

*“All the Brews
that’s fit to
print!”*



THE BREW NOTE

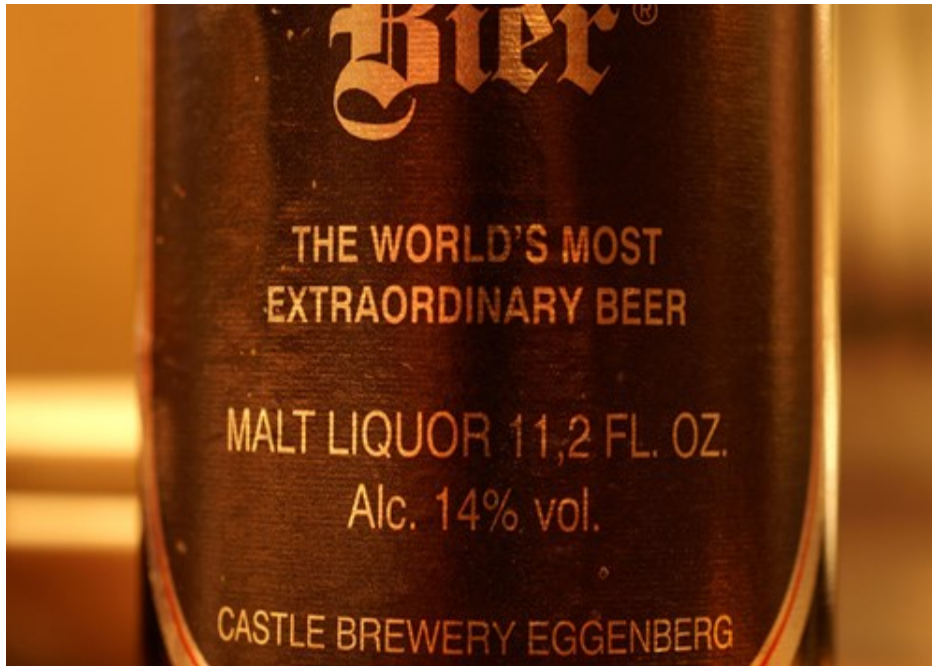
December 2014

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Beer History: Christmas Beer

Dec 23, 2011 9:30AM

Lisa Grimm BEER HISTORY BLOGGER



A Christmas classic: Samichlaus. [Photograph: Hyougushi on Flickr]

While the recent history of Christmas beers is rather marketing-driven, both in the US and around the world, the tradition of brewing special beers for this time of year draws on a number of deeper traditions.

The Scandinavian countries have, perhaps, the strongest claim in this regard. The Vikings enjoyed a strong, malty beer during their Jul—or Yule—celebrations: their December 21st festivities involved them 'drinking Jul,' with drafts offered up to Odin, Frey and the other Norse gods.

In fact, even after Christianity became the official religion, brewing Christmas beer was enshrined in law: Norway's King Haakon I ('The Good', c. 920-961) decreed that each household must brew a measure of beer for Jul, now moved several days and rolled into Christmas. The tradi-

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Vegetable**

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Specialty Spiced Beer**

tion was further reinforced by the Gulathing Laws, written down in the 13th century (though probably established long before), which not only required each peasant household to brew a Christmas beer and hold something of a party, but it outlined specific penalties for failing to do so—fines and a loss of property were possibilities for those shirking their brewing responsibilities.

Sweden and Denmark, with their shared Viking beginnings, were equally enthusiastic about their holiday brewing and drinking, both from that early period until recent times—indeed, the Swedes were among the first Europeans to bring a Christmas beer tradition to North America in the 17th century.

Commercial production of Scandinavian Christmas beers only began in earnest in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, but the story continues today; modern Scandinavian brewers, even those that produce little beyond fairly generic lagers the rest of the year, continue to brew Julebryg and Juleøl for Christmas—or for a Jul revival.

The Scandinavian Christmas brewing phenomenon did not go unnoticed elsewhere; in 1804, an anonymous British correspondent noted Scandinavian holiday brewing traditions as outside the wider European norm: the Christmas beer, which had been brewed in October, was 'pleasing to the palate, but heady.'

Of course, strong holiday beer was not actually new to Britain—it had been memorialized in song by 1681. 'The Merry Boys of Christmas; Or, The Milk-Maid's New Year's Gift' celebrated having a strong Christmas beer (or several)—and special Christmas beers were not unknown to 19th century commercial brewers in Britain.

Though there are many modern Belgian Christmas beers, one of the country's most famous exports, Stella Artois, has lost much of its original seasonal luster. While modern marketing positions the now-ubiquitous lager as coming from a brewery with medieval origins, Stella itself only appeared in 1926, launched as a Christmas beer and named as a nod to the storied Christmas star (the 'Artois' was courtesy of 18th century brewer Sebastianus Artois, who took over Den Horen Brewery in Leuven, Belgium, in 1708). Indeed, more recently that heritage is being played up again, with the release of a Christmas album tie-in, but the pale, golden lager does not, on the whole, match the current stereotype of a dark, malty Christmas beer.

