

Next club meeting

HVHB April 11 8:00 pm The Derby

Beer of the Month: American IPA 21A

The Derby

96 Main Street, Poughkeepsie, 12601

April 11, 2018

8:00 pm

(Second Wednesday)

<https://www.facebook.com/TheDerbyPoughkeepsie>

(845) 452-3232

Club officers:

President - Jon Fry

Vice President - Kevin Drozinski

Treasurer – Brian Jameson

Sargent at arms – Justin Lomas

Communications Secretary- Hilon Potter

Recording Secretary - Phil Van Itallie

Upcoming EVENTS on page 3



The Derby

Minutes of March club meeting at The Derby

The March 14, 2018 Hudson Valley Home Brewers meeting was held at The Derby in Poughkeepsie.

Justin Lomas poured the evening's beers:

Beer 1 - Rich Rang - Hopped Cider. Rich made a cider using 1 ounce of cascade hops. He said that he wanted to do more clarification (and even did a second addition of yeast) but each time the cider only cleared to halfway down the carboy. Someone suggested that one needs to add two kinds of clarification agents, one with negatively charged ions and one with positively charged ions.

Beer 2 - Sweet Action by Six Point -- 5% ABV. This was an example of a commercial blond ale. It was described as a fruity blend blend of lager and pale ale with mid-style bitterness.

Beer 3 - Altbier by Josh Youngman. It featured German hops and Munich pils; it was a mix of lager and ale, using ale yeast and fermentation starting at 58 degrees. A 2-liter yeast starter was used to make a 5-liter starter which was used for a 5-gallon batch.

Beer 4 - Kevin Drozinski brought his Pretty Big Sour - He used one lactose tablet per gallon in his 5-gallon batch. He used S05 yeast; he added some sliced English cucumbers after fermentation had started.

Beer 5 - Jon Fry made a small 6% ABV Belgium style beer. He wanted a starter for a much bigger beer (12% ABV) and wanted to try to "use" the starter as a finished beer. He ramped up the fermenting temperature: 64 for 3-days, 68 for 5-days and finishing at 70 degrees for a week. Jon noted that he had the vast majority of active fermentation in the second and third day.

There was discussion of whether it is possible to have too much yeast. It appeared that, for a homebrewer, it is unlikely to have too much yeast. A packet of dry and a container of liquid yeast is sized for about 5-gallons and doubling or tripling is not a concern -- it may even be

beneficial. However, a commercial brewery could have a problem with excessive yeast at the bottom of a conical container due to too much pressure blocking the movement of CO2 and possibly rupturing the vessel.

Beer 6 - Josh Youngman brought his Peanut butter and Jelly Stout (without the jelly). He used a full jar of peanut butter powder, added on the third day of fermentation to a 5-gallon batch. The commercial beer Sweet Baby Jesus uses hazelnut flavoring rather than peanut butter.

Beer 7 - Jon Fry brought his starter for an imperial stout. This was also a way to make enough "small" beer to have a 5-gallon batch and use for a starter for a larger 12% ABV later. Jon used the dry S05 yeast and three different dark malts, a 200, a 300 and some 500. He said that he used acidified sparge water.

Competition Results

Results are now posted at www.hvhomebrewers.com/competition

Several HVHB club members won prizes in this year's competition.

- o Josh Youngman - Best in Show (BOS) Beer, German Pils, 3rd Euro Amber, 3rd Strong Euro Lager, 2nd Stout, 1st Pilsner
- o Eric Wassmuth - Honorable Mention in BOS Barleywine, 2nd Strong Euro Lager, 3rd IPA, 2nd Pilsner, 1st and 2nd Strong Ale, 3rd Sour/Wild
- o Phil Van Itallie - 2nd Bier de Garde
- o Daniele Chianese - 1st Fruit
- o Jonathan Fry - Best in Show Cider/Mead, Sweet Sack Mead, 3rd Mead

Jon Fry distributed examples of "good" and "bad" score sheets. There is an informal rule of thumb that there should be one suggestion for improvement for each drop of 5-points from the top score of 50.

When filling bottles for a competition from a properly carbonated keg, it was suggested that one should slightly over carbonate to make up losses while doing a bottle fill.

Treasurers report

Brian Jameson said the competition netted \$2156.71 after about \$1900 in expenses. The net was about \$2300 in 2017. There were fewer entries this year.

Beverage Elements is offering \$10 off \$100 to club members for a limited time.

Other competitions

The National Homebrewers Competition will be held in New York City April 6-8. Entries are no longer being accepted.

