meeting last month at Deep Ellum Brewing – they certainly put on a good show for us and already invited us to come back later in the year. We are also planning to have our August club meeting at Lakewood Brewing – but we are still working those details out – so stay tuned for more on that. This fall we are also planning an event down at Peticolas Brewing once things cool off a bit.

Even with the heat of summer well entrenched – it seems many members are hard at work brewing up a storm both for competitions and personal enjoyment. I have put myself on a strict schedule for the next few months – hoping to crank out 8-9 beers prior to the Autumn drinking season – we

will see how that goes! - 2 down and another one on the way tomorrow!

In the background I can hear the next yeast starter churning away in preparation for the German Pils that is about to be brewed, and the dog is licking his chops looking at my bag of pilsner malt – 50# of snacks as far as he is concerned. This will take me half way through my German 6 pack of beers I am doing – then on to other brewing regions of the world – time to quit with the lagers for a while and move back to the ales of the world.

We continue to see new faces in the club along with some old familiar faces popping in from time to time. I really enjoy seeing the generations blending together as much as they do – we all have a lot to learn from each other and with our common interests – it really helps to bridge those generational gaps. Yet another example of how the homebrew/craft beer cultures really do bring folks together – and I will do my best to help facilitate the sharing across the generations as much as possible – we have so much to gain from it.

I would also like to encourage folks to sign up with Jason Harrington to be in the documentary he is making about the club – if you have not seen the first part – go check it out on our YouTube channel – the link is on our club homepage. We really want to get a good cross section of the club portrayed in this – so don't be shy – heck – he'll even help you clean up after your brew day. ☺

Lastly I would like to thank all of the folks in the club that come out to events and participate – I know it is not convenient for everyone to do that – but any suggestions that you have to make that easier – I am glad to work through them to make the club accessible to as many members as possible. I also want to reach out to everyone to start thinking about who would like to run for office next year – before you know it we will be putting ballots together to pick our next group of officers – if you are interested – reach out to any of the current officers and we will be glad to talk with you about this. Also – come on by an officer's meeting and see things in action. —*Chuck*

Retract That!

Please note this correction to our June newsletter *Livin' the Brews Volume XXVII Issue VI*.

My wife Sue and I are starting a business as an independent representative for a Dallas based energy provider. This company has been recognized as the largest direct selling provider of electricity and natural gas. I am showing people how to both profit from energy deregulation and to save money on electricity and natural gas. We are currently in the process of national expansion on of the largest growth industries around. If you have either an interest in saving or making additional income, please contact me.

—*Fred David*

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If you want to be featured in the next NTHBA newsletter submit articles, news, review, and questions by email to secretary@nthba.org.

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BREW ★ ENTER ★ JUDGE ★ WIN

THE CONTESTS OF THE LONE STAR CIRCUIT!

2012 EVENTS

BLUEBONNET BREW OFF
ALAMO CITY CERVEZA FEST
CELTIC BREW OFF
BIG BATCH BREW BASH
LUNAR RENDEZBREW
LIMBO CHALLENGE
CACTUS CHALLENGE
DIXIE CUP



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Thoughts on Wild Beers

By Simon Ford

With wild/sour beer reaching new heights in popularity (there's now even a Wikipedia article devoted specifically to the general concept of "sour beers"), many homebrewers have considered putting time, sanitation, and fermentor space on the line by whipping up a batch of the wild stuff. However, before pitching that vial of WLP655 or that smack pack of WY3763 (or if you're lucky, that jar of ECY01), there are a few things to consider.

1. What kind of sour/wild beers do I like?

Sour/wild beers are definitely an acquired taste. Years ago, when I was new to the style, I remember being served a generous pour of oude kriek at Cantillon by Jean-Pierre Van Roy and being a little turned off by it (where's my time machine?). It took a long time and plenty of bottle purchases, shares, and pours before I learned to appreciate wild beers, and it was even longer before I narrowed the scope of my interest from just "sour" to the particular wild styles I am passionate about today.

With this in mind, I recommend first figuring out whether you like wild beers, and determining which particular styles catch your fancy, before jumping into the deep end with fermentors full of juice you may not even like after a year. I know people who attempt clones of Russian River Temptation and Consecration without tasting them first – how will you know if/when you hit the mark, or if you'll enjoy the results?