Conversely, a British beer that has become a Christmas tradition began life as something altogether rather different: Young's Winter Warmer was originally a Burton ale, which was much stronger and sweeter than its modern counterpart. While the rise and disappearance of the Burton style is a much longer story, by more recent times, it was often more popular during the winter—not surprisingly, given its strength and 'warming' abilities—so it is not so unusual that it has largely morphed into a Christmas beer—at least for the time being.

Presidential Ponderings

Another successful HHC is in the books. While this year's competition was not as large as the 2013 competition, it was our second largest with 540 entries. I cannot thank Mike Walters enough for the tireless effort he put into running this competition. Thank you to everyone who volunteered to judge or steward and Matt Buck for serving as head judge.

Congratulations to the Brews members who medaled in the competition. We had 20+ members medal in the competition. John Harrison and Troy Bedik took a gold for their German Pilsner and second in BOS. Andy Laidlaw did not disappoint either. He took a gold for a Cyser mead and BOS for Meads and Ciders. Others members who medaled are Ryan Crump, Chris Rahn, Ray Hoffsetter, Tim Lael, Brian Fresenburg, Ray Seals, Dan Stauder the younger, Justin Bosch, Jacob Voss, Dave Daniels and Jeff Muse. My apologies if I missed someone.

The Spiegelau glass demonstration was a huge success. We had a full room for the demo, roughly 80 people. I cannot tell how many compliments we received on the event. It was very informative and eye opening the difference a glass makes. My Spiegelau IPA glass is my new BFF.

The venue for the banquet was very nice. The grand ballroom at the Shrewsbury City Center turned out to be quite spacious. There was plenty of room for everyone. We will be looking at for a return in 2015. Peter MacKercher and Al DeBolin did an excellent job with the main course. We had plenty of prime rib, chicken and pork for everyone to have seconds.

The Brews presented two awards at the banquet. The "Homebrewer of the Year" award to the club member who brewed the best at home. That honor went to Jeff Muse. The "Darrel Cox" award for the person in or out of the club that has contributed the most to the art of homebrewing. This award went to Mike Walters. Congratulations to both.

There no rest for the weary. We are already planning the first round of the National Homebrew Competition. It is our first step to securing the National Homebrew Conference in St. Louis. Save the dates of March 27, 28 & 29. We will be updating more later. Other important competitions to add to your schedule are Garage Brewers Society Champion of the Pint on February 7. GBS gave us quite a bit of help for our competition so let's reciprocate. We also have Microfest competition to plan in April or May.

In 2015 the Club will celebrate our 30th Anniversary. There a number of ideas I have to celebrate the milestone. One item is getting a collaboration with a brewery. We are in negotiations at the moment and will have more details when they become available. If anyone has any ideas and would like to share please contact me. Here's to looking forward to great 2015!

Tim

Lord of the Brews

Perhaps the most famous modern Christmas beer is Samichlaus, which began life in Zurich in 1980. Its birth is a reminder of how far beer has come in the past thirty-odd years, not just in terms of variety, but from a scientific perspective.

The beer, named after the local version of Santa Claus, was once the strongest lager in the world; it's 14(ish)% ABV was only possible because the Hürlimann brewery had developed yeasts capable of surviving at such high gravity—something that seems almost commonplace (although still technically difficult) in today's brewing scene. The beer disappeared after the 1996 vintage, but returned in 2000, with a move to the Eggenberg brewery in Austria. They continue to brew the beer once a year, on December 6th, and they maintain the original method of aging the beer for nearly a year before bottling for its Christmas release.

So when you enjoy a Christmas beer this year, think back to some of those that came before it —or go 'full Viking' and make your own!

From SeriousEats.com

Competitions

Boneyard Brewoff

Date: Jan 17

Location: Champaign, IL

Entry fee: \$7 for the first entry, \$5 for each subsequent entry

URL: <http://www.buzzbrewclub.org/competition>

Registration opens: Dec 26

Registration closes: January 6

Entries due: Jan 2-Jan 13 (judge walk-ins allowed)

No more than two entries per entrant per BJCP category

Upper Mississippi Mashout

MCAB Qualifier

Registration opens: Dec 12

Registration closes: Dec 31

Date: Jan 24

Location: St. Paul, MN

URL: <https://mashout.org/index.html>

Entry Fee: \$7/entry

Entry Deadline: Jan 10



BeerSmith Home Brewing News

Dry Hopping: Enhanced Hops Aroma

Dry hopping is a great way to enhance the hoppy aroma of your home brewed beer. Real hopheads will tell you that in addition to boil and late hop additions, adding dry hops is a preferred technique for preserving a burst of delicate hop aroma for IPAs and other hoppy beers.

Hops are normally added during the boil to extract alpha acids that provide the bitter flavor needed to offset sweet barley malt in beer. Brewers also use late hop additions in the last 5-10 minutes of the boil to enhance aroma, but even this technique loses some aromatic oils that evaporate rapidly in the boil.

