



THE FOAM RANGERS Newsletter Urquell

It Even Has The Kitchen Sink!

September 2011 - Volume 31 Pints - Issue 9

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September Meeting:

Friday,
September 16th
7:00 p.m.
at
DeFalco's

Foam Rangers Taken Seriously!

By Bev Blackwood

In a stunning blow to the Newsletter Urquell, the Foam Rangers periodical was actually taken seriously by a reader. "What were they thinking?" states Editor Bev Blackwood. "Don't people realize I pull this stuff out of my ass at the last minute?" At issue was a phone call to Saint Arnold sales manager James Cunningham from an H.E.B. store manager wanting to purchase the fictional beers: "Santo En Fuego," "Hedge Trimmer" and "Lawn Tractor," all of which were a satirical commentary on the apparent fixation of Houston's local brewery with variations on the Kölsch theme. "If we had that kind of power" notes Grand Wazoo Kyle Jones, "Saint Arnold would be brewing barleywines, imperial stouts and double I.P.A.'s like there was no tomorrow." "It's not like this is one of T-Bob or Steve Moore's articles that actually has so much context and fact to it that you question reality." States Blackwood. "This is sheer



So nice, we can use it twice!

fantasy at its finest." Given its reception, the Newsletter Urquell will be submitting its August edition to the Pulitzer Prize committee for consideration in the "Best craft brewery satirical fiction" category, hoping to beat out Stone Brewing's April first "Bastard Shotz" entry and break their nine year grip on this particularly esoteric category. Saint Arnold refused to comment on this article.

Out (of) The Wazoo

By Kyle Jones,
Grand Wazoo



Cider?

The weather is cooling down (well, it is anywhere else in the U.S.) and the leaves are changing colors (somewhere). That means it's time to

make cider! Making cider can be as easy or as complicated as you would like. In this article, I'll review some easy ways to make cider and provide direction if you're looking to delve deeper into traditional cider making. My favorite way to make cider, and one of the easiest methods, is to use store-bought

apple juice. Stores like Central Market or Trader Joe's often carry varietal apple juices during the fall, and it is easy to make good cider from these juices. I've also made good cider from plain Safeway brand apple juice. The key is to buy juice without preservatives - pasteurized is OK, but preservatives may prevent a healthy fermentation. If you see the words "potassium sorbate" on the label, don't buy it.

Once you have your juice (I start with about 4-4.5 gallons for 5 gallons of finished cider), it's time to ferment it. For a basic cider, it's as simple as adding your choice of yeast to the juice and letting it go. I also like to add some type of nutrient as apple juice contains low levels of key vitamins and nutrients, including free amino nitrogen (FAN) and thiamine, that yeast need. Add
(Continued on Page 8)

The Brewsletter Urquell

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The Brewsletter Urquell is published by the Foam Rangers Homebrew Club, 8715 Stella Link, Houston, Texas 77025

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Hopefully this is the last late Brewsletter we'll have this year. Apart from the huge formatting headaches of the November issue, the remaining two are mostly pictures and minutes. My apologies (again) to the officers who were on time. Thanks to Buck for the massive article... It's more than filler, it's fun to read too!



When The Brewing Gets Tough...

By Jaime Ortiz,
Scrivener

...the tough get brewing!

This months meeting got off to a late start as secondary Jaime decided to show up

late for work. Thankfully, we knew were the beer was and started drinking it anyway.

A great part of the evening was spent reminiscing about the pub crawl and all the things that may or may not have taken place at some of these establishments. There are also a couple of warrants out for Foamies.

Be careful next time you enter Austin City Limits! Our lawyers forbid us from providing any details on this newsletter. Please refer to last month's issue for the details. Tonight we tasted lots of pale ales and bitters.

Once again, Jaim(a) and Jaim(b) remain neck-to-neck in the brewclub competition, with Jesus getting 1st this time. I am coming for you next month!

The Waz began talking by making excuses as to why he skipped out on the pub crawl. He told us some story about his job being more important than drinking beer on a bus. Are you serious??? Jaim(a) and Jaim(b) strongly disagree. Then we were reminded about the Dixie Cup quickly approaching. If you are going to brew for the competition, do it now! You still have time! Still lots of work to do on that and we need all the help we can get from all the members to have it run smoothly.

Next we got more details about the club brew in at Jeff Reilly's house on September

10th. The club will provide lots of base malt and Jeff will make wort for all those there to brew accordingly. More details will follow so check your email. Thank you Jeff!

Chris White from a new organization called Open the Taps came to visit us tonight. He helped start this non profit consumer advocacy group to help promote craft brew in the state and have a voice with politicians on laws related to the craft brewing industry. Follow them on facebook, twitter and check out the website at openthe taps.org.

