



The Wort Alert

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

<http://hopbarley.org>

President's Corner

Ryan Thomas

I hope everyone's 2009 is off to a great start. This is going to be a big year for Hop Barley and the Alers. Our 20th Dredhop is just over a month away, and this one will be our biggest and best yet. At the meeting this month we will be asking for volunteers to help with all facets of the competition. Please think about how you would like to contribute. We need judges, stewards, sorters, transporters, prize gatherers, mailers, and more. This is the biggest and oldest local competition, and our 20th will take it to new heights.

At February's meeting we will be doing mock judging. This will be a good chance to see what to expect if you are new to judging and a good refresher if you are an experienced judge. It's also a great opportunity to get some feedback about beers you plan to enter. If you are trying to decide between multiple beers in the same style, bring them all and see how they compare.

This month at our meeting we will also be focusing on a technical topic – water. Water is the biggest single ingredient in beer, accounting for 90% or more of almost all recipes. The mineral content of your brewing water helps to determine what styles of beer you can brew successfully, and to brew outside those styles you really need to know how to calculate what adjustments are required. I'll be giving an in-depth look at the important minerals, how they affect brewing, and how to change your water with the addition of brewing salts. We will also look at some of the tools available to make the calculations easier.

A new Hop Barley member, Rick Hagerbaumer, will also be speaking to us about beer and homebrewing podcasts. Rick does his own podcast, and covers a wide variety of topics and events. He'll also let us know what other podcasts are out there that we should be listening to. My thanks go out to Rick for volunteering to share his passion for beer with us. If you have a topic that you'd like to tell us about, please let me know.

Matthew Anderson will be telling us about Belgian and French beers, and will surely have some excellent commercial examples for us to sample. We will also have the Red Group providing food, and the Green Group providing beer. This month we will also be reorganizing the color groups for the year, so make sure to pay your dues and get a new color group assignment from Deb. Dues this year will be \$30 for singles, \$35 for the whole family.

That's it from me this month. Hope to see you all on Tuesday.

Cheers!

Ryan

Vice President's Corner

Oh Where, Oh Where Has My Bière de Garde Gone?

By Matthew Anderson

When we look Category 16, Belgian and French Ale, in the Beer Judge Certification Program (BJCP) Style Guidelines many of us focus on the Belgian Ale and unfortunately overlook the French. French food and wine are renowned the world over; therefore, one might assume they know a thing or two about pleasing the palate in general. And Bière de Garde is evidence the French know how to please the palate when it comes to beer as well. Bière de Garde is a style you occasionally read about and if you're lucky you'll catch a glimpse of one at the store. And its relative obscurity is probably the reason it intrigues me and it is definitely the reason I picked it for this article.

The English translation for Bière de Garde is "beers to keep." It was traditionally brewed in the early spring and kept, or lagered, in cellars for consumption during the summer. These farmhouse ales originating in Northern France are similar to a Saison; however, according to the BJCP Style Guidelines, they are rounder, richer, sweeter, more malt-focused than a Saison and have a "cellar" character. Additionally, they lack the spicy, tartness of a Saison. Some of these differences are due to a cool fermentation to suppress ester formation and a period of cold maturation. Bière de Garde has three variations: blond (blonde), amber (ambrée), and brown (brune). All variations are malt-focused, but paler versions have slightly more hop character.

The beer we will sample at the January club meeting is Lost Abbey Avante Garde. It is a Bière de Garde of the blonde variety and the Port Brewing Company describes it as "Deep gold in color with hints of biscuits, caramel and fresh baked bread." I usually try to have two examples, but due to this beer's relative obscurity I was only able to find one commercial example. Additionally, the number of published recipes is fairly limited. I wanted to provide one complete all-grain and one complete extract recipe, but this month I'm going to have to simply leave you with some general recipe guidelines from Farmhouse Ales by Phil Markowski. Experiment with your own recipes and next time you're at your favorite liquor store express interest in seeing Bière de Garde on the shelf.

Recipe Guidelines

75.00% Pilsner Malt

15.00% Munich Malt

5.00% Special Aromatic Malt

3.50% Carmel Vienna Malt

1.20% Amber/Biscuit Malt

0.30% Kiln Black Malt

Bittering Hops: Brewers Gold or Fuggle Hops (20 – 22 IBU)

Flavor Hops: Strisselspalt or Hallertauer (9 grams / 5 gallons)

Optional White Sugar – Up to 8% by Extract

Yeast Recommendation: German Ale or Kölsch Yeast

Original Specific Gravity: 1.060 – 1.080

Final Specific Gravity: 1.008 – 1.016

International Bitterness Units: 18 – 28

SRM: 6 – 19

Alcohol by Volume: 6.0 – 8.5%

Bibliography

Beer Judge Certification Program (BJCP) Style Guidelines 2008 Edition, Pages 48 – 49.

Jackson, Michael, "Let Them Drink Beer" The Beer Hunter 1998, www.beerhunter.com/documents/19133-000051.html.

Markowski, Phil, "Farmhouse Ales: Culture and Craftsmanship in the Belgian Tradition,"
Brewers Publications 2004, pp. 29 – 91.

Events Calendar

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

Day	1/27/2009	2/24/2009	3/24/2009	4/28/2009
Red Group	Food	Setup/Cleanup	Beer	Relax
Orange Group	Relax	Food	Setup/ Cleanup	Beer
Green Group	Beer	Relax	Food	Setup/Cleanup
Blue Group	Setup/Cleanup	Beer	Relax	Food

One brew per group will be reimbursed. Save your receipts.

Announcements

- Don't forget to renew your memberships! We will be accepting payments at Tuesday meeting so you might want to bring your checkbooks.
- We still need volunteers for DredHop in March.
- New color groups are coming!

Color Groups – Please bring your recipe along with your beer and tell us about it! And *Please coordinate with your group as there will be a \$75 max limit on reimbursable food per meeting. Please see the treasurer in an unusual circumstance.*

HBA Club Meeting at the Masonic Lodge

The Masonic Lodge is located on the corner of Pine and Broadway, Boulder, Colorado 80303. Additional parking is available at the Lutheran Church.

December 23, 7 PM

Upcoming Beer Styles

January – Belgian/French

February - Big Beers (1.080 and up)*

March – Second runnings*; Historical styles

April - Extract-based beers*

May - Bocks*

June - Pilseners/Light lagers*

July - Amber hybrid*

August - European Amber Lagers*

September - GABF so no judging

October - Belgian strong ales*

November - Cider*

**Club only competitions*

The club sponsors an all-grain and an extract brew from club members each month. The brew should be the style for that month. Bring in a receipt and you will be reimbursed. It is that easy.

First Friday Out

February -- We will make an announcement about time and location.

Upcoming Beer Events

DredHop -- March 7 at Falling Rock in Denver (plus we need volunteer help in days leading up to it)