Ocean State Homebrewers (OSH) judging will commence on March 24 and 25. They award stipends for certified judges and their assistants -- this is held in Pawtucket, RI.

Judging for the Essex Junction, VT competition is May 5. Entries must be submitted by April 12.

Josh Youngman has agreed to run a beer competition at Stormville Airport and Flee Market. Judging will be held before the food festival on Saturday June 9, There are no entry fees. Awards will be across all entries for 1st, 2nd, 3rd and Best of Show.

Monica Metty said that beer contributions and pourers are needed for a local competition and fund raiser on March 25.

The club has been asked if it would be willing to run a Beer, Bourbon and Bacon Festival on June 30 at the Dutchess County Fairgrounds. Contact Jon Fry if you would be interested in running the competition and rounding up coordinators. The festival asks competitors to bring a keg and let the people at the fairgrounds judge.

Jon said that he wants to establish some committees to work of club development.

Because there was no "beer in the pipeline" for the April beer of the month style (German Leichtbier), it was decided to use American IPA instead (from May) to switch to Mead in May using entries from the 2018 competition as samples.

There are still many members delinquent with their dues. Please see Brian if you are uncertain.

50/50 raised \$36 for the club; Phil and Monica Metty had the winning ticket.

Raffles for other raffle prizes included StarSan (3 for \$10), PBW (2 for \$10) and gift cards from Half Time, Texas Home Brewing and a Sunday, April 29 TAPNY ticket.

The Club has a number of PBW and Star San canisters available at a discount. Contact Josh Youngman or Phil Metty.

All of our events are publicized on Facebook - if you want to stay in the loop with club activities please visit <https://www.facebook.com/hvhomebrewers>

The club gets some money if you click on an Amazon link from the club website.

www.hvhomebrewers.com or

<https://www.amazon.com/?&tag=HUDSOVALLEHOM-20&camp=216797&creative=493977&linkCode=ur1&adid=0452K58TDKXXCSFAV84H&>

Upcoming Event(s):

| | |
|-----------|---|
| April 4-6 | NHC Competition first round judging in NYC |
| June 9 | Stormville Airport's Food Truck and Craft Beer Festival |
| June 22 | Night of the Funk, Boston |

2018 meetings and beers of the month (with 2015 style guideline identifiers)

| <u>Date</u> | <u>Style</u> | <u>Location</u> |
|-------------|-----------------------------|------------------|
| April 11 | American IPA 21A | To be determined |
| May 9 | Mead | To be determined |
| June 13 | Cream Ale 1C | To be determined |
| July 11 | Biere de Garde 24 | To be determined |
| Aug 8 | Specialty IPA 21B | To be determined |
| Sept 12 | Vienna Lager 7A | To be determined |
| Oct10 | Belgian Dark Strong Ale 26D | To be determined |
| Nov 14 | Annual Dinner (No botm) | To be determined |
| Dec 12 | Baltic Porter 9C | To be determined |

DRAFT

Debating the "Pandora's box" of mixing beers

BY KATE BERNOT March 16, 2018

<http://draftmag.com/mixing-beers-combinations/>

The writer describes tap rooms in Alberta, Canada in which servers offered to mix beers from different taps. The writer was surprised.

With some research, it was found that mixing styles isn't something new. The British beer historian and author Ron Pattinson, who said that the custom of combining beers began much before the Black and Tans and Snakebites we know.

"As far as you go back, people have always mixed beer," he says. "It's normally for reasons of economy, really. They had a beer they really liked but couldn't afford to drink all the time."

"The young people with beards who drink craft beer, they don't mind drinking a beer that looks like orange juice but they'd never dream of mixing their beers."

The Oxford English Dictionary lists the first citation of "Black and Tan" to describe a beer that's half darker beer, half lighter beer in a slang dictionary from 1889. Beer mixes predates World War I, though the practice is best documented from the 19th century on. Some motivations were economic, as with the mixing of half a bottle of beer with half a draft beer during World War I, when draft beer quality was middling at best but bottled beer was still expensive to drink exclusively ... hence, the fifty-fifty split.

But flavor considerations were also a factor. Mixing an old ale with a bitter (called a Mother-In-Law, zing!) wouldn't have been a price-based decision, since both styles would have been nearly equal in cost. Drinkers just liked the way it tasted.

These days, though, Pattinson said the beer-combination custom is on the wane in Britain, as the styles used to make the classics (mild, bitter, porter, etc.) are becoming less common on draft. The rise of more American styles in the British beer world and the development of a younger craft beer culture have created something of a disdain for the practice.

"The young people with beards who drink craft beer, they don't mind drinking a beer that looks like orange juice but they'd never dream of mixing their beers," he says.