Bev announced all of our winners at the Lunar Rendezvous. Congratulations to all. We are now in second place behind the Zealots. As Bev says, they are coming to steal our Dixie Cup!!!! Better get brewing. The BJCP classes started and lots of candidates are getting ready to take the certification exam.

Doak got up to make an announcement and was quickly reminded that he is the Was Waz. He gave Scott a piece of granite he found on the street as a token of appreciation from the Foam Rangers. He also promised Scott he would personally help him move in November!

The usual raffle shennanigans took place and the meeting quickly turned south. Someone decided to give away a glass bowl and it quickly became a beer mug. A beer chugging contest ensued with Paul Porter taking first place on the can chugging portion of the competition. I think he was taking Beerfest too seriously. Doak gave us the quote of the night: "When the brewing gets tough, the tough get brewing." Soon after, the secondary was seen stumbling out of his post and anarchy took over.

Join The Conversation! Get On The Lists!

By Dave Cato
List owner

In the example that follows, LISTNAME should be one of these mailing list names:

foam-rangers
foam-rangers-announce

Replace LISTNAME with the *actual name* of the list when subscribing!

To subscribe to one (or more) of these lists, send the single line:

subscribe LISTNAME

in the body of an e-mail message, in *plain text* (make sure the message is not sent in HTML or RTF format) to:

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You should receive a reply from the server requesting that you complete the subscription, by sending another message back to majordomo@crunchyfrog.net.

Once your subscription is confirmed, you will receive a reply with the guidelines for the list you subscribed to, including instructions for unsubscribing in the future.



This Month in Foam Ranger History

By Sean Lamb, Club
Historian (Sorta)

25 Years Ago:

In the Brewsletter:

Dixie Cup preparation, new club T-Shirts and a recipe for steam beer from Bob Zahray of the Texas Malthoppers filled the issue. Dr. Strangebrew answers an inquiry about the single-stage "Carboy blow-out" brewing method. He concludes that it does work, but it is not his preferred method of fermentation. Scott Birdwell begs for someone to take over the duties of the Brewsletter editor.

At the Meeting:

Held Friday 19 Sept. at The Gingerman. The Beer of the Month is "American Micro-brewery" beers. The list of beers available in Houston that fit this category is Anchor Steam; Sierra Nevada Pale Ale, Celebration Ale, Bigfoot Barleywine, Summerfest, Porter & Stout; Collin County Pure Gold & Black Gold, and Boulder Pale Ale & Porter.

Other Events:

On Labor Day Sept. 1st there was a Texas Homebrewer's float on the Guadalupe, Tim & Susan Davis and Mike Templeton attended, 7 clubs from Texas were represented. There was a club brew-in on Labor Day too. 30 Gallons were brewed, 15-20 folks showed up. The club attended the Astros-Padres baseball game on Sept. 20th for "Foam in the Dome".

20 Years Ago:

In the Brewsletter:

Grand Wazoo Lou Carannante reminds everyone that the Dixie Cup is next month and that all the usual tass need to be done to make it come off. A letter from Jim Homer, Co-Director of the BJCP, is reprinted, stating that the Dixie Cup is not a "National" competition based solely on the number of entries and that judges will not be awarded points for a national competition. Lou Carannante's letter

responding to Jim is also printed. Lee Anthony writes as short history of the Dixie Cup, and the Foam Rangers "club only" competition is recapped.

At the Meeting:

Held at K. (Keith) Florian Klemp's house (yes, the guy who now writes the column for All About Beer magazine). There was a raffle that included tickets to the Dixie Cup pub crawl - won by Chris Todd. BOTM was Brown Ales and Bitters : Newcastle Brown, Double Diamond, Fuller's ESB & London Pride, Young's London Ale & Ramrod, Bateman's XXXB and Victory Ale.

Other Events:

The club attended the Astros-Braves baseball game on Sept. 29th for "Foam in the Dome".

15 Years Ago

In the Brewsletter:

For some strange reason the Brewsletter archive is lacking September and October 1996 material. Anyone with copies from those please let Sean Lamb or a club officer know.

At the Meeting:

No minutes available.

Other Events:

None noted.

10 Years Ago:

In the Brewsletter:

Grand Wazoo Bev Blackwood, as is customary in September, pimps the Dixie Cup. He also encourages everyone to work on their beer judging skills or to try judging if they haven't started. Secondary Jimmy Paige give a brief description of Oktoberfest/Vienna Lagers.