Dry Hopping

Dry hopping involves adding hops to the fermenter or keg after fermentation. Dry hops add no bitterness to the beer, but the technique does add fragile aromatic oils that are normally lost in the boiling process. Dry hops are allowed to soak in the finished beer for anywhere from several days to several weeks. The result is a burst of hoppy aroma.

Commercial craft brewers use dry hopping to enhance their beer including Anchor Liberty, Samuel Adams Pale Ale and Sierra Nevada celebration. Many drinkers prefer the distinctly floral hop aroma that dry hopping adds. On the con side, some drinkers perceive a "grassy" or "oily" flavor from dry hopping. The technique is appropriate for brewing beer styles with high hop rates such as IPAs, Pale Ales, some Stouts and California Common (Steam) beer.

Dry Hop Selection

The first question that arises when dry hopping is which hops to use? Aromatic

Next meeting: December 11, 2014 7:00 PM

Please note different location for this month:

Kirkwood Community Center

It is located at 111 S. Geyer Rd, Kirkwood, MO 63122



hops with low alpha rates (6% or less) are considered preferable because these hops have a higher percentage of fragile aromatic hop oils needed for dry hopping. All of the noble hops as well as most of the low alpha aromatic varieties are appropriate.

Examples include: Saaz, Tettnanger, Hallertauer, Goldings, Fuggles, Cascade and Willamette. You should select a hops that matches the origin and beer style - an English Goldings hops might be appropriate for an English Ale or India Pale Ale for instance.

The next question is what form of hops to use: pellets, plugs or whole hops? Plug or pellet hops are generally preferred, especially for those using a glass carboy with a narrow neck. Getting whole hops in and out of the fermenter can be difficult. Pellet hops can cause some foaming when adding because, much like diet coke and mentos, the pellets have a large surface area that promotes nucleation of the CO₂ left from fermentation.

Some purists prefer plug hops as they fear that the extra processing and compression of pellet hops may have an effect on the delicate hop oils and aroma. Personally I have noticed no significant difference between plug and pellet hops when dry hopping.

The amount of hops to use is largely a matter of preference. Between 1 and 2 oz (28-55g) per 5 gallons (19 L) is considered a moderate amount. Less can certainly be used if you are shooting for a mild floral aromatic, and true hopheads use as much as 4 oz of hops for 5 gallons for a burst of aroma.

Dry Hopping Methods

When should one add hops to the beer, and for how long? Some brewers add dry hops during primary fermentation, but most agree this can result in loss of precious hop aromas due to the steady stream of CO₂ bubbling out of the fermenter.

The appropriate time to add dry hops is after primary fermentation has complet-

ed. Adding dry hops to the secondary maximizes the exposure without risking volatile aromas. A third option is to add dry hops directly to the keg, but this can result in some "grassy" flavors from overexposure as the hops may remain in the keg for months.

Some brewers use a mesh bag to make it easier to contain the hops and make them easier to separate from the beer later. Others merely separate the beer from hops carefully when siphoning later. Pellets tend to sink after a while, while whole hops and plugs tend to float. Obviously a bag is required for kegging your hops to keep the hops from plugging the keg.

The duration of dry hopping also varies widely. An exposure of several days is the minimum needed to extract aromatic oils. Most brewers dry hop for around 3 days. Those that add hops to a keg may leave the hops in contact with the beer for months. Some fear overexposure will add a "grassy" flavor, but I've never had a significant problem with this. However, current thinking is that you should avoid extended dry hop periods.

An extra ounce or two added to the secondary can add a great burst of flavor for IPAs and other hoppy styles!

Thank you again for your continued support!

Cheers,

Brad Smith

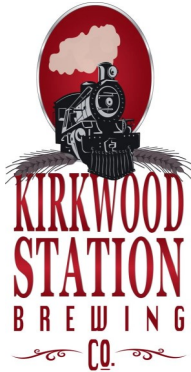
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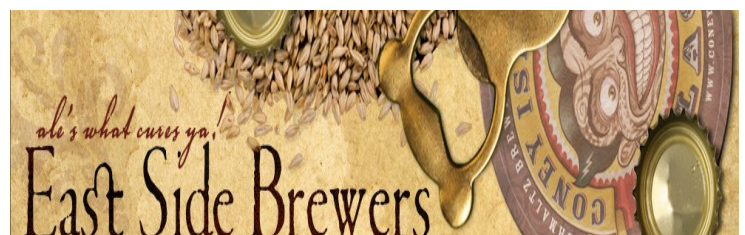
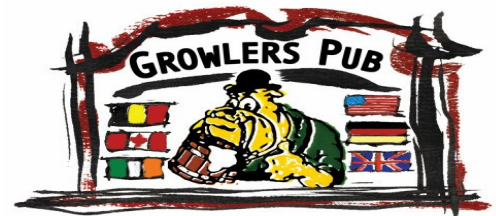
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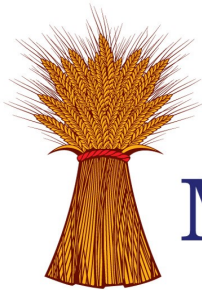


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