Mixing beer isn't super common in the States these days, though a few taprooms and bars encourage the practice. Among them is Broken Compass Brewing Co. in Breckenridge, Colorado, where "mix tapes," as the brewery's dubbed them, are a common order from regulars. Before the brewery had even opened, owner/brewer David "Ax" Axelrod was interested in making a mole stout, so he began roughly mixing his chili pepper pale ale and his coffee chocolate stout in various ratios until he nailed the right level of chili pepper kick. From there, a tradition was born.

Now, taproom staff and customers are in on it, too, requesting their own combinations and tinkering with the tap list. Recent favorites include a half coconut porter, half chocolate coffee stout mix invented by Axelrod's girlfriend, Kristin, and the "chill-pah": chile pepper pale with just a dash of IPA.

So though he's proud of how his beers taste as-is, Axelrod certainly doesn't mind customers and staff playing around with his creations.

"There are certainly people that get all puritanical on beers but that's what the Reinheitsgebot is for. If you want that, go to Germany," he says. "I certainly respect someone's expression of a style or their vision, but we wouldn't have the craft movement if people didn't start playing around with different recipes and designs."

Pub Dog, a small pizza-and-brewpub chain with locations around Baltimore, Maryland, has gone a step further: All locations, since 2003, have served a menu of "Half Breeds," or mixes of their house-brewed beers. Options include the Bloodhound (half Irish stout, half raspberry ale), the Smooth Dog (half IPA, half nut brown) and the Beagle (half peach ale, half nut brown). Customers often make their own, too, incorporating the two seasonal beers on draft.

"We've had great success with it. I think people enjoy being able to make their own beers. Our environment, as opposed to some other brewpubs, we find it fun and interesting," says Pub Dog marketing manager Caitlin Fisher. "We've embraced mixing the whole beer thing."

Not everyone has. I came across a seven-year-old [blog post](#) ("screed" could also be used here) written by Michael O'Connor, who at the time was the beer manager and buyer at Bailey's Taproom in Portland, Oregon. (He's since left that position to work on other projects, but still bartends at Bailey's once a week.)

In the post, titled "The Sin of Mixing," O'Connor writes: "Sometimes, when you've had a few drinks, you do something you really regret... something that will haunt you until your dying days. This happened to me yesterday when I... I... mixed beers!"

The Frankenstein he created was half a North Coast Old Rasputin on nitro with half Six Rivers Raspberry Lambic.

He goes on: "Every beer snob worth their cirrhosed liver knows that you don't take a masterpiece beer and dilute it with another. That's the act of a vandal, a scourge, a... an Englishman."

After bemoaning the outcome—"The lambic and stout mixture was certainly not repulsive, but nowhere near as good as the beers by themselves"—he offers a warning to others never to follow down such a dark path.

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Sixpoint Brewery

Brooklyn, NY [Best of Show Award]

Bull And Barrel Brewpub

Brewster, NY [Brewer's Choice Award]

Maltose Express

Monroe, CT

Barley Hops And Grapes

Red Hook, NY

Brew It!

Somers, NY

Cornell's Brew Shop

East Chester, NY

Half Time Beverage

Poughkeepsie, NY / Mamaroneck, NY

Homebrew Emporium

USA

Pantanos Beer And Wine

New Paltz, NY

Competition photos by Phil Metty



Donated prizes



Checking strong ale evaluation sheets



First round judging





Best of Show Judging



Testing beers brought in for lunch

Hudson Valley

Hudson Valley Magazine's "March Madness" Predictions

Which brewery will be voted best in the Hudson Valley?

BY DAVID LEVINE *Published: 03/02/2018*

<http://www.hvmag.com/Hudson-Valley-Magazine/March-2018/Our-March-Madness-Predictions/>

If you're the type of person who loves this time of year, it's probably not because of the weather. It's because of the NCAA basketball tournament. Here at First Draft Headquarters, we thought it would be fun to craft an online craft beer competition. There were 32 breweries to start, which was whittled to our Sweet 16, the Great 8, and of course, our Final Four.

Go to <http://www.hvmag.com/Hudson-Valley-Magazine/March-2018/Hoppy-March-Madness/>

Throughout March, the final two polls will be administered, and the winner crowned. Who will that be? Here's our Fearless Forecast:

Semifinal 1: Brown's Brewing Company vs. Keegan Ales

These two veterans of the Valley brewing scene have been crafting award-winning brews for so long, they might be the North Carolina and Duke of Valley brewers. Brown's Brewing pretty much launched the current Hudson Valley craft boom — not to mention the resurgence of Troy's downtown — in 1993, and owners Garry and Kelly Brown have mentored many brewers since then (and opened a North Hoosick location, too). They are still considered one of the elite breweries in the Northeast, prized especially for the Oatmeal Stout (World Beer Cup Gold Medal) and the Pale Ale (Gold Medal from the Culinary Institute of America).