At the Meeting:

Held at DeFalco's on Stella Link. BOTM was Oktoberfest/Vienna Lager. BOTM served was St. Arnold Oktoberfest, Pete's Wicked Oktoberfest, Dos Equis Amber, Negra Modelo, Moretti La Rosa, Hacker-Pshorr Original Oktoberfest, Spaten Ur-Marzen, and Paulaner Oktoberfest

(Continued on page 9)

Beer of the Month Calendar



January 20th, 2012

Porter & Stout



February 17th, 2012

Barleywine & Holiday Beer



March 16th, 2012

Belgian Ales & Lambics



April 20th, 2012

Homebrew!



May 18th, 2012

Bocks, Dark Lagers, Dunkel



June 15th, 2012

Wheat, Wit, Fruit & Rye



July 20th, 2012

Homebrew!



August 17th, 2012

Pale Ale, Bitter & Steam



September 16th, 2011

Oktoberfest & Smoked



October 20th - 22nd, 2011

Dixie Cup XXVII



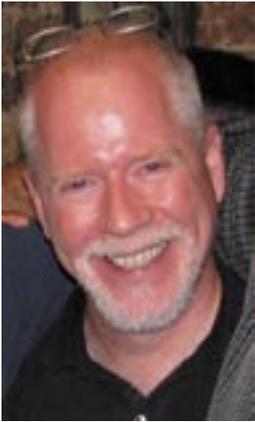
November 18th, 2011

I.P.A. & Ambers



December 4th, 2011

Homebrewer's Xmas Party



By
Bev
Blackwood II,
Competition
Coordinator

The Limbo
Challenge
produced
some more
Foam Ranger
LSC points!

Congratulations to Bev Blackwood for his 2nd place in German Pilsner and David Rogers for scoring 1st place wins for his Vienna Lager and Dusseldorf Altbier.

The Cactus Challenge will be holding their awards ceremony the day after the September meeting, so you'll have to wait until the October Brewletter to see how we fared there!

Of course we're in the final days before the Dixie Cup, our big event of the year. If you haven't brewed up your entries by now, it's too late! Needless to say we will need all hands on deck to help us sort and judge the hundreds of entries we expect to receive.

Sorting takes place at Saint Arnold Brewery in the loading dock area on the following days:

Saturday September 24th

Saturday October 1st

If you can lend a hand, it is very much appreciated! Of course, after sorting all those beers, we have to judge them!

It's Dixie Cup Time!

Here's the judging schedule:

At Saint Arnold Brewery:

Sun Oct 02, 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM
(Lunch provided)

Tue Oct 04, 6:00 PM – 9:00 PM
(Lunch provided)

Sun Oct 09, 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM
(Lunch provided)

Tue Oct 11, 6:00 PM – 9:00 PM
(If necessary, lunch provided)

Sun Oct 16, 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM
(If necessary)

At the Crown Plaza Hotel, Brookhollow:

Fri Oct 21, Noon – 8:00 PM

Sat Oct 22, Noon – 4:00 PM

If you can't judge, come out & steward!
Hopefully we'll be keeping the Dixie Cup in Houston, where it belongs!

Lone Star Circuit Current Standings

Individual

Mark Schoppe - Zealots - 97
Jeff Oberlin - Mashtronauts - 27
David Rogers - F.R. - 27

Team

Bradley & Bradley - Zealots - 27
Darity & Darity - NTHB - 10
JAWZ - F.R. - 8

Club

Austin Zealots - 248
Foam Rangers - 94
Bay Area Mashtronauts - 83



August Brew - In!

Brew Naked!

By Bev Blackwood II

Sean Lamb, in his annual rite of insanity, brewed the club beer in August's heat in front of DeFalco's! Thanks to the refreshment of Secondary Jaime's beers and the company of fellow Foamies, he managed to survive both the heat and the day's libations! Look for the beer at a future Foam Rangers meeting!



BREW ★ ENTER ★ JUDGE ★ WIN
THE CONTESTS OF THE LONE STAR CIRCUIT!

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OCTOBER 20 - 22, 2011
HOUSTON, TEXAS

EARLY ENTRY DEADLINE
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LATE ENTRY DEADLINE
9/30/2011

