

Froth

The Newsletter of the Brewers of Central Kentucky

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July/August 1999

DOES YOUR BREWERY HAVE A SPICE RACK?

by Mark Roberts

While brewing root beer and bottling "Wry Wit" (that's another story, only don't add 4.5 lbs. of Weisenberger Mills organic hard whole wheat flour to anything unless you enjoy stuck mashes), I came to the realization that Fred the Shed, my brewhouse, is developing a nice spice rack.

You know, before hops became the dominant additive in beer, all sorts of herb/spice combinations were used. You name it and it was in beer. A few beers today still have herbs/spices as the predominant flavor (wit beer—orange & coriander—for example). And herbs add a million more possible flavor combinations. Many of them are surprisingly good. Tim Black made a southern India curry beer I still have dreams about, and someone (Kurt?) used black pepper in a beer.

I personally was reluctant to try my first hopless beer. But since I made the leap, I now have a selection of spices that I use regularly. Hops still are my favorite herb and they do fight the bad bacteria guys who live in homebrew better than most herbs. Still, sometimes you just want that extra flavor, so here's my regular selection:

Curacau orange peel (bitter), sweet gale (or bog myrtle, bitter and said to

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Next Meeting
Wed., August 11
Lexington Brewing
Company

THIS ONE IS FOR THE LADIES

Editor's Note: This article is being rewritten from an article that appeared in the Dec./Jan. '99 issue of Working Woman Magazine.

Fifteen years ago, when the Geary family invested in a brewery in Scotland, they realized they might be missing an opportunity back home in Maine. Microbreweries were all the rage on the West Coast at the time, yet the local market was still untapped. Thus was born the Geary Brewing Company. As a taster there for five years, daughter Kelly takes pride in the flavor of her prize-winning Hampshire Ale Special. We also like its logo: "Only available when the weather sucks."

What are the worst beer-taste problems?

Metallic, stringent, bitter flavors indicate an improper pH level. Salty is a problem. If you order a beer and it has a fruity or sulfuric taste, the tap lines are dirty. If it has an apple flavor, it wasn't fermented right. When a beer sits too long, small grains of sediment will form. If anything is floating in there, the beer is probably stale.

Has your sense of taste become more refined?

When I taste spaghetti sauce, the basil and oregano really jump out at me. I'm a better cook for it.

Why does beer have such a guy reputation?

Women have only emerged as a force in the past 20 years. A lot of people still think it's only the man who has a beer after work, but I know a lot of women who suck down a lot of beer.

What do you drink after work?

My diet consists of Guinness Stout in the pressurized cans and Geary's Pale Ale. I enjoy beer very much. As a rule, I don't drink anything else.

When the smell makes the back of my tongue water, I know it's good beer.

FRED THE SHED'S "BUGGRUB"

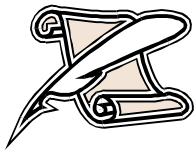
by Mark Roberts

What is Buggrub? Well, I guessed that's how you would pronounce B.H.G.R.B. (Belgian high-gravity root beer).

It all started when Mr. Cromwell challenged me to come up with a root beer recipe that would have some kick, as in pre-Prohibition fermented traditional root beer. He suspected I would take the bait. Well, he knows me reasonably well. A little research, some shopping and some just plain creativity resulted in the following recipe.

First, pour 5 qts. boiling water over 6 oz. of sassafras root bark (at the Good Food's Coop it's \$39.59/lb. so find someone with some trees), 6 oz. wintergreen (I had to substitute about 20 drops of pure wintergreen oil), and 3/4 tsp. each of cinnamon and nutmeg. After about 20 minutes, strain off the liquid into your kettle. I assume you do not want to actually boil the root

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Scribes Scribbles

I'm feeling uninspired. Summer is winding down. I think I still have jet lag from all the vacationing and roadrunning we've done. First my apologies for slacking a bit with the newsletter. I have no excuse. I guess I drank to much beer and had to much fun. But I've been to some interesting places and drank some excellent microbrewed beer while chasing the sunset. If you are ever in Anaheim, CA make sure you stop by J. T. Schmidts. Best quesadillas ever and quite possibly the best blonde ale as well.