Tommy Keegan joined the scene 10 years after the Browns, and since then Keegan Ales has been named Best Brewery in The Hudson Valley (2009), Best Brewery in New York State (2009), and Best Craft-Brewed Beer in New York State (2009) at the TAP New York Craft Beer and Food Festival. Its signature brew, Mother's Milk, was named one of the top 10 stouts in North America by the *New York Times*. The Hurricane Kitty, a hoppy IPA, was inspired by and named for Keegan's grandmother, whose driving record was apparently as aggressive as this brew.

The winner: Keegan Ales.

Semifinal 2: Newburgh Brewing Company vs. Sloop Brewing Co.

A Valley favorite since it opened in 2012, Newburgh Brewing is known for dozens of different styles of beer — but beloved for one in particular, its signature Cream Ale. Newburgh has perfected this upstate New York specialty, both in flavor (it earned a 2015 Great American Beer Festival Silver Medal) and imagery (CNBC gave it a Most Loved Label award, for Betsy the purple cow). Its taproom was named the 2017 Best Brewer Tap Room in New York by ratebeer.com.

Sloop can match Newburgh award-for-award, however. It was named one of the 10 favorite nanobreweries in the nation by no less than Bon Appétit, and won a gold medal at the 2016 World Beer Cup for best American-Style Sour Ale. Its new location, inside an old Dutch post-and-beam barn at Vosburgh Orchards, allowed them to increase production with a new 30-barrel system and deliver a tasting room worthy of its concoctions.

The winner: Newburgh Brewing Company.

The Finals: Newburgh Brewing Company vs. Keegan Ales

There are no losers in this Final 4, and each has fans who will defend to the death their pub's predominance. But we at First Draft HQ predict that the 2018 Craft Madness champion will be: Keegan Ales.

Unless, of course, the readers prove us wrong.

Brewing With Sugary Adjuncts

<https://beerandbrewing.com/brewing-with-sugary-adjuncts/>

The right ingredients and techniques make a difference

NEIL FISHER February 24, 2018

If you're brewing a beer to evoke a culinary experience like eating a piece of key lime pie or German chocolate cake, choosing the right ingredients and treating them correctly can be the difference between a balanced and nuanced beer, and one that's disjointed and unsatisfying. Here's a quick primer on ingredient selection and use—based on our experience—that will help you make the right choices for your beer.

Cacao

The single most important thing you can do when procuring cacao to add to your beer is to source it locally. Think of cacao like coffee—the fresher the better—so your best possible source is a local chocolatier who roasts their own beans. Cacao doesn't degrade as fast as coffee does, but if you get it fresh, you can use the husks as well as the nibs and they'll impart an additional richer flavor. Locally roasted cacao isn't available to everyone, and if you're ordering it or buying from your local homebrew shop, look for Tcho cacao nibs. Shops or breweries can order them from BSG, and they're a high quality product at an affordable price.

Of the two varieties they offer, Ecuadorian is dark fruit-forward, while Ghanaian is more earthy. We stick with Ghanaian for the more traditional quintessential chocolate flavor. Your choice should depend on your flavor target—for softer and fruitier beers, stick with South American. For earthy and spicier cacao character, stick with African.

Another thing to consider with cacao is the potential for infection. Find a provider that packages them in a sanitary way after roasting—the heat of roasting will kill microbes, and the quicker you can get it in a sealed environment after roasting, the lower your chance of picking up unwanted microbes. We've had no issues at all with Tcho's packaged cacao nibs.

Be careful when adding nibs to time it properly—the longer your beer rests on cacao, the more astringent it will get, and the beer can go rancid if you leave it on the nibs for too long (that's a general rule of thumb that applies to most adjuncts). Our typical cacao regimen is one day on nibs at ambient temperature, then crash to 35°F (1.7°C) for two days. That gives us the right amount of creamy cacao character without extracting harsh cacao bitterness. Like dry hopping, the higher the temperature, the better the extraction will be, but you'll also extract more bitterness at those high temperatures.

One key to achieving great cacao character in a beer is supporting it with chocolate malt in your grist bill. In our stouts with cacao, we use pale chocolate, chocolate rye, and regular chocolate malt in varying percentages depending on the beer. The addition of cacao adds that dark chocolate candy bar character, but cacao by itself without the chocolate malt will be perceived as thin and unsupported. We accomplish more chocolate character with malt than with cacao alone.