WWW.LONESTARCIRCUIT.COM



By
Jaime Robles
Secondary
Fermenter

I suppose that nowadays, Oktoberfest could be considered a misnomer

but that wasn't always the case. The 16-day festival, which I'm sure is on everyone's bucket list, is held every year in Germany during the Fall to celebrate lots of beer drinking and passing out in random locations. Yes, you are correct – it's almost like Dixie Cup. The first Oktoberfest was held on October 12, 1810 in the Bavarian city of Munich to celebrate the marriage between Prince Ludwig and Therese of Saxe-Hildburghausen (it must have sucked filling in the bubbles on standardized tests with a name like that). The celebration continues to this day, drawing a multi-million-person crowd from all over. It's considered to be the largest festival in the world, after our Dixie Cup. At this month's meeting, we will sample the large variety of Oktoberfest beers, try to differentiate them from Vienna-style lagers, and also drink some bacon in the form of Rauchbiers (rauch = smoke). As you can see from the current BJCP guidelines, there is some overlap in the target numbers for Oktoberfests (or Märzen) and Viennas and the overall flavor profiles. These are malt-forward, rich amber beers with a medium body and drying mouthfeel. These styles (VMO, get it?) are where the Maillard reactions shine. Common descriptors include rich malt aroma and flavor with notes of toasted bread crust, moderate bitterness yet low hop flavor, and a smooth, yet crisp mouthfeel. The use of high-quality malts such as Pilsener, Munich and Vienna is key. The development of rich melanoidins comes from a decoction, single or multi-step, mash and vigorous boiling. If you do not have to time or interest in decocting, you can include

Shouldn't It Be Called Septemberfest?

some melanoidin malt in your grain bill. On the hopping front, the options are fairly straightforward. German hops such as Hallertauer Tradition or Perle are used for a relatively neutral character and backbone to prevent the beer from being cloyingly sweet. And of course, the use of a lager yeast strain is a must. No esters, diacetyl or DMS should be present in this beer. A cooler fermentation temperature is key to achieve a clean Oktoberfest or Vienna, along with a diacetyl rest. With our hot weather here in Houston, this means that some sort of refrigeration unit is required to maintain cold temperatures for the duration of the fermentation and conditioning period.

Classic rauchbiers are hard to come by here in our area, unfortunately, especially since we Texans love to smoke almost anything we eat. These Märzen-based beers showcase a balance of maltiness and smoke, reminiscent of bacon. Typical grain bills can contain 20% to 100% beechwood smoked malt, depending on the intensity that you'd like to have in the finished product. I was able to get my hands on a limited supply of the two iconic examples – Schlenkerla Rauchbier Märzen and Spezial Rauchbier Märzen. Prepare to get smoked, just like the Colts. In true Bavarian form, the obvious food pairings for VMOs include pretzels, pork knuckle, sauerkraut, and kartoffelsalat. But don't let that limit you – any bread or hearty dish will go well with a 1-liter maß of Oktoberfest. For a more in-depth look at the style and its history, I highly recommend the "Vienna, Marzen, Oktoberfest" book

from the Classic Beer Style series written by George Fix and Laurie Fix. It's a great read. And it'll make you want to go to Germany.

Prost!



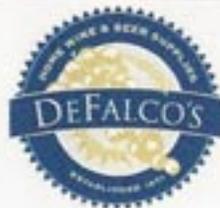
Kitchen Sink Causes Brewsletter To Go Missing!

By *Bev Blackwood II*

It is indeed a sad day when a kitchen sink outweighs the reading enjoyment of the Foam Rangers. Something about September seems to induce late or missing Brewsletters. Could be it's the eventual wearing down of the Brewsletter editor, or maybe it's just coincidence. (Or maybe it's having to generate filler like this when an officer runs short on their column!) This time though, it was definitely the sink. It's a really nice sink though!



**Running water means
I can make beer!**



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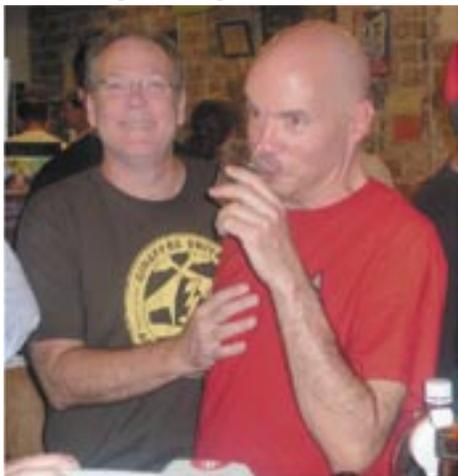
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Capo cops a feel...



I feel better now!



Extreme Close-Up!



Chug!
Chug!
Chug!



Behold...
The power of cheese!



Foam Ranger Foto Pages!



Scott gets a
piece...
of the rock!

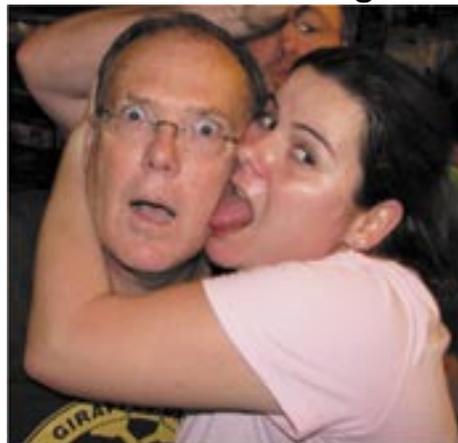


Check out our
hot women!