I recommend trying as many general wild/sour beers you can get your hands on, especially popular ones that define their style (e.g., Rodenbach Grand Cru, Orval, etc.). For a lot of people, backsweetened wild beers are a great introduction (e.g., Duchesse De Bourgogne), and they are usually easier to find than their unaltered counterparts. Once you have tried a few wild beers, I recommend delving into some subcategories (e.g., east flanders red, west flanders brown/oud bruin, lambic/geuze/kriek/framboise, American-style sours, Berliner weiss, gose, etc.) to see which ones really get you going.

Of course, acquiring some of these bottles may take some time, but it is definitely possible to find some gems in every corner of the states. Check out beeradvocate.com for reputable bottle shops in your area and also check out popular bodegas at travel destinations. If you are really hurting, snag a bottle or two online through a beer trade or auction.

2. What kinds of bugs make the beer style I want to brew?

There are potentially four fermentation elements at work when wild beers are percolating: saccharomyces, Brettanomyces, Lactobacillus, and Pediococcus. Delving into each one would require a novel's worth of detail (*Wild Brews*, anyone?), but be aware that not all may be present in each of your favorite wild beers. For example, most Berliner weisses focus on sacc and lacto, and some killer sours (Cascade) use only lacto as their primary souring agent. A lot of other wild beers use only sacc and Brett (or Brett alone). Therefore, once you have determined the style you are interested in replicating, go online (or read labels if you have commercial examples) and check to see what bugs are in action for that style/example. Then go out and get those bugs (more on that below).

3. What are some general guidelines for brewing sour beers?

Prepare your wort in anticipation of an extended wild fermentation. More specifically, mash high (155F+) and hop low (<15 IBUs). Sacc dominates primary fermentation and usually leaves little behind for the other bugs to eat, so mashing high creates longer sugar chains that are hard for sacc to break down (but not for brett, etc.) I have heard of extract brewers adding maltodextrin to feed bugs (evidently sacc doesn't like it), but I have never tried it personally. High IBUs inhibit bugs like lacto, so be light handed with the hops (brett pales/IPAs are another story altogether).

Use a combination of commercial yeast and bottle samples, and pitch the bugs early. White Labs and Wyeast both sell sour blends as well as isolated strains which are easy to get online if you can't find them locally. When you taste a great bottled sour, flame the lip of the bottle and pitch the dregs directly into your fermentor – it adds great biological diversity, which may result in more complex flavors. Also, pitch your bugs directly in with your sacc starter (don't pitch them after primary) – your results will be faster and more significant. Also, forget about autolysis and don't rack off of the yeast cake – brett likes to eat it up.

Tuck your fermentor away in a cool dark place and forget about it. A hot topic these days is the concept of “quick sours” that usually involves pre-boil souring with lacto. This simple process is great if you want a simple result, such as a light, tart Berliner weiss. However, if you want an earthy, funky lambic with a ton of complexity and aroma, the only way to seal the deal is to let your carboy sit until the bugs have done their work. I spent a year pipelining sours (brewing one every three months) so that after that initial year, I had a new year-aged sour available every three months (I would re-brew the recipe and repitch onto the original cake after a year).

Re-yeast with wine yeast when you bottle and wait some more. When you get around to bottling, your fast-acting yeast will be sluggish at best, and their residuals may take years to carb a bottle up. I recommend pitching some rehydrated alcohol/acid-tolerant wine yeast into your bottling bucket to get things going, and I also recommend waiting another 2-3 months at least before sampling your creation to let everything meld in the bottle. Painstaking, I know, but see the pipelining idea above.

Also, do everyone a favor and don't try to “save” an infected/screwy batch by pitching a bunch of bugs and letting it sit. If it tasted crappy to begin with, it will most likely taste even crappier when you take a pull after a year.

Hopefully, the above was helpful with respect to your wild brew goals. As always, the Internet is your friend and can elaborate upon every topic described above. I also highly recommend becoming active in your homebrew club and bringing your finished beer to meetings – you'll get valuable feedback, plus, you can only drink so much gose by yourself at home...

—Simon Ford
administrator, <http://overcarbed.com>

The Bottled Culture

by Barrett Tillman

The following will be an attempt at oversimplify culturing yeast from bottled beer. I've taken notes from Chris White & Jamil's book *Yeast* and have practiced this process with varying results.

The best examples have been with fresh bottled conditioned beer. Not one of my attempts to harvest bright beer with this method have succeeded.