Coconut

We use a significant amount of coconut in our beers, both in terms of the number of beers that use it and the amount used in each of those beers. We don't find much benefit to coconut if we add any less than 5 lb per barrel (2.3 kg per barrel). While some breweries report success with it, we have yet to get good results from raw coconut due to the very high oil content, and we're

fearful of infection issues that might come from adding an ingredient that hasn't been pasteurized.

We now exclusively toast our own coconut, and we've found that a higher temperature for a shorter time is the key to removing oil. 375°–400° for 4–6 minutes will typically do the job, but evaluate by color rather than sticking to a strict time schedule—the coconut should be a nice golden brown. If you go black or burnt, you'll get unpleasant astringent flavors. At homebrew scale, you can typically fit one pound of coconut on a cookie sheet—just place paper towels underneath the coconut, as you would with bacon, to soak up the excess oil. Cool it as fast as you can, then get it into the beer shortly after that. The longer it sits out, the more chance there is of it picking up some errant microbes.

We add it to tanks in mesh bags to facilitate clean up, even though this means we have to use more coconut in each batch. Our most coconut-forward barrel-aged imperial stout uses a whopping 25 lb per barrel (11.3 kg per barrel), and we've found that in pastry stouts we're hard-pressed to get perceptible flavor with any less than 10 lb per barrel (4.5 kg per barrel). We purchase pre-shredded, unsweetened coconut. While some brewers use sweetened coconut, we prefer to only add fermentable sugars in known quantities. Flaked coconut can work as well as shredded, but always keep in mind that the more surface area of the coconut, the better the extraction.

No matter how you add it, coconut is not a stable ingredient in beer. The beers you make with it should be consumed relatively quickly.

Graham Cracker & Sugar Cone

These flavors are very hard to impart in finished beer. We've added them to the mash tun for sake of ease, but that doesn't always carry over in flavor to the degree we would hope. Some of those ingredients are very hard to work with on the cold side, so we no longer do that, and instead use malts to bring that character out. Victory malt and honey malt together are pretty effective at adding a graham cracker note, and vanilla will definitely help accentuate the graham flavor. Aromatic malt and caramel malts can also help highlight that sweetness.

Oreos

We've added cookies straight to the cold side, but that's a huge risk and we do it knowing the limitations. We source cookie crumbles without the cream, to avoid messes with the dissolving cookie center. Throwing in the cookie crumbles by themselves won't yield much flavor in the beer, but in conjunction with lactose, vanilla nibs, and cacao, that cookie note becomes more apparent.

Lactose

For beers that don't normally have lactose, we've tried all sorts of tricks with attenuation and malt bills, but settled on simply using lactose. It provides that creaminess of the pie, not just key lime flavor, in our Key Lime Berliner Weisse. If you depend on lower attenuation for that body and mouthfeel, you border on cloying. Lactose provides a more satisfying sweetness than under-attenuated malt.

Vanilla Beans

Vanilla is quite possibly the most difficult ingredient to substitute. At cost of \$370–400 per pound right now, it's the most expensive ingredient we've ever used, but also the most irreplaceable. When cooking, it's almost impossible to make a dessert without vanilla, and the same is generally true of pastry beers—it's one of the glues that brings these flavor combinations together, so pony up the cash or find an alternative.

While vanilla extracts are a viable option for homebrewers who don't have the time or incentive to tackle extra processing, we use whole beans to create a vanilla paste that we blend with the

beer in a brite tank. That paste gives us plenty of surface area with the beans for more efficient extraction. In our experience, you can't over-extract vanilla as it just doesn't produce a tannic bitterness like cacao or coconut if you leave it in contact too long. We've seen great results at 3–4 weeks of contact, and even at 3 months in a bourbon barrel, with the only issue being clogging as we racked out.

There are many different growing areas for vanilla, each with their own character—Papua New Guinea, Uganda, Tahiti, Mexico—but we keep coming back to Madagascar vanilla for our beers. Our stouts tend toward the low ester range of the spectrum, so the earthy sweet tobacco character of the Madagascar vanilla complements that well. There are a variety of other formats out there—commercial extracts and vanilla pastes, but when we buy beans and process them ourselves, we know we're getting the most value out of it. No rogue manufacturer has cut it with anything, and we can inspect them before and after they've been processed. Extracts are very useful if that level of manual labor is not appealing to you—they involve no processing time or work.