"Once upon a time, there
was a homebrewer..."



He takes a licking...





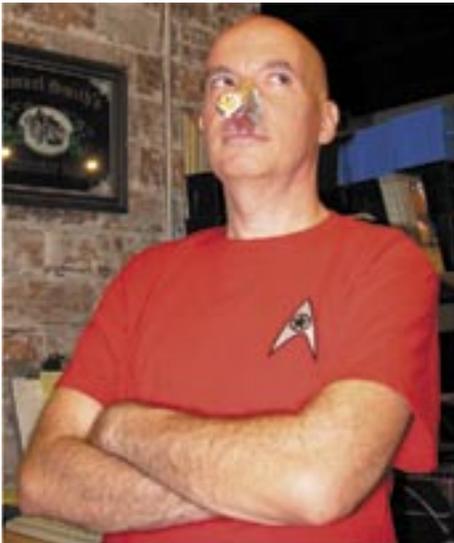
Just serve the damn beer Jaime!



Now I know how all of you feel!



**It's rigged!
Oh, wait...
Maybe not!**



Beer geek? Says who?



It is good to be the Stupid Toad!

Foam Ranger Foto Pages!



Making sure the door does hit him in the ass on his way out...



What Foamies hear: "Blah, Blah, Dixie Cup!"



DOAK SMASH!

(Wazoo - continued from page 1)

the nutrient according to the directions provided for wine. Good aeration is also good insurance for a healthy fermentation. Many dry wine yeasts work well for cider making, and I have seen posts on homebrew forums that praise English Ale yeasts in cider making as well. A neutral beer yeast like California Ale might also work well. Two of my favorites are Premier Cuvee and Cote des Blancs. Rehydrate dry yeast according to the manufacturer's directions. Cider fermentations tend to reek of sulfur, especially when using certain wine yeasts. This is normal, so don't worry. A healthy fermentation will last about a week, and your finishing gravity will likely be less than 1.000. If you like really dry cider, then you're done - it's time to package. If you want a bit of residual sweetness and some extra apple flavor, then you'll want to back-sweeten. This is where you have to pay attention - if you simply add more apple juice to the fermented cider, you'll end up with more alcohol and no sweetness - the yeast are going to consume any sugar available up until the alcohol concentration in the cider exceeds their tolerance. Apple juice alone usually provides a starting gravity of about 1.045 - 1.050, so you're only at about 5 or 6% ABV at this point. You need to keep the yeast from consuming any additional sugars you are going to add. This can most easily be accomplished by using potassium sorbate to stabilize your cider. Potassium sorbate prevents yeast from budding, and thereby prevents fermentation from restarting. Dissolve the recommended amount (listed on the package) of potassium sorbate in water and add to the finished cider. Let this sit for a day or so, and then you're ready to back-sweeten. At this point I rack the cider into a new vessel (a keg in my case). I recommend starting with about a quart of juice. Mix it in, taking care not to splash around too much. Then, taste the cider. Repeat as necessary until you are happy with the flavor and sweetness. Apple juice concentrate can also be used to back-sweeten, and requires less added volume to achieve the same sweetness,

however, your choice of varieties will be quite limited. Let the cider condition, package it, and you're ready to drink it. Cider can be packaged just like beer - either by using a bit of sugar to bottle condition, or by kegging and force carbonating.

You can play endless variations on this theme, including adding spices, fruit, some type of sugar or honey to boost the starting gravity, adding apple juice concentrate, etc.

Other variations on apple cider include applewine and applejack. Applewine is basically a cider with lots of sugar added, boosting the original gravity into the 1.070 - 1.100 range. Applejack is the eisbock of cider, and is made by freeze distilling a cider until the alcohol is concentrated to 20-40%. Applejack is sometimes consumed in a slightly frozen slushy state.

Traditional cider making is the ultimate as far as cider is concerned. The process takes more time and is much more involved, as you might expect. The first step is finding the mixture of fresh apples that you want to use to make your cider. These apples must be milled and pressed to extract the juice. The way the apples are pressed and the juice separated from the skins, as well as the varieties of apples used, will play a large role in the flavor of the finished cider, including tannic bitterness and acid. After pressing, the juice can be treated with sulfite to inhibit wild yeast found on the apple skin, or the juice can be left to spontaneously ferment. A special process called keeving may be used to treat the juice. Keeving results in the removal of all of the pectin and many of the critical nutrients from the must (unfermented juice). The end result will be a very clear cider that has some natural residual sweetness, as the yeast have been stressed from the lack of nutrients, and wild yeast were removed during the keeving process. Fermentation is either started spontaneously by wild yeast or is initiated by inoculating the must with yeast. The process proceeds in a similar fashion to the "easy" method from this point on. Those who are really daring can initiate a malo-lactic fermentation after the primary fermentation, as apples contain high levels (higher than grapes) of malic

acid. Wild yeasts and the ability to create custom blends of fruit can yield endless varieties of cider. For an excellent discussion on traditional cider making, see Gary Awdy's talk from NHC 2010, available at

<http://www.homebrewersassociation.org/pages/events/conference/2010-speaker-presentations>

Try your hand at making some cider this fall, and be sure to bring the results to a future Foam Rangers meeting!