Second, when in Rome, do as the Romans do. Go exploring. Get out and try the local offerings. One of the best nights out I've had in a long time was at Alcatraz Brewing Company. The Golden Gate Bridge was a hoot.

I've enjoyed my summer adventures to the fullest. I made sure to top each one off with a full head of local fare.

*Sincerely,
Krista Alexander*

Brewers of Central Kentucky Financial Report

For four months ended April 30, 1999

Income

Dues	\$ 400.00
Hats and Shirts	15.00
	<u>280.00</u>
Total Income	695.00

Expenses

Postage	86.00
Printing	62.00
Special Events	50.00
Miscellaneous	<u>49.00</u>
Total Expense	265.50

Income in Excess of Expenses 429.50

Cash Balance

Beginning	936.24
Ending	\$1,365.75

100 Shares Lexington Brewing Company \$ 500.00

First Time To Experience B.O.C.K

If you would like to join us, we meet on the second Wednesday of every month. We'll meet on **Aug. 11** and **Sept. 8**. You will find us at Lexington Brewing Co., 900 W. Maxwell St. Bring a glass and some homebrew (or a good commercial beer) to share. Be sure to let us know it's your first meeting so we can be on our best behavior. We'll swap stories and brew, raffle doorprizes, and have a great time!



Froth

A publication of the Brewers of Central Kentucky

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BREW HOUSE PALE ALE

Reviewed by Mark Roberts

Brew House Pale Ale is not an extract, according to the brochure. It's simple to make beer and it's sterile. The kit's about \$30 retail, but you don't need hops or grains. (Wait, did I hear someone say "Right.")

Here's all you do: You sterilize a carboy or fermenter bucket. You open the handy tap (like on those delicious box wines) and let her pour into the fermenter. The with a sterilized spoon you stir in the "pH adjuster" which is a white powder of unknown content (although a quick snort did not result in disco fever—no I didn't do really do that, but it sounded good).

Then, the hard part, you pitch yeast. That's all there is to it.

The results? 96 percent of club members at the May meeting rated it "had better." There was one "okay beer" and my personal vote "sucks."

So what is the problem. First, I dare say a donated raffle item has some age on it. Quite a bit by my taste buds. Second, I believe they tamper with the pH to keep it sterile in the bag. Fine. But unless the "adjuster" gets mixed in really good, it tastes a bit acidic. Finally, after some age and extreme cooling, it turned into a not-quite-better-than-Bud lawnmower beer. I almost dumped it out, but it did have the lawnmower quality. No boiling? Hah, some steeped grains and at least a minimum boil with hops could have made it better.

Recommendation: Take control. With extract, some speciality grains and some hops, you can add variety and richer flavor components. Don't let someone sell you 15 minute no effort beer unless you live in a dorm room and carry a really heavy class schedule.

OCTOBERFEST/MARZEN

by Tony Aiken

Here is my recipe and notes for an Octoberfest/Marzen I made this winter. It uses a combination of no sparge and decoction techniques, which is not as complicated as it might sound.

For base malt, you'll notice, I used 2-row Briess (which was about 18 month old) and a Czech Pils malt. I think the Moravizn malt added to the flavor but I don't think that is critical. Just substitute 7 more pounds of domestic 2-row and go for it.

Despite the large grain bill, this is a 5 gallon recipe. I wanted to keep the grist to water ratio at about 1.5 qtrs. per pound of grain. When I was formulating the recipe I realized that with the decoction's 2 boils, I was going to lose a lot more liquid than I would with a infusion mash. I guessed at how much water I wanted and worked backwards to calculate the amount of grain I would need. I am sure I wasted a lot of frementables, but I am very please with the results.

A slight complication with the no sparge technique and its accompanying large grain bill, is that you will probably want to adjust the pre-boil gravity of the wort. This means cooling the wort to 68 degrees F., or adjusting the hydrometer reading to correct for 150 degree wort. When I did this the first time I did not have a chart that didn't show corrections for temperatures above 100 degrees. I guessed wrong, and ended up with a little less yield than I expected. Oh well, live, learn, and brew.

A deviation from a conventional decoction regiment is that I divide out the grain for the first decoction prior to doughing-in. This saves time and eliminates having to figure out what is meant by the "thickest third of the mash." This really seemed to simplify the decoction process. Short cutting the first decoction in conjunction with the no sparge technique makes for a comparatively short brew day and a very good beer.