We've found that whole beans split in half are a huge waste of a very expensive ingredient—the pod and the fiber have flavor you can extract, and at \$300+ per pound we want to get every bit of vanilla flavor we can.

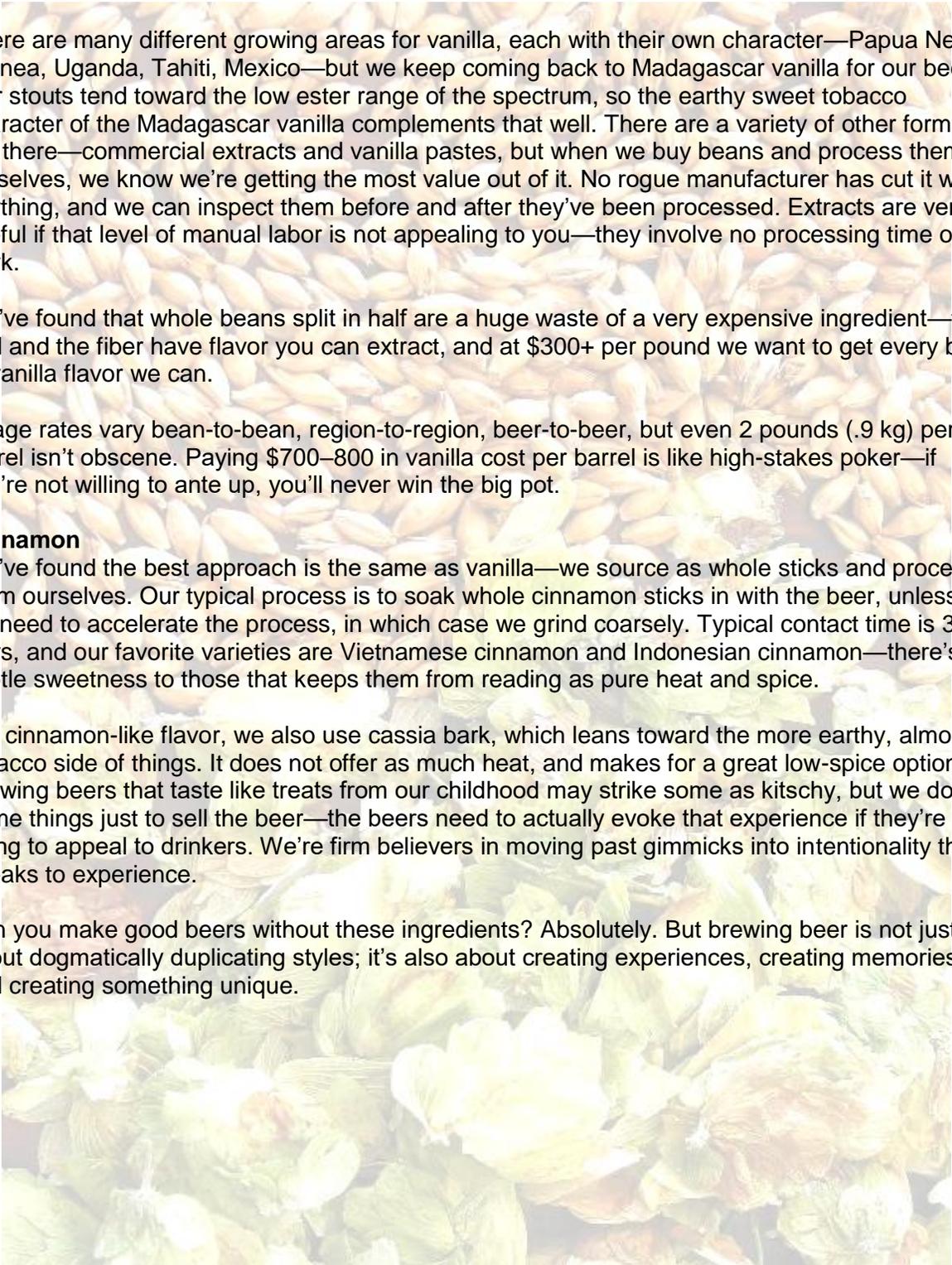
Usage rates vary bean-to-bean, region-to-region, beer-to-beer, but even 2 pounds (.9 kg) per barrel isn't obscene. Paying \$700–800 in vanilla cost per barrel is like high-stakes poker—if you're not willing to ante up, you'll never win the big pot.

Cinnamon

We've found the best approach is the same as vanilla—we source as whole sticks and process them ourselves. Our typical process is to soak whole cinnamon sticks in with the beer, unless we need to accelerate the process, in which case we grind coarsely. Typical contact time is 3–7 days, and our favorite varieties are Vietnamese cinnamon and Indonesian cinnamon—there's a subtle sweetness to those that keeps them from reading as pure heat and spice.