(Continued from page 3)

Marzen (yes, that's it!).

Other Events:

1st Sunday pub meeting held at Bradley's brewpub in Clear Lake (now site of BJ's).

5 Years Ago:

In the Brewsletter:

Sadly, there was no Brewsletter as the Editor at that time [*Yours truly - Ed.*] was reaching the saturation point with his new job at Saint Arnold.

Foam Ranger Club Brew-In!



**This is MY
brewhouse, Bitches!**



**I dunno what the hell it is,
I'd throw it in anyway...**



**Screw brewing...
I'll take the pool!**



**What the hell is that
in my kettle?**



**Hey Jeff, Can I ring your
mash tun?**



**So... It's working...
Right?**



**It's been a
loooooong day!**



**Hobbiteses don't
like water!**



**Or then again...
Maybe they DO!**

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SATURDAY
GUESTS ADMITTED FROM 11:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Buck Goes To B. Nektar!

By Buck Wyckoff

**Part the second.
When last we left Buck...**

W: Yeah. I saw online, you guys got a lot of varieties. You got like a dozen, er....?

B: Oh, yeah. I don't even know how many we've commercially done. We've got four that we have out all the time: two traditionals, a wildflower mead and an orange blossom mead.

W: That's your year round stuff?

B: Yeah. Then we've got a vanilla cinnamon and a wildberry pyment. The pyment is a Shiraz grape with some star-thistle honey. We used to use clover. We're switching it over to star-thistle now. Strawberry, blackberry and blueberry is in there too, so it's got a big kinda Sangria character: lots a berries, lots a fruits and tannin from the grapes. It's a good mead, definitely our most popular.

W: So those are your four regulars and then you have the seasonals?

B: The limiteds. We don't even do them seasonally.

W: You're just, whenever.

B: Yeah. It's all whimsical. We're just a bunch of crazy homebrewers. We didn't get into this with like, a marketing plan. All kidding aside, the limiteds are just things we're going to do as one-offs. We get an idea and we do a....let's start with the extra limiteds. The extra limiteds are really the fun stuff. These are things....we might make only five gallons of it, but we'll release it. You can only get it here at the meadery two nights of every month on the first and third Friday. And people literally used to line up and wrap around the corner of that building there and wait to get a taste of it. We give them free tastes of everything and then they can buy it.

W: And you sell those at a premium price I guess.

B: Yeah. It's like \$20 for the half bottle, which is really, compared to a lot of other meads out there, that's really not outrageous or anything. Especially

for something that's a five gallon batch. Still put in as much work in five gallons as you do in fifty.

W: You said a half bottle?

B: 375 ml.

W: You know, for high-end, really limited run mead, sure, that's a totally reasonable price.

B: And it's really because it takes us so long to make. A five gallon batch takes as long as a 50 gallon batch. I think that's why people enjoy some of the stuff we're doing. It's like, we're not doing this to get rich. We just love to have fun. Like our coffee, it's an Ethiopian Harrar, which is a coffee bean from Ethiopia and considered one of the oldest coffees in the world.

W: Last year at the Dixie Cup in Houston, it was the first time I entered since '95, I got a second place for a Traverse City Cherry Coffee Mead and years ago, '94, I entered a hazelnut coffee mead. I like coffee meads. I think they work.

B: Yeah. It's something we wanted to do. There's a coffee roaster two blocks away from us and the guy, you go in there and talk to this guy about coffee and it's like you're talking to a craft beer nut.

These guys are as geeky about coffee as we are about beer or mead. So we're just like, I got to work with him. We started collaborating on different flavors. We wanted to use an all Michigan wildflower honey. So we brought him some samples of the honey. We brought him some of the mead and tasted all the different varieties of coffee, and it's kind of funny 'cause we unanimously picked, without even talking to each other, the exact same coffee. So we're like, alright, this is the one. So we made up a 15 gallon batch and that was it. The coffee was roasted the day before. We ground it and soaked the grounds in cold water for 48 hours, racked it off the coffee and made the mead with that water.

W: I'll bet it was wonderful.

B: Oh, it was fantastic. It was like, six pounds of coffee in a 15 gallon batch.

W: I don't suppose you got any of that left?