Items needed:

- Starsan sanitizer in a spray bottle
- Foil to cover the bottle
- Small torch to flame the bottle neck
- 20% of the bottle dregs
- 1.020 specific gravity starter wort (cooled)
- Bottle stopper
- Twin air-lock

Before beginning choose beers whose sediment is less compact. A cloud should form when you spin the bottle increasing your chances for viable yeast.

Start by wiping the bottle exterior and spraying with sanitizer. Let it sit a minute, open then pour. Leave 20% in the bottle and cover with foil.

Using a small torch flame the neck of the bottle including the foil. You should hear a light sizzle. Careful do not overheat lightly pass the surface. Finish your beer while the bottle is cooling.

Add 1.020 specific gravity starter wort* directly to the bottle. Fill to 50% capacity. Close with sanitized stopper and twin air lock.

**Starter Wort: 1/4 cup of dried malt extract into 20 fluid ounces of water boiled 15 minutes and cooled.*

The sample should show activity by the third day having the appearance of fermenting beer. If the settlement darkens it's bacteria. If cellulose forms like cloth you have created acetobacter —the mother of Vinegar.

After a week swirl and pour a sample for sensory evaluation. Passing examples should be doubled with 1.040 specific gravity starter wort. The idea is to pitch the bottled culture into a yeast starter. The process can be shortened dregs from two 750 ml bottle pitched directly into a 1 liter starter.

I typically harvest using gallon jugs. Then bottle the best examples. So far the easiest bottles have been Westmall and Ommegang. I suggest using a basic blonde ale recipe with two-row malt and noble bittering hops for the gallon with a low OG ~1.050. If everything goes well you have drinking beer and a basic understanding for troubleshooting.



2012 Competition Schedule –updated

Competition/Style	Entry Deadlines	Awards
Lunar Rendezbrew All BJCP Beers, Meads, Ciders	Early July	Early August
Limbo Challenge Beers w/SG<1.050	Late July-early August	August 25
Cactus Challenge All BJCP Beer ,Meads, Ciders	Early August	Mid September
August2012COC BJCPCategory12-Porter	July 27-Club August 10-AHA	August 18-AHA
September/October2012COC BJCPCategory6-LightHybrid	TBD-Club October 6-AHA	October 13-AHA
Dixie Cup All BJCP Beers, Meads, Ciders	Mid-late September	Mid-late October
November/December2012COC Ant Hayes Memorial Burton (Olde) Ale BJCPCat19A	TBD-Club November 10-AHA	November 17-AHA

2012 Current Standings

Brewer Royale

Brewer	Points
Bill Lawrence	3 Points
Kent McBride	3 Points
Jesse Thoresen	3 Points
Liz Solan	3 Points
Leroy Gharis	3 Points
Jay Ellsmore	2 Points
Jimmy Orkin	1 Point

Brewer of the Year

Brewer	Points
Jenna Higgins	6 Points
Don Vanslyke	5 Points
Bill Lawrence	4 Points
Anthony Perea	3 Points
Phillp Zayas	3 Points
Randy Friese	2 Points
Aaron Wolin	2 Points
David Lee	2 Points
Doug Nett	2 Points
Kent McBride, Ryan Saenz	2 Points
Lance Smith	2 Points
Andrew Speer	1 Point
Lee Pelfrey, David Ireland	1 Point

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Club Brewmeisters

Club Brewmeisters are members who are experienced brewers and have volunteered to help other brewers, new and old, with brewing problems. Give them a call with your questions! Just don't call too late, too early, or during Cowboy games!

Homebrew Headquarters
(972) 234-4411

The Wine Makers' Toy Store
(866)417-1114

North Texas Home Brewers Association

The North Texas Home Brewers Assoc. is a group with an interest in beer in general and home brewing in particular. We meet once a month on the second Tuesday at various locations in the area. Visitors are welcome! "Livin' the Brews" is our newsletter and is published about once a month. We do accept advertising, although the NTHBA, its officers, assignees, and editors are not liable for losses or damages resulting from mistakes or misprints, or any other consequences of advertising in this or any other publication. Ads are \$30 for a 1/3 page and \$50 for a full page, subject to change without notice. Readers are encouraged to submit articles. The deadline for ads and articles each month is 14 days prior to the club meeting.



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www.nthba.org