For cinnamon-like flavor, we also use cassia bark, which leans toward the more earthy, almost tobacco side of things. It does not offer as much heat, and makes for a great low-spice option. Brewing beers that taste like treats from our childhood may strike some as kitschy, but we don't name things just to sell the beer—the beers need to actually evoke that experience if they're going to appeal to drinkers. We're firm believers in moving past gimmicks into intentionality that speaks to experience.

Can you make good beers without these ingredients? Absolutely. But brewing beer is not just about dogmatically duplicating styles; it's also about creating experiences, creating memories, and creating something unique.



WINE ENTHUSIAST

The Toasty, Hearty, Flavorful World of Amber Ales

<https://www.winemag.com/2018/03/22/toasty-hearty-amber-beers/>

BY LAUREN BUZZEO

With spring here and summer looming just around the corner, it's the perfect time of year for a transitional brew, one that will move us from the robust porters, hearty strong ales and imperial selections enjoyed throughout winter and even the beginning of spring to lighter, crisper quaffs. Not quite ready for wheat beers and Pilsners, amber or red ales are the perfect choice for this time of year.

The tricky thing about amber or red ales is that it is a bit of a catch-all category, with examples ranging from light copper to amber to light brown in color. Typically high in maltiness, with low to medium caramel character and a light fruitiness, American examples are also usually characterized by their use of American hop varieties, producing anywhere from soft to well-pronounced hop bitterness, aromas and flavors. Medium in body, with moderate alcohol that usually runs in the 4–7% abv range, these brews are toasty, hearty and flavorful while remaining refreshing and clean.

Amber ales used to be more popular than they are now, and the style has not necessarily been in vogue in recent years. Sure, there are still fantastic examples to be found, as evidenced by the reviews below, but more often than not, they were one of the first flagships from an established brewery (like New Belgium or Bell's) as opposed to a new recipe or recent release.

Bell's Amber Ale (American Amber Ale; Bell's Brewery, MI) abv: 5.8%

Bear Republic Red Rocket Ale (American Amber Ale; Bear Republic Brewing Co., CA) abv: 6.8%

Gjulia Ambrata Ovest (Amber ale; Birrificio Gjulia, Italy) abv: 7%

New Belgium Fat Tire (American Amber Ale; New Belgium Brewing, CO) abv: 5.2%

Santorini Brewing Company Red Donkey (Amber Ale; Santorini Brewing Company, Greece) abv: 5.5%

DRAFT

<http://draftmag.com/psycholinguistics-beer-flavor-descriptions/>

What a psycholinguist can tell us about how we describe beer flavors

By Kate Bernot

Ilja Croijmans is a psychologist by training and a homebrewer in his off time. He's a researcher in the field of psycholinguistics, which combines psychology and linguistics, obtaining his PhD at the Centre for Language Studies in Nijmegen, the Netherlands.

His work is currently focused on the ways people describe the flavor and aroma of food and beverages. In this vein, Croijmans coauthored a 2015 study titled “Odor Naming Is Difficult, Even For Wine And Coffee Experts,” which found that “both wine and coffee experts were no more accurate or consistent than novices when naming odors.”

Why has your research until now mostly focused on wine and coffee?

It has focused primarily on wine, actually. Wine is, like coffee, an incredibly rich source of aromas, and can be experienced by smelling it, and by tasting it. In both cases, the nose is involved. Wines differ along a few dimensions—grape type, country of origin or terroir, and yet, there is so much variety. There are many wine experts available in the Netherlands, in shops (vinologists), in restaurants (sommeliers), and we even have a few wine producers now (oenologists). Additionally, wine expertise is well defined. To become a sommelier or vinologist, you have to go through intensive training and get a degree. Wine experts are interesting, because they talk and write about the smell and flavor of wines frequently—in shops, in restaurants and in reviews on the internet.

Have you considered applying your research to beer rather than wine or coffee?

Beer is also incredibly interesting. Back when I started this project on flavor language, this whole “craft beer revolution” was just kicking off in the Netherlands, which is only four years ago. Back then, there were 200 breweries, already 40 more than in 2012. Right now, there are around 422 breweries in the Netherlands. While beer is an interesting and obvious choice right now, it wasn’t yet back then. There are beer expert communities in the Netherlands with incredible expertise, and at least 422 commercial brewers which I think are expert enough to participate in my studies, too. And I think beer is talked about a lot too. What you see for wines (wine menus, wine reviews online) you see for beers more often too. There now even is a Michelin-star restaurant in the Netherlands (de Librije in Zwolle) that has a beer menu to pair with their seven-course menu.