B: I do, but not open. We have less than a case left and I'm not....and that's the other thing with the extra limiteds, we only sample them the month it's released. Even if we have anything left over, the next month, we're not sampling it. There's not enough. When you get two cases out of an entire batch, to open one bottle is a huge percentage.

W: I don't mean tasting, I mean for sale.

B: Oh yeah, we got some. So the idea with these extra limiteds is we just have fun with it and if a batch turns out great, we make a limited release. And the limited is like, okay we're going to make a full 265 or almost 500, 600 gallons of it or something possibly. Then it's something we'll release in stores. We'll release out of state, but once it's gone, it's gone, you know. We may make it again. Like, last year we did a raspberry, chipotle mead. Just an extra limited and

people went crazy for it. We're still just waiting for the right time to make a big batch of it. So it's like, we don't know when we're going to get around to it again.

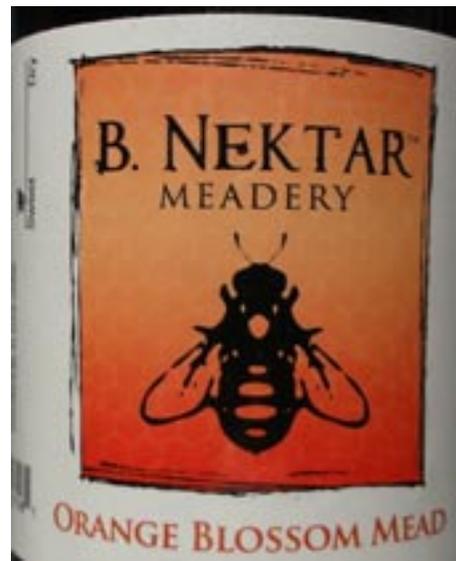
W: Some of that stuff, you gotta keep the customer salivating for more.

B: Yeah. Well, I'm got trying to be a jerk about it. We only have so much money, so much

time, so much space. I mean, you can see the process. It's a 1200 square foot space and we're kicking out, I think like this year, we're probably going to do over 10,000 gallons this year and we just got the fifth tank here. We're doing everything we can. We financed this whole thing ourselves. No banks. No investors.

W: Well, I'm glad it's working. You're distributing pretty far and wide?

B: Yeah. We're launching Florida next
(Continued on next page)



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week.

W: You are?

B: Yeah. Florida and Wisconsin, we're going to do before the end of the year.

W: You're not doing Texas are you?

B: Not yet. Maybe next year or the year after. They're on my radar.

W: I don't know if there's going to be a problem with a meadery. I know some of the good craft Michigan breweries, Bells, Founders....I've heard they aren't going to do anything in Texas because the TABC



B. Nektar's meadery

pisses them off. They make life difficult for everybody.

B: Yeah, well....that's the game.

W: I think that's their mandate.

B: That's the game in this business. You've got to figure out how all the states work.

W: Well, what's insane is you always hear politicians playing lip service as to how they want to give small businesses a leg up and get enterprise going.

B: Open the market to competition. Free market.

W: You've got craft people, creative people, artisans... the market's there. Yes, alcohol, it can affect you, but it's just a commodity like anything else, you know? Just keep track of it and let people have free reign as far as....just as long as they know where it's going, what do they give a damn about what size barrel you let in and don't let in, what the tap looks like, the top, the connector, labels....all the little stupid things they put in place that make it difficult for people to go from one state to another.

B: Well, I haven't looked into Texas laws yet. When I get to that point, I'll have a whole new perspective on the state. I've dealt with some pretty difficult states. When you learn how it works, it's just like anything else. It's just a system and you figure the system out.

I mention that I saw a peanut roaster down the street and I hope he's not thinking about a peanut mead like he did the coffee mead. No, thankfully.

But he does say that close by is the number one salsa maker in the country and they supply Costco's Garden Fresh salsa. Farmdale, Michigan! Whodda thunk it. I excuse myself to go off and snap pictures, cursing a persnickety camera and flash card.

B: (Talking to an employee) So what are you going to do? Swap all the lids on the drums as you go? [Yep.] Bitch.

W: You guys are still having trouble getting the....oh, well you got that one open.

B: Yeah, but they got to swap the lid on all of them to use that lid.

W: Oh, 'cause that's the only one you could get open? What a pain.

B: That looks like the lid from a wildflower....yep. At least they're the same size drum instead of that fucking concentrate drum.

P: Oh, that was ridiculous.

W: What, they just over torqued it or something?

B: I don't know. And then one honey guy sent us drums that were used for juice concentrates and they were a different size and we couldn't use any of our lids, and they had no holes on the lid. It's like, well how am I going to get this honey out? What do you want me to do? This is Paul by the way (the other owner). Buck Paul, Paul Buck.