Note that built into the recipe is an additional 6 quart of mash water to

compensate for my mash tun's large false bottom.

- 7.5 lbs Pale malt (2-row Briess)
- 7.0 lbs Pale malt (Moravizn Pils malt)
- 1.5 lbs Medium crystal (Briess)
- 0.75 lbs English caramel
- 1.8 oz Saaz hops
- 0.5 oz Hallertau hops (leaf)
- 1 pk Wyeast 2308 Munich Lager yeast
 - Pitched Wyeast 2308 into 1.050 starter 3 day before brewing.
 - Crack grains.
 - Dough in all specialty grains & 6-1/8 lbs. pale malt with 10-1/3qts., 98 degrees F. water into preheated mash tun.
 - In decoction kettle, dough-in remaining 8-1/3lbs. of base malt with 8-1/3qts. of water.
 - Rest temperatures should be 93 degrees F.
 - Rest for 20 minutes.
 - Step grains in mash tun to second rest temperature using 9-1/3qts. of 131 degrees F. water.
 - Rest temperature of mash tun should be 122 degrees F.
 - Slowly heat decoction mash (over 20 minutes) to 156 degrees F.
 - Rest for 20 minutes.
 - Raise decoction mash to boil.
 - Boil for 15 minutes.
 - Carefully return decoction mash to main mash tun.

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Webpage Update

Randy Alexander, Webmaster

The past couple of months have been a great period of growth for the homepage. I've added a few more links, updated pages and, the latest thing, added a mailing list for B.O.C.K. Now, if you have a question that you want to pose to the club or have a question that can't wait until the next meeting, post to the mailing list.

I am always updating the webpage and always looking for new ideas. So if you would like to see something different on the web, please let me know.

“Spice Rack” continued from page 1
enhance the intoxicating qualities), coriander, cardamon, cinnamon, juniper berries, caraway, nutmeg, ginger, wintergreen, lemon balm, apple mint, spear mint, pepper mint. And every summer when the basil is in its prime, I think that needs to go in a beer.

Experiment with your spice rack. That’s what homebrewing is all about—taking a walk on the wild side of fermentation.

“BUGGRUB” continued from page 1
bark or you will extract tannins. Now, add 4 lbs. each brown sugar, blackstrap molasses and dark honey. Add about 15-20 cloves and enough water to bring the mixture to 5-5 1/2 gallons. Bring to a boil and boil for 15 minutes or so—you’re just trying to sterilize the wort here.

Cool to yeast pitching temperature and pitch the yeast of your choice. I started to go with California Com-

mon, which would have had a nice clean taste and would have left significant residual sweetness. But then I thought, hey, I want some serious primitive down and dirty complex fruity fermentation here. I had an old Belgian Abbey I yeast pack. It didn’t expand to my satisfaction, so I slapped a pack of Abbey II and pitched them both.

The original gravity was 1.088. The Abbey brothers ferment 72-77% so I am estimating a final gravity of 1.024, with some decent residual sweetness, but about 8% alcohol by volume. Those bizarre Belgian flavors (bubblegum/fruitiness/tartness) should add to this herbal brew. It’s got to be better than the 15-minute beer in a box, right? And if my wort tasting gave a solid clue, it will in fact be root BEER.

Octoberfest/Marzen from page 3

- Rest temperature should be 152 degrees F.
 - Rest for 25 minutes.
 - Remove to decoction kettle thinnest 1/2 of mash.
 - Bring decoction mash to boil.
 - Boil for 20 minutes.
 - Carefully return decoction mash to main mash tun.
 - Rest temperature should be 165 degrees F.
 - Vorlauf.
 - Drain mash tun to brew kettle.
 - Adjust gravity of pre-boiled wort to 1.050 (I added 6 quarts of water to adjust the pre-boil gravity, however, I am not sure what the pre-boil gravity was because I used the wrong temperature correction value when I was doing the adjustment.)
 - 90 minute boil
 - Saaz @ 60 minutes
 - Hallertau @ 5 minutes
- Original gravity was 1.070. Final gravity was 1.015.

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