What implications could your research have in terms of how we understand and value beer judging?

What we found in wine experts is that it matters how much you talk about smells and flavors in order to become better at describing it. If these beer judges talk a lot about beer, in addition to tasting and judging it, the findings for wine experts might apply to beer judges too. I think judges (for wine and beer alike) are very useful. It is hard to judge from a bottle of beer how it will taste, and some beers are quite expensive, so these pose a risk. If a beer expert has described the flavor in a way I can understand, this helps me in my decision process. I see sometimes online that people really don’t like a well rated beer, for example a Berlinerweisse or a lambic or a black IPA. And it turns out they just didn’t expect the flavors in those beers, for example, in case of the Berlinerweisse, they expected more of a traditional German weisse or Belgian wit. If they would have had access to a short description of the flavor, they might have given it a second thought, or not spent money on it in the first place. Expert descriptions are very useful, especially when novices struggle with finding the right words for the flavors

How can casual beer drinkers become more adept at describing aroma and flavor?

With practice, people can become better at describing aromas and flavors. A guided tasting can help: Let an expert explain what flavors they taste in a beer, and see if the casual beer-drinker can spot these too. Or a beer flavor wheel might help, seeing particular flavors occur in a beer. This is speculative, but in the beginning, it seems it is important to just get acquainted with the words that are used in beer contexts, and these wheels can help. After a while, it is more about practicing using them and applying them to new beers.

There are apps in which you can choose a few flavor descriptors for each beer you drink. This is already easier than just coming up with your own, or type in your own description. Becoming an expert in any domain, like in music or in chess, takes time, on average around 10,000 hours, so

it really just needs deliberate practice and time. But even practicing it a few hours can help. It is too bad we don't teach our kids to talk about smells and flavors, but focus on what cows say (sound) and what color a sheep is (vision) instead. It's speculative, but it might be possible people would be better at naming smells if they learned to pay attention to them when they were young.

Do you have a favorite beer style?

I don't have a specific favorite. It depends too much on the context. But there are types of beers I like more than others. I am quite into the sour beers: gose, Berlinerweisse, lambic, gueuze. Somehow the sourness keeps being interesting, while for example for with IPAs or stouts, these seem to become more similar to each other the more I try (although I also really like IPAs). I also like the crossover-type beers, in which multiple styles are combined, e.g., a sour stout, or experimental beers in which interesting ingredients are used.

Has your research changed the way you personally experience the act of drinking beer?

I don't think my research has changed the way I am experiencing beer. Whether it changed what types of beers I drink, I think homebrewing is more to blame for that—if you know how something is made, you may find flaws and possible ways to improve it. But I am trying to be aware of the flavors and tastes in what beers I drink, and I try to at least write a few words on each beer I drink and rate it, even if I've had it more than once.

Beer Without Hops

The New York Times

By Douglas Quenqua March 20, 2018

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/20/science/craft-beer-hops.html>

Charles Denby, a biochemist at the University of California, Berkeley, might have made hops an optional ingredient to brewing beer. Dr. Denby works in a lab that focuses on creating sustainable fuel out of plant molecules called terpenes. But he is also “a very enthusiastic home brewer,” he said. When he learned that some terpenes could, in small doses, impart the taste of hops — the small, green flowers that give beer its bitter, citrusy flavor — he decided to perform a side experiment.

Dr. Denby and his colleagues infused brewer's yeast with DNA from basil and mint, two plants that naturally produce the hop-flavored terpenes. The scientists were aiming to recreate the flavor of Cascade hops, which are most popular among craft brewers. They used the engineered yeast to brew a hops-free ale.

“The real challenge of the study was to produce strains that produce flavor molecules at the right concentrations without sacrificing other aspects of the brewing yeast performance,” according to Dr. Denby. “To me, it tasted distinctively hoppy, and not unlike a beer hopped with Cascade.”

Wanting a more objective analysis, the researchers asked Lagunitas Brewing Company in California to help them convene a double-blind taste test involving 40 participants. When asked to compare the brew's hoppiness relative to traditionally brewed beers, the participants placed it above most of the competition. Dr. Denby said that “We were really excited to see that some of our strains produced flavors that were hoppier than conventionally dry-hopped beers.”

Bryan Donaldson, brewing innovation manager at Lagunitas, “described it as having flavor characteristics of Fruit Loops and orange blossom without having undesirable off-flavors.”

For more details, go to <http://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-018-03293-x>