W: Is this your research table? (chuckling)

B: This is the everything table. This is actually my mom's old kitchen table that we've confiscated and repurposed.

They notice some open bottles and give them the sniff test. Deemed good enough to let me try.

W: Which one is this?

B: That's the Pineapple Coconut.

W: Oh yeah, I saw that online.

B: That batch we did when we first opened and we only did a 5 gallon batch and one store bought the whole thing. And we're like, "Oh, we have to make more of this!"

W: Ummmm. I love the alcohol going down on that too. The alcohol, the

pineapple and the coconut....those are all balanced nice together. Real nice.

B: Thanks.

W: You need that alcohol to make it work.

B: To cut the sweetness. And this is the other lan by the way.

I: Hey.

W: How you doing?

I: Pretty good.

B: Well, Paul's our partner and head mead maker over here.

P: Ian's just some guy that started showing up one day. Eventually, instead of trying to tell him to leave we just said, "Go do this" and he started doing it, so....

W: It's like feeding the cat and then he wouldn't go away.

B: Yeah, look at his whiskers! Naw, he's the assistant mead maker and fun czar.

W: I like the craft....homebrew level aspect of the operation. I mean, it's got to be more fun than a factory.

B: Yeah. Well, we still have factory-like problems, but we try to take care of that in an efficient manner so that we can get back to the fun.

W: You wouldn't mind growing and it becomes huge or would you rather it just stayed small and crafty?

B: I don't like being broke, so I wouldn't mind if it got bigger...so there's that. I wouldn't mind gettin' big because I got so many friends, like really, really good brewers....I got a lot of friends that are out of work here in Detroit and it's been cool that's we've been able to bring some friends on and put some people to work.

W: It'd be nice to grow and then....

B: Show people that something other than cars can come out of Detroit.

W: Right.

B: 'Cause like, legally we're a winery. When I was telling people we're starting a....I wasn't going to say meadery, 'cause then it's a whole nother conversation. So I say we're starting a winery and they're like, "Where?" I say, "In Ferndale." Ferndales like a half a mile outside the city of Detroit. "Well, where you going to grow your grapes?" (We laugh)

W: Yeah. Really it's an uphill battle with the....just the general overall ignorance the public has with mead. What is a mead? You get blank stares.

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B: You even get conflict from within the mead making community about what this style really means. Like I was asking you about sack mead, what's your definition of a sack mead? Everyone's going to have a different description. I've heard sack mead is really just the alcohol percentage. You hit a certain alcohol percentage, it's a sack mead. So theoretically you could have a dry sack mead, you know? I guess. The thing is the mead industry is so, it's funny to say, new, because it's so old in all reality, but it is so new. All these styles, it's a wild west. We can do anything. And it's why we do all these crazy things. The one you're holding in your hand, Margarita Style Melomel...

W: Margarita style melomel.

B: And the reason we had to call it that...the government didn't want us to call it Margarita Mead. It's a long, long story. Basically calling it margarita implies there's spirits in it and mead can only be made with just honey, according to the government.

W: Yeah, they're really hung up on names. (Sip. Smack, smack.)

Ummmmm.

B: But that's roughly 40% Agave, 60% orange blossom honey, fresh lime juice, lime zest and orange zest.

W: Tasty. Boy that is good. Like the Acoustic guy, he wanted to call it Buzz, but you can't have Buzz on the label because it implies intoxication.

B: It's just tough for mead makers because it's such an easy path to take when you are talking about bees.

W: That's really good too. So that's Agave honey and....?

B: Well, it's a blend of dark and light agave. We just figured, "Well, what's in a margarita?"

B: Get your glass and I'll pour you a dry one. (Takes my glass, goes to a vessel and returns.) That's very young, but that's our new dry orange blossom.

W: This is right out of one of your tanks?

B: Yep.

W: Straight orange blossom.

B: Yep. Just orange blossom honey. Bone dry.

W: Boy, you just taste the flower in that. The alcohol is....

B: It's different without sweetness though. It's way different. Alcohol is

probably about 12-ish.

W: Wow. That's deceptive because it doesn't taste highly alcoholic.

B: Yeah, well, it's.....we try to keep it clean. But that mead was made a month and a half ago. That's a month and a half dry mead.

W: What's the process from here to bottling? You just going to let it age, then bottle it? Do you do anything with it?

B: Age it. Filter it. Bottle it.

W: Yeah, it's a little bit cloudy. Once you filter it, it will clear up. A little bit of a milky color.

B: But that's what it looks like typically once it's in aging tanks.

W: Well, that's tasty. Very delicate.

**To "bee"
continued...
(Maybe even
concluded...)
Next month